

Princeton Human Services Commission Minutes

Monthly Meeting

September 16th, 2015

Monument Hall - East Meeting Room

One Monument Drive, Princeton, NJ 08540

Present:

Board Members:

Ross Wishnick, Chairman

Elizabeth Bidwell Bates

Leticia Fraga

John Heilner

Larry Spruill

Thomas Parker

Stacy Mann

Staff

Elisa Neira, MSW

Michael Soto

Liaison & Guests

Heather Howard, council member

Wilma Solomon (Not in Our Town)

Sam Hust

Absent:

Robert Hackett

Laura Encinas

I. Open Public Meeting Statement and Call To Order

At 7:06 PM, Chairman Ross Wishnick called the meeting of the Princeton Human Services Commission (HSC) to order by reading: "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 Meeting Act." There was no response to his request for public comment.

II. Approval of August 19th, 2015 minutes

Mr. Heilner motioned to approve the minutes with corrections, seconded by Ms. Bates. All eligible members voted in favor of this action.

III. General Assistance

The monthly General Assistance report was stated to be available on request, since the website was not working. The caseload is fairly level month to month, ranging from 25 to 30 cases. Moving forward, this report will be sent prior to the meeting so the members of the commission have time to read it beforehand.

IV. Human Services Committee Reports

Summer Youth Employment Program

The program finished successfully with an award night where certificates were distributed. The students gave helpful feedback: asking for more hours; the option to start a week earlier and finish a week later; and also requesting additional employers be added to the list.

The students enjoyed the activities during their trip to the Princeton Plasma Lab and we hope to continue this trip in the following years. Mr. Andrew Zwicker from the Princeton Plasma Lab shared his enthusiasm about the Princeton Summer Youth Employment Program's visit via Twitter.

Several students were hired to continue working until the end of the school year.

Send Hunger Packing Princeton (SHUPP)

About 138 tickets have been sold for the SHUPP Hunger Banquet event coming up on September 20th from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Since, some people that bought tickets will not be able to attend, SHUPP is considering hosting a round table in January to spark further discussion on food insecurity.

The Hun School had a similar event in March and some of its students will attend the Banquet to help facilitate conversations around the tables.

Photographs will be taken at the event and during the rehearsal.

The first food packages of this school year will be distributed on October 2nd, 2015.

Civil Rights

The meeting planned with the administration for September 21st will be rescheduled; Ms. Neira will send a Doodle to determine the new date.

Ms. Fraga informed that she will be part of the 'Getting Beyond Racism' Panel on September 20th at 7:00 pm.

Ms. Fraga shared that victims of wage theft have confided their cases with her but do not intend to file a formal complaint. Victims are afraid of losing their jobs due to retribution if they complain.

There is a need to do an outreach and education campaign for the community to become aware of the existence of such instances, which will make it harder for people to commit such offenses.

Cases about domestic workers were also discussed. Ms. Mann recommended looking at the resources that a domestic employer organization called “Hand in Hand” has developed in working with employers and workers.

Mr. Heilner invited everyone who is interested to participate in an upcoming meeting to outline relevant subjects regarding wage theft.

Immigration

Mr. Heilner informed that as a result of a lobbying effort about 3 months ago, Congresswoman Watson Coleman will sign the amendment to the spending bill to eliminate the detention bed quota.

Mr. Heilner and Ms. Neira met with Jorge Torres from Unidad Latina en Accion (ULA), and as a result ULA will hold a workshop on September 27th at the Henry Panell Center from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. The workshop will focus on OSHA workers’ rights and wage theft.

In the next Council meeting the Princeton Human Services Commission will recommend to Council and to the Mayor to join Welcoming America, and for Princeton to support offering driver’s licenses to undocumented immigrants.

Mr. Heilner will draft the proclamation to join Welcoming America, the resolution to support driver’s license to undocumented immigrants and the approval for Princeton to Join Cities United for Immigrant Action (CUIA).

Community BLOCK PARTY

Mr. Spruill shared the success of the Block Party where about 100 people assisted. Mr. Parker commended Mr. Spruill for organizing and being the spirit of the event. This event was a good opportunity for the Commission to mingle with the community.

V. Adjournment

Ms. Elizabeth Bidwell Bates seconded Mr. Thomas Parker’s motion to adjourn. With no further business to discuss, all voted in favor of this action. The meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM.