

Minutes
Mental Health Planning Council
Housing Committee
Wednesday, January 30, 2019

Attendees:

- Adrienne Cassidy, Advocates (co-chair)
- Joe Finn, MHSA (co-chair)
- Jonathan Bowen-Leopold, DMH-CO (via Telephone)
- Joel Danforth, DMH-CO
- Danna Mauch, MAMH
- Janet Marsden, DMH-HOT
- Dennis McCrory, MD
- Andrew Fagan, Advocates
- Jeff Chasse, DMH-MB
- Dan Reis, North Suffolk MHA
- Andrew Roach, Vinfen
- Virginia Griffin, Bay Cove
- Kimyatta Campbell, DMH
- Linda McMahon, MassHousing
- Paul McPartland, DHCD
- Kim Clougherty, DMH-CO
- Stephanie Kan, DHCD
- Brendan Goodwin, DHCD
- Jessica Larochelle, MAMH
- Joe Vallely, DMH-CO

Welcome

Adrienne C. called the meeting to order along with fellow Co-Chair Joe F. at 10:06; introduced the agenda and invited participants to introduce themselves. The minutes from the November 14 meeting were put forward, Andrew R. made the motion, seconded by Andrew F, voted and approved.

DMHRSP Updates & Barriers

The group discussed on-going challenges to the leasing of units touching on a need for better marketing materials, concern about broker fees, lag time in the lease-up process that can discourage landlords, delays at the Administrative Agencies, and providers varying abilities to negotiate reasonable rents within 110% of FMR.

Adrienne and others again thanked DHCD for issuing their memo specific to MB FMRs that allows DMH to use the Interim FY19 HUD FMRs (not the FY18 FMRs) in that region; this action was very much appreciated both for its financial implications and symbolically as recognizing just how difficult leasing is in the current market.

There was a suggestion that programs develop a DMHRSP rental packet that includes the all necessary documents such as RFLA, client ID, income, SS#, etc., to help expedite leasing. Unclear who would take this on, a subject for future discussion?

Kim touched on the Department's interest in exploring the creation of a trust fund that would both allow for retention of unexpended DMHRSP funds and create a mechanism to promote leasing through payment of real estate broker fees, possible staff or landlord referral incentives and other soft costs associated with leasing yet, have no funding source. Internal discussions are underway.

Educational Material & Video for DMHRSP

Michelle from DMH Communications spoke about producing a video on the subject of DMHRSP to help staff, prospective landlords, and other stakeholders to better understand the program and how it works. She distributed a draft "story board" to give people a sense of what the video might cover. This introductory video will incorporate graphic artistry that will help convey procedures, decision points, required forms and the roles of the various stakeholders.

Michelle said she will be forming a small workgroup and will reach out to the Committee, there will also be a larger group to review the script and production work. This video is thought to be about 10-15 mins. in length and will be made available through a link created by DMH and distributed to providers.

Developer Outreach & Engagement

Joe F. , Danna and Jessica talked about a meeting held in late November at MAMH that included Aaron Gornstein and Eleanor White along with CEDAC and DHCD that highlighted the need for DMH housing production and the making of alliances with developers willing to use FCF-DMH to create new units.

From this conversation there was general agreement to look at sponsoring a conference in the coming year that would bring developers together to educate them about mental illness, the supports that clients receive from DMH and the significance of FCF-DMH in both financing their multi-family projects and enhancing management capacity to address mental illness.

Danna made the point that there would be a need to seek Legislative support for increasing the FCF Bond Cap now set at about \$11.5M to support additional development.

Budget Update

Danna indicated that MAMH would be asking for additional DMHRSP funding from the Legislature in FY20. She did point out the concern that current leasing activity was somewhat slow making the argument for more funds difficult. She was confident however, that a case can be made for new funding as the high cost of leasing in the current market is well known by all households and DMHRSP rents need to adjust with market conditions.

Next Meeting: April 10 @10AM, DMH Central Office, 25 Staniford St, Boston