

**Minutes**  
**Mental Health Planning Council**  
**Housing Committee**  
**Wednesday, April 10, 2019**

**Attendees:**

- Adrienne Cassidy, Advocates (co-chair)
- Jonathan Bowen-Leopold, DMH-CO (via Telephone)
- Dennis McCrory, MD
- Andrew Fagan, Advocates
- Jeff Chasse, DMH-MB (via Telephone)
- Dan Reis, North Suffolk MHA
- Andrew Roach, Vinfen
- Norma Laurent, Bay Cove
- Stephanie Kan, DHCD
- Cecilia Woodworth, DHCD
- Michelle Cormier, DMH-CO
- Jessica Larochelle, MAMH
- Sally English, Viability (via Telephone)
- Gary Comeau, DMH-NE (via Telephone)
- Joe Vallely, DMH-CO

**Welcome**

Adrienne C. called the meeting to order at 10:05; she noted that Joe Finn her Co-Chair had a scheduling conflict and would not be attending. All attendees were invited to introduce themselves and comment on the agenda. Andrew F made the motion to accept the minutes from the January 30 meeting, seconded by Andrew R., the minutes were voted and approved. (Stephanie Kan noted for the record that she was not at the 1-30 meeting, her name will be withdrawn.)

**Olmstead Plan**

Linn Torto, Director of the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness and Co-Chair of the Olmstead Planning Committee (along with Roberta Rubin, Chief Legal Counsel, DHCD) noted that the Plan was completed in July 2018 and published just this past Fall. outlined the work of the Committee over a period of 12 plus months noting that the plan was completed in July 2018 and published in the fall.

In developing the Plan the Committee relied upon both a work group comprised of state agencies who serve people with disabilities and an Advisory Group made up of nearly 40 organizations and individuals with expertise in services to people with disabilities. There were many meetings, lots of discussion, and a website established to promote input, all resulting in a comprehensive document that acknowledges the past and embraces the future.

The Plan incorporates an extensive list of specific activities with accompanying “benchmarks” intended to give clear direction to the Committee’s work, these benchmarks also provide measureable outcomes and help to hold the agencies accountable. The first annual progress report is to be issued in early 2020.

Linn also took the opportunity to commend Commissioner Mikula in successfully advocating for more DMHRSP funding and promoting flexibility in the leasing program. She noted the financial challenges in the rental market and the personal challenges to people with mental health conditions leasing in the community. Linn underscored the need for DMHRSP to be able to balance these challenges. She noted her meeting with the Commissioner where marketing strategies, leasing incentives and establishment of a DMH Housing Trust Fund were discussed.

### **Housing Conference with Developers**

Jessica L reported on Committee activity related to planning of a conference with housing developers in the Fall to educate them on the need for housing in the community for people with mental health conditions, the conference will focus on the array of DMH services that support clients, and the value of FCF-DMH in financing affordable housing.

The Committee has been in touch with several developers, CEDAC, DHCD and others about such a conference and has received positive feedback. This most likely will be a half-day event held in Boston with an anticipated audience of 40-50 participants. The Committee is continuing to meet and will issue an planning outline in the coming weeks.

### **DMHRSP Educational Material & Video**

Michelle C from the DMH Communications Office updated people on the DMHRSP video she is producing with help from Adrienne C, Andrew R., Dan R, Jeff C, Jonathan B-L and Joe V. This is to provide an overview of DMHRSP and is directed at DMH service provider staff, AAs and other interested parties. The video will be about 5 plus minutes in duration, giving the basics with various links to additional information. The work group has its next conference call on April 26.

A question came about regarding possible discrimination, Cecilia W from DHCD offered to assist and said they are very sensitive to Fair Housing issues.

Andrew R. raised concerns about rent reasonableness tests by the AAs and that these can drag out the lease-up process. Stephanie K said that each AA has a method for determining reasonable rents based upon comparable in the area. If this becomes a larger issue we’ll need to revisit.

### **Updates**

The House W&Ms added \$500K to the DMHRSP line item in DHCDs budget. MAMH and others are working to get this to \$1M.

Next Meeting: July April 10 @10AM, DMH Central Office