Howard County Housing Committee

NOTES

Zoom Thursday May 12th 3:30 – 5:00

**Present**: Dorothy Plantz, Patricia Sylvester, Cindy Parr, Erin Ashinghurst, Katie Collins-Ihrke, Sharonda Huffman, Melissa Gibson, Theresa Ballanger, Mark Dunham, Andy Krauss, Diane Dressler, Nannette Livides, Matthew Plantz, Sarah Hochbaum, Tim Wiens, Terri Bradford

1. Welcome
   1. The minutes from the March 16th meeting were reviewed
2. Introduction of New MIH employees
   1. Director of Housing, Sharonda Huffman
   2. Director of Communications, Andy Krauss
   3. 2nd Community Living Coordinator focused on Baltimore Region including Howard County, Sarah Hochbaum
3. The Housing Opportunities Trust Fund for Howard County
   1. Report on status
      1. Legislation passed the general assembly authorizing the Trust Fund. The County Executive included $5 million in his budget for the housing opportunities trust fund. The funds are administered by the Department of Housing and Development, which also has an advisory board. They review how the funds would be used before releasing them. A trust fund enables the money not to revert to the general fund if it’s not spent. The money can be invested, and the income earned can be used for the trust fund also. It is a permanent source of funds for affordable housing in HoCo. [Often counties put funds in trust funds to be used going forward.]
      2. The council took testimony regarding this and has held one listening session about it. They will act by May 25th. It has to serve participants at or below 80% of the Howard County AMI. In any year half of the households need to be at 50% of HoCo AMI., and 40% of that 50% needs to be at the 30% of AMI level.
      3. Waiting to see if the county council will leave the funds in the budget during the 5/25 vote.
   2. How we can support this going forward
      1. Invite Kelly Cimino to join Tim, Katie, Pat, Diane, Sharonda & Nannette to talk about the trust fund and how it will impact people with IDD. We could generate a list of needs and ideas of how they could be addressed so she has an idea of what we’re thinking about.
      2. It was recommended that MIH send a letter to county council members on behalf of the HoCo housing committee to express support for the $5m funding of the trust fund. Pat will send Tim what the housing coalition sent to review.
      3. It would be helpful to talk with Kelly about the most effective use of funds (master leasing units in a property at the payment standard, use it to help people without a voucher, help with “buying down” the rent, funds for people with IDD to help purchase homes, etc.)
      4. Diane Dressler will do some work on best practices on Housing Trusts funds to bring to the discussion with Kelly, MIH will pay for her time to do this work.
4. Mainstream Voucher;  Updates;  Nannette
   1. 74 leased and 6 vouchers on the street so they are maxed out.
   2. Applied for 30 additional mainstream vouchers and waiting to hear. We are eligible.
      1. We will be going to the waitlist (not the coordinated entry system) to give them out.
      2. Priorities are the same – those moving from institutional settings (includes group homes, correctional facilities and others based on HUD definition), the homeless and those at risk of homelessness.
5. Patuxent Commons – Mark Dunham
   1. It moved forward by 5-0 council vote which was exciting to see widespread support for housing for the disability community. They appreciated the support from the council, advocates, media, etc.
   2. Want to keep the momentum going to fund other (as yet undetermined) projects.

1. Other issues
   1. New Communications work
      1. Legislative advocacy page
         1. Purpose: to collaborate on affordable housing opportunities with other groups
            1. Ex: There is a new DDA rental subsidy program for FY23. It has a $350,000 baseline and MIH would like to see it expand to $1.5 million in the FY24 DDA budget through advocacy using this advocacy page.
            2. A number of entities already track these legislative bills, MIH and its partners would not be tracking legislation per se but rather would be rallying around the stated priorities.
            3. Suggestion was made to concentrate on a limited number of topics relevant to the disability community to focus on.

Create 5 priorities with talking points as our priorities.

Back up talking priorities and talking points with data to make the case.

1. New Committee Members
   1. Heritage Housing board members might be interested.
      1. Nannette will reach out to Sandy Corbin with Humanim to see if she’s interested in joining the committee.
   2. HoCo Disability and State Disability commission board members might be interested.
      1. Sharonda will reach out to them.

1. Changes at the Arc Howard County; Cindy Parr
   1. Cindy will be leaving the Arc and our committee.
   2. The Arc is still searching for her successor. They hope to hire for the position by July.
      1. Cindy believes the new executive director should serve on this committee.
2. Future Agenda & Meetings
   1. Next meeting: July 14 3:30-5:00 pm