  
**Montgomery County Housing Committee**

**Minutes**

Wednesday November 13th, 2024 at 3:00pm via ZOOM

Attendees: Lauren Silverstone, Tigest Alemu, Ahmna Khan, Diane Dressler, Tierra Medley, Mary Kolar, Tim Wiens, Rosemary DiPietro, Steve Keener, Rebecca Grayson, Jillian Copeland, Andy Krauss

### **Welcome**

* Meeting was called to order.

### **Review Minutes from September**

* No objections or changes were noted, and the minutes were approved as written.

### **Housing Support Services Discussion**

* Attendees discussed challenges faced with DDA’s housing support services, particularly regarding the requirement for housing plans before service authorization.
* Providers highlighted that creating housing plans before authorization is difficult due to limited knowledge of individuals’ needs at that stage.
* It was noted that there is no standardized housing plan form, which adds complexity to the process.
* Providers shared strategies for addressing these challenges, such as:
  + Regularly updating housing plans with detailed documentation of activities (e.g., SNAP applications, utility payments).
  + Including comprehensive information in service implementation plans to reduce clarification requests.
* The group discussed that advocacy with DDA may be necessary to streamline these processes and ensure consistency across requirements.

**Action Items:**

* Tim Wiens will discuss these issues in an upcoming meeting with Stephanie Jones from DDA.
* The group will consider a collaborative advocacy approach to address systemic inefficiencies in the current process.

### **DDA Shift**

* Participants expressed concerns about DDA’s impact of stricter documentation requirements.
* Several attendees shared examples of delays in PCP approvals due to extensive clarification requests from DDA.
* Providers noted that DDA now requires detailed timelines and evidence of progress for goals outlined in PCPs.
* The group emphasized the need for pre-planning and comprehensive documentation to meet these expectations.
* Suggestions were made to advocate for clearer guidance and process improvements directly with DDA leadership.

### **Introduction to Mary Kolar - CDN Network, Montgomery Housing Alliance**

* Mary Kolar provided an overview of the Montgomery Housing Alliance’s mission and priorities:
  + **Affordable Rental Housing:** Advocating for maximizing resources such as the Housing Initiative Fund and Nonprofit Preservation Fund to support development and preservation.
  + **Affordable Homeownership:** Promoting initiatives that increase access to homeownership and provide support for aging in place and critical home repairs.
  + **Land Use and Zoning:** Supporting attainable housing efforts while advocating for affordability incentives in new zoning changes.
  + **Rental Assistance:** Pushing for expanded programs to stabilize households, especially in light of post-pandemic economic challenges.
* Mary emphasized the importance of partnering with disability advocates to include supportive housing units in new developments.
* Tim Wiens shared that a meeting with County Councilmember Kate Stewart is being scheduled to explore financing mechanisms to support these goals.

**Discussion and Collaboration Opportunities:**

* The group expressed interest in partnering with affordable housing developers early in project planning to prioritize disability-inclusive housing.
* Opportunities for collaboration with Montgomery County officials and advocacy efforts were discussed to address shared goals.

### **Upcoming Developments (Hillandale Gateway, Sumner Place Apartments)**

**Hillandale Gateway (Silver Spring):**

* This HOC project will feature 463 residential units, including 155 designated for seniors.
* Rebecca Grayson raised concerns about accessibility issues in the senior building and the lack of equal amenities compared to family units.
* She committed to following up with HOC to determine if the provided recommendations for accessibility have been implemented.

**Sumner Place Apartments (Bethesda):**

* This redevelopment project by WC&AN and Miller Development will include over 300 residential units, with 18 moderately priced dwelling units (MPDUs). The project is expected to be completed by 2027.
* Jillian Copeland offered to connect the group with the developers as she knows a contact from there.

**Jeremiah Park Development (Shady Grove):**

* Updates are expected soon on the redevelopment of the Shady Grove bus lot into multi-unit homes.
* The group has expressed interest in collaborating with the developers and is awaiting further communication about their plans.

### **Closing Remarks and Next Meeting**

* The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, January 8th, at 3:00 PM.