



MEETING MINUTES

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS COMMISSION

Wednesday, February 28, 2018, 7:00 P.M.
Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center, Room 2403

Present: Chair Ellen Cushing, Vice-Chair Geri Palmer, Suzanne Calder, Sidney Caselberry, Noelle Gilbreath, Alderman Eleanor Revelle

Absent: Sandra Hill, Kyle Lauterhahn, Moika Long

Staff: Sarah Flax, Housing and Grants Administrator; Savannah Clement, Housing Policy and Planning Analyst

Call to order

Chair Ellen Cushing called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM with a quorum present.

Approve minutes of January 11, 2018 meeting

Sue Calder moved for approval, Ald. Revelle seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Public comment

Doreen Price, resident, interested in Age Friendly Evanston, and said the needs of seniors needs to stay in the affordable housing conversation.

Sue Loellbach, Connections for the Homeless/Joining Forces for Affordable Housing, spoke in support of a comprehensive affordable housing plan. She said 30 human services agencies want to see a plan.

Alliance to End Homelessness of Suburban Cook County HMIS Application

Jennifer Hill, executive director of the Alliance to End Homelessness of Suburban Cook County, explained the Continuum of Care (CoC), Coordinated Entry And the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) databased used to track all clients of the CoC. The Coc is implementing a new Coordinated Entry process required by HUD, named "Entry Point," that is designed to streamline the process for accessing homeless services. Instead of a person/HH in crisis going to several organizations and being evaluated, there is one point of entry. People are then assessed using a shared standard, and the type of intervention is determined based on need rather than whether the person/HH can be served by a specific organization. It is accessed via a toll-free number managed by Catholic Charities, four walk-in centers, emergency shelters and street outreach programs. Clients are screened by phone call or at intake and a vulnerability assessment is completed as appropriate. People/HHs are prioritized on by-name list based on vulnerability score and length of time they've been homeless.

The Alliance plans to add a fourth dedicated staff person to HMIS in 2018 due to increased data management requirements of Coordinated Entry. The Evanston community is one of the heaviest users of HMIS. Evanston is providing 5% of the HMIS budget, but 10% of CoC clients are in Evanston. In 2017, \$1.4 million of CoC funding went to Evanston organizations out of \$12 million total for suburban Cook County. The CoC includes 130 municipalities and 40 agencies using HMIS.

Sue Calder asked what other municipalities fund HMIS. Jennifer Hill said that LaGrange, Oak Park, and Cook County provide funding. Cook County represents the balance of communities that use HMIS but don't have their own entitlement funding. DuPage County pays a share for shared implementation/partnership, but it is standalone agreement and not included in the CoC HMIS budget. There is a 20% match requirement for the HUD grant the Alliance receives. The City of Evanston uses its local funds from the Affordable Housing Fund rather than ESG funds for HMIS, because ESG is also HUD /federal dollars and does not count as matching funds.

Discussion ensued about whether Evanston was paying more than its fair share of the cost of HMIS. Sarah Flax noted that Evanston organizations receiving CoC and ESG funding are required to use HMIS, and that the City's General Assistance office also uses HMIS to help assess residents' eligibility for General Assistance. Ellen asked if the commission could get a report showing the number and types of clients in Evanston that are served through the CoC. Staff will contact Peggy Troyer at the Alliance to generate a report that shows the number of clients, services received, etc.

HMIS is used to track what homeless people's needs are, and the assistance and referrals they receive. The Alliance uses HMIS data for strategic planning; for example, a new short-term stabilization program was developed based on needs identified through data analysis. Jennifer Hill explained that Continuum of Care/McKinney Vento funding doesn't necessarily provide more funding for the increased services that are needed, but requirements to receive McKinney-Vento funding have increased. State funding has also significantly decreased. State and local dollars leverage federal dollars, which have stayed about the same.

Vice-Chair Geri Palmer asked about strategic planning and expanding HMIS. Jennifer explained that the HMIS vendor provides regular updates that address changing requirements for data management from HUD, and is very customizable to accommodate by-name list and Entry Point. The Alliance has tried to be thoughtful about providing the necessary supports to agencies receiving CoC funds, growing the budget and adding staff as needed. In addition, the Alliance began a health partnership with Cook County, engaged in data matching with the City of Chicago, and expanded into new initiatives that are data-led and data-informed.

Sue Calder asked whether funding for HMIS and other services traditionally funded each year are included in the Affordable Housing Fund budget. Sarah explained that \$114,500 was budgeted for housing services in 2018 and is part of the \$800,000 uncommitted. All funding for programs including HMIS, Open Communities landlord-Tenant Services will be requested through HHC, P&D and City Council. Sue Calder requested a memo on the budget. Staff provided an AHF summary based on unaudited 2017 financials that shows revenues and carryover commitments from activities funded in 2017 but not expended. It was agreed that in future staff will provide information on the annual budget to the commission at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Alderman Revelle motioned for approval of HMIS application funding, Sue Calder seconded, and it was approved unanimously.

Election of Chair/Vice-Chair

Chair Ellen Cushing let the Commission know about the upcoming vacancies on the Commission, and encouraged the commissioners to do outreach. Ald. Revelle motioned to keep the current chair/vice-chair the same for another term, Sue Calder seconded and it was approved unanimously.

New/other business

Chair Ellen Cushing said there is a lack of clarity of Commission's role and what City leaders expect of the Commission. Ald. Revelle said her expectation is Council will task the Commission with developing an affordable housing plan at the April 30th meeting. Ellen will review the 2009 Affordable Housing Plan and staff will put together a one-pager on needs and strategies for a future meeting.

Staff reports

The 2017 CAPER will be posted for public comment on Monday, March 5.

Adjournment

Ald. Revelle motioned for adjournment, Sidney Caselberry seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting of the commission is Thursday, April 5, at 7:00 p.m. in room 2402.

Respectfully submitted,
Savannah Clement, Housing Policy and Planning Analyst