

## Princeton Human Services Commission Minutes

Monthly Meeting Minutes

**February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

Monument Hall-East Meeting Rooms

One Monument Drive, Princeton, NJ 08540

### Present

#### **Board Members:**

Ross Wishnick, Chair  
Veronica Olivares-Weber,  
Vice Chair  
John Anagbo  
Janet Estes  
John Heilner  
Heather Howard, Council  
Liaison  
Anastasia Mann  
Omar Nishtar  
Larry Spruill  
Matthew Trujillo

#### **Staff:**

Elisa Neira, MSW  
Melissa Urias  
Ben Strauss

#### **Guests:**

Phillip Curran, Princeton  
Packet

### Absent

#### **Board Members:**

## **I. Call to order**

At 7:04 pm, Mr. Wishnick calls the meeting to order: “This is to affirm that the regularly scheduled meeting of the Princeton Human Services Commission has been duly notified and is being conducted in compliance with all provisions of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.”

## **II. Public Comments / Guests**

Council Member Howard suggests the two new members who could not make the last meeting, introduce themselves. Ms. Estes and Mr. Trujillo introduce themselves as follows.

Ms. Estes: she has been a social worker in D. C. for elderly people and psychiatrically disabled people. She worked for a pediatric mobile clinic, also in D. C. She expresses her enthusiasm to join the group.

Mr. Trujillo: he did graduate work for Princeton University in psychology and social policy. He now works for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in research grant making. He wants to stay involved in racial justice issues and to help the community.

The other members, staff and guest introduce themselves.

### **III. Approval of January Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Heilner moves the approval of the January minutes. Mr. Anagbo seconds. The committee unanimously approves them.

### **IV. Director's Report**

#### **a. General Assistance (January 2017)**

Director Neira reports a similar caseload this month as last month, 23 open at the beginning of the month, 22 at the end of the month. She opened four cases and closed three cases, all opened or closed for typical reasons.

#### **b. State Audit**

Director Neira attended a state meeting earlier today. The state will audit Human Services for the first time under her tenure, at the end of March. Two state auditors will come to the office then.

#### **c. Welfare Updates**

Counties have been reaching out to municipalities about individuals no longer in compliance due to the combined clock. Princeton will have only one person possibly affected by the policy change. That person should be exempt for being the caregiver of a disabled person.

Employable people who receive food stamps must complete a work activity. She considers that challenging for people, especially those chronically unemployable or close to retirement. Many people also consider searching for jobs unhelpful.

#### **d. New Responsibilities**

Director Neira will serve in a leadership capacity for the Municipal Welfare Association and will join the Legislative Committee in the League of Municipalities.

### **V. Committee Reports**

#### **a. SHUPP**

Chair Wishnick provides background on Send Hunger Packing Princeton (SHUPP): about 150 kids participate per week. In response to a member question, he mentions that 450 families would qualify income-based. Not receiving state or federal money, SHUPP can be more inclusive to people who would not receive assistance due to state or federal regulations. The group organizes "Fill the Bowls" as a fundraiser. "Fill the Bowls" will happen in 2017 on September 24, midday.

Starting in March, their weekend bags, in addition to four meals, will include a second bag of rice or beans, a can of tuna, a can of chicken and three cans of vegetables. They have been thinking about logistics given the bag now weighs three pounds.

A member mentions that the group should watch the charter school expansion as there might be potential students who benefit from SHUPP.

#### **b. Immigration**

Last Wednesday, the sub-committee held an outreach meeting for residents and community partners. They discussed current immigration enforcement events. Director Neira thinks the meeting went well. School employees attended the meeting. They informed families that schools have been recognized as safe places. They discussed safety planning (for instance, notarizing temporary parental consent forms) in the event of a raid. Representatives from nonprofits, including a mental health nonprofit, and clergy also attended.

Director Neira talked to an ESL class at the Y. She spoke in English and translated into Spanish. Someone else translated into Mandarin. She talked about the community's values, and identity as a welcoming community. Mr. Heilner compliments Director Neira and Ms. Urias for their work.

Mr. Heilner reports that LALDEF looks to increase legal service to immigrants. They have been working with Mr. Lilienthal and a law firm.

Mr. Heilner reports that, at the Princeton Housing Board meeting last night (February 14), Mr. Heilner and Ms. Fraga talked about the lack of clarity on mixed status families in the affordable housing lotteries. Mr. Heilner compliments all the Housing Board members, particularly Chair McGowen and Mr. Truscelli, for their thoughtfulness.

Director Neira suggests members attend the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice's "Train the Trainer" event. Chair Wishnick suggests the committee keep a calendar of interesting events.

#### **c. Housing**

Members discuss the latest developments surrounding the Housing Stability Coalition.

#### **d. School**

Members discuss the latest developments surrounding the School subcommittee.

### **VI. Discussion**

#### **Committee Membership**

Chair Wishnick sent out an electronic committee signup sheet to members, identifying five issues: youth, immigration, housing, communication (and events). Members discuss the work of committees. They then volunteer for those committees:

Youth: Mann, Anagbo, Estes, Olivares-Weber, Spruill  
Immigration: Heilner, Olivares-Weber, Trujillo  
Communication: Anagbo, Trujillo  
Housing Stability Coalition: Estes, Olivares-Weber  
Welcoming Community: Nishtar, Anagbo, Spruill, Trujillo

Chair Wishnick requests an outline from each committee in advance of the next meeting. At their meetings, the subcommittees can develop objectives and goals.

## **VII. Updates**

The committee does not discuss updates.

## **VIII. Closed Session**

The committee does not enter closed session.

## **IX. Adjournment**

At 8:25 pm, Mr. Spruill motions to adjourn. Mr. Trujillo seconds. Members unanimously vote to adjourn.