



**May 5, 2022
Zoom Meeting
9:30am- 11:00am**

Minutes

Attendees

- Adrienne Cassidy, Advocates (co-chair)
- Joe Finn, Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance (co-chair)
- Amy Callahan, Edinburg Center
- Andrea Muther, Eliot Community Human Service
- Andrew Fagan, Advocates
- Bia Moreira, City of Boston Mayor's Office of Housing
- Brent Rourke, Department of Mental Health Northeast Area
- Cecilia Woodworth, Department of Housing and Community Development
- Chris Zabik, Department of Mental Health Western Mass Area
- Crystal Kozlowski, Open Sky Community Services
- Danny Lee, Department of Mental Health Metro Boston Area
- Edna Rivera-Carrasco, Baycove Human Services
- Gary Comeau, Department of Mental Health Central Area
- Heidi Holland, Department of Mental Health Central Office
- Jess Larochelle, Massachusetts Association for Mental Health
- Jill Gichuhi, NAMI Massachusetts
- Joe Valley, Department of Mental Health Central Office
- Jonathan Bowen-Leopold, Department of Mental Health Central Office
- Kate Alicante, Massachusetts Association for Mental Health
- Kim Clougherty, Department of Mental Health Central Office
- Luke Benson, Massachusetts Coalition for Homeless
- Mark Bilton, Department of Mental Health Southeast Area
- Monic Luke, NAMI Massachusetts
- Nancy Coulter, Advocates
- Roger Herzog, Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC)
- Sarah McKeever, Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC)
- Steph Doyle, P/PAL/Youth MOVE Massachusetts
- Stephanie Kan, Department of Housing and Community Development
- Thomas Rimms, Department of Housing and Community Development

Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chairs Adrienne Cassidy and Joe Finn called the meeting to order at 9:02am. Adrienne welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked members to introduce themselves and how long they have been a member. The meeting agenda for this meeting and meeting minutes from the February 9, 2021 meeting were made available to the group in advance.

Review of minutes from 2/10/2021

Adrienne asked for a motion to accept the Minutes from February 9, 2021. Two corrections were made. Jonathan Bowen-Leopold made a motion to approve, and Stephanie Kan seconded. The February minutes were approved with corrections by unanimous consent.

Tom Insel

Adrienne Cassidy spoke about the event hosted last night by Massachusetts Association for Mental Health featuring Tom Insel, the former director of the National Institute of Mental Health. Dr. Insel's writes about the 3 P's needed when supporting people with their mental health; people, place and purpose. Adrienne tied the role of the committee to supporting people with finding a "place" to work on recovery.

Joe Finn echoed Adrienne's sentiments about the event. He noted that permanent supportive housing is the solution for homelessness.

Understanding ARPA Funds

Joe Finn introduced Roger Herzog from Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC). Roger noted that Massachusetts initially received around \$5 billion dollars in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funding. In December 2021, the state legislator approved the use of those funds. This included \$150 million for supportive housing, with \$50 million earmarked for people and families who have experienced homelessness. Other funds are targeted to veterans, people with mental health diagnoses, people with disabilities and other groups. The goal is to increase the supportive housing opportunities that are available.

Roger encouraged members to get involved in their local community with getting projects sited. He spoke to the success of Father Bill's/Mainspring with bring new supportive housing online during the pandemic. Few organizations have the skillset to both build it and manage it in the long term. Pine Street Inn, Louison House, and others are working with community partners to build other opportunities.

Roger noted that with supportive housing, pulling together funds to build the housing, manage the housing, and provide the services are all needed. Efforts are being taken to coordinate this better.

Joe Finn echoed the idea of partnering with other organizations. He noted that many of the people who would typically be served by these programs have challenges with becoming housed. He asked for flexibility with requirements.

Steph Doyle asked if any housing would specifically be set aside for youth and young adults. Roger noted that this has not specifically been carved out, but projects serving this population are encouraged to apply for housing.

Monica Luke asked is there a case study for how Community Development Corporations can help with supportive housing? Roger answered that he was not aware of a case study, but there has been a lot of work in this area. Joe noted that Neighborhood Works Housing Solutions has done a lot of work in this area. Roger suggested making sure that there is a target for “extremely low income” folks, which is up to 30% of the area median income. Trying to build in as many ELI units into a development as possible helps build diversity within the development.

Jessica Larochelle how the pre-existing FCF relate to the new APRA funding? Would a developer or partnership weave together both sources of funding? Roger answered yes. Programs get together by mixing money from different pots. He noted that experience in housing development is important for this reason. The system is complicated and makes partnerships especially useful.

Adrienne Cassidy said that this information has made her wonder how they can work with developers to creatively use DMHRSP. She wanted to know what we could do as a committee. Joe Vallely noted that subcommittee members have spoken about hosting an event for developers, that was worth revisiting. Adrienne suggested putting together a small group to start planning for a new event. She will send an email to subcommittee members after the meeting gauging interest.

Housing Support & Educational Opportunities

Adrienne Cassidy noted that a lack of housing inventory continues to be an issue. She also noted that housing about the FMR rates. She asked what we can do as a group. Crystal Kozlowski echoed this. She noted that Open Sky has seen success with advocating for reasonable accommodation request to the housing authority to increase their payment amount.

Kim Clougherty asked if there was any guidance from DHCH. Stephanie Kan noted that DHCD is using a 110% FMR payment standard already for some voucher programs. There is also no cap on rental increase percent, as there has been in the past. She also noted that reasonable accommodation requests are individual. She encouraged providers to submit these as they see needed. It is beyond what DHCH to submit challenges to HUD FMRs. She clarified that members would need to work with their local and regional administrative agencies, who can appeal to HUD.

Adrienne noted that there will be another statewide provider meeting on June 3rd.

2022 Housing Advocacy

Jessica Larochelle, MAMH provided an advocacy update that the Safe Havens did not get approved in the House and that there will be a call to action the week of May 23rd. Adrienne Cassidy offered to send out the toolkit and encouraged members to take 45 seconds out of their day to advocate for this funding.

Housing Subcommittee Page- SMHPC Website

Jonathan Bowen-Leopold, DMH shared the SMHPC Housing Committee webpage. <https://www.mass-smhpc.org/housing-subcommittee-menu-draft/>. Jonathan encouraged members to provide comments or feedback about the page. The committee can use this as a resource for information.

Meeting adjourned at 11:06am.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday, July 14, 9:30 - 11 am (tentative)

minutes taken by Jill Gichuhi, NAMI Massachusetts