

**Minutes**  
**Mental Health Planning Council**  
**Housing Committee**  
**Wednesday, November 14, 2018**

**Attendees:**

- Adrienne Cassidy, Advocates (co-chair)
- Joe Finn, MHSA (co-chair)
- Jonathan Bowen-Leopold, DMH-CO (via Telephone)
- Arthur Ellis, DMH (via Telephone)
- Joel Danforth, DMH-CO
- Danna Mauch, MAMH (via Telephone)
- Daniel Lee, DMH-HOT
- Andrew Fagan, Advocates
- Dan Reis, North Suffolk MHA
- Andrew Roach, Vinfen
- Linda McMahon, MassHousing
- Paul McPartland, DHCD
- Kim Clougherty, DMH-CO
- Stephanie Kan, DHCD
- Jessica Larochelle, MAMH
- Joe Vallely, DMH-CO

**Welcome**

Adrienne C, Committee Co-Chair opened the meeting along with fellow Co-Chair Joe F. at 2:35; introduced the agenda and invited participants to introduce themselves.

**Housing Conference**

Jessica provided a summary of the Sept 25<sup>th</sup> conference highlighting noting that over 190 individuals attended with a waitlist approaching 50. Danna Mauch lent her skills as MC. Sen. Spilka's offered very personal and moving remarks followed by Heidi Trainor, Director of Peer Support at the Worcester Recovery Ctr & Hospital who delivered a powerful presentation on her recovery and the importance of housing in providing stability and safety.

The first panel of the day was Innovation and Best Practices led by Deputy Commissioner Brooke Doyle that included Keith Wales from the Eliot PATH program, Joe Finn from MHSA, Adrienne Cassidy from Advocates and Lyndia Downie from Pine St. This focused on effective models.

The Commissioner's remarks addressed the challenges faced by DMH and noted the record budget for FY19, the \$2M in new funding for DMH Rental Subsidy Program now a \$10.5M program, revised programming with ACCS and new Safe Haven in Boston. She underscored the importance of housing to being able to deliver mental health services.

The afternoon panel on development featured Mike Durkin with United Way as moderator, Aaron Gornstein from POAH, Alana Murphy of DHCD, Roger Herzog from CEDAC and Eleanor White, Housing Partners, Inc. They highlighted the opportunities with strategic collaborations and funding sources.

Joe Finn was acknowledged for his wonderful and inspiring closing remarks that appreciated all that has been accomplished yet, much more is required and affordable housing is the key factor in addressing homelessness and meeting the needs of people with mental health conditions.

### **Conference Follow-up & Next Steps**

Aaron Gornstein and others have agreed to come together on Nov 29 to outline specific steps that will engage developers in utilizing FCF capital funding to house DMH clients. Joe V noted that MAMH has agreed to host this meeting.

Mike Durkin, President of United Way offered to assist the Committee with policy issues around production working with his Board and members. Danna M will take the lead in working with UW.

Adrienne noted there is an on-going need to provide training, education and support to the field in order to secure the necessary units using DMHRSP. She looks forward to working with DMH to develop these resources.

### **NAMI Conference**

Joe F underscored the significance of NAMI assisting in the effort to expand housing resources and spoke about the workshop he gave to some 40 plus participants at the NAMI Convention in October.

### **New Funding for DMHRSP**

Adrienne opened the discussion noting challenges of the housing market, AAs having to learn the new DHCD guidelines, new ACCS staff learning as they go but, fortunate to have \$2M in new DMHRSP.

Danna expressed the concern of the Commissioner that leasing was moving slowly and questioned what could be done to increase the number of units. She argued for higher rents (FY19 Fair Market v. FY18 Fair Market), more flexibility to meet the demands of the market, broadening the category of clients targeted to receive DMHRSP and anything else to facilitate spending the funds.

Stephanie spoke about the training that she had done in all five DMH Areas regarding the new guidelines, and she expressed confidence that as AAs learned the new processes leasing would move along at a more rapid pace. She continues to make herself available to assist AAs with any questions or concerns.

Andrew noted that Vinfen was facing unique challenges on the Cape where owners preferred 9 mos. leases. Dan from N. Suffolk pointed out that individuals in GLEs were not necessarily ready to move.

Kim noted that DMH has also done training with providers and internally is meeting with staff regularly to review progress and strategize to address any barriers. She clarified that clients can be selected who are not in GLEs they just have to be receiving ACCS services. She is acutely aware of the Commissioner's concern. Joe F encouraged all parties to be creative, foster new alliances and seek solutions and not dwell in issues that cannot be changed.

*Time ran out and the meeting was adjourned at 4:10*

**Next Meeting:** TBS

Notes submitted by: Joe Vallely