

Princeton Human Services Commission Minutes

Monthly Meeting

March 18, 2015

Monument Hall – East Meeting Room

One Monument Drive, Princeton, NJ 08542

Present:

Board Members:

Elizabeth Bidwell Bates
Laura Encinas
Leticia Fraga
John Heilner
Stacey Mann
Robert Hackett
Thomas Parker
Larry Spruill
Ross Wishnick, Chairman

Staff:

Elisa Neira, MSW
V Bea Snowdon

Liaison & Guests

Emily Klockenbrink, PHS Senior

I. Open Public Meeting Statement and Call To Order

At 7:08 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”. Chairman Wishnick introduced and welcomed the guests in attendance.

II. Public Comments/Guests

There was no response to the Chairman’s request for public comment.

III. Approval of February 4, 2015 minutes

Laura Encinas motioned to accept the minutes as submitted. Elizabeth Bidwell Bates seconded this motion, with all voting in favor of this action.

IV. Director’s Report

General Assistance Report

Director Neira reported that the General Assistance summary will no longer be printed. It will be emailed to those desiring a copy. 34 cases were open at the end of the month. She was pleased to report that two clients received employment and one received benefits Family Guidance.

Princeton University students begin work next week on a project to improve employment opportunities, for those receiving TANIFF and other benefits. Half of the participants will do qualitative research. Some plan to go to the One Stop Career Center in Trenton. Another will prepare a statistical research review, to present a quantitative picture of challenges for jobless benefit recipients. Stacy Mann shared that the reduction of AFDC, under the Clinton

administration, resulted in more people moving to disability. She added that this effect, and disability statistics, may be worth analyzing as well.

Communications regarding the joint concerns of Princeton and UMCPD have improved. The logistics of the transportation voucher system will soon be shared with the hospital.

The Financial Literacy was a big success. There were many comments about the great information shared. Participants were well served by this presentation, Princeton staff members, and their supporting volunteers. Director Neira hopes to provide this workshop again.

On April 18th, Director Neira will present the needs assessment report to the Stone Hill Church community. The church has a bilingual group that is very interested in helping residents in need. They are also willing to lend general volunteer support, to the Human Services department. Regarding shared events, Stacy Mann and other HSC members present questioned Princeton's policy about working with religious organizations. All felt that no proselytizing can take place, in HSC program offerings and events.

V. Human Services Committee Reports

Wheels Rodeo

Elizabeth Bidwell Bates reported that the Wheels Rodeo will be held on 5/16 and 5/17. A request for volunteers was shared. Handmade signs embody the neighborhood feel of the event and will be used again. Money is needed for reflectors. Chairman Wishnick suggests that our Mayor's Wellness Campaign may be able to get reflective stickers. Ways of rewarding helmet wearers will also be explored.

Civil Rights Presentation

Civil Rights Subcommittee Chair and Vice Chairman Leticia Fraga shared an account of the history and spirit in which the *Joint Commission on Civil Rights (JCCR)* was created, in 1968. Recent meetings, with former JCCR stakeholders, helped the CR subcommittee gather additional perspectives on the history, the experiences, and the insights of those involved in mediating local civil rights issues.

The Subcommittee distributed two extensive reports, dated March 18th 2015, to provide a clear overview of Civil Rights efforts in Princeton. These reports also addressed the pros and cons of a Civil Right Advocacy Organization vs. a Civil Rights Subcommittee. Based on a careful analysis of the details of the history of Civil Rights in Princeton, it remains the strong recommendation of the subcommittee that a standalone Commission be established.

Subcommittee members Elizabeth Bidwell Bates, Leticia Fraga, John Heilner, Thomas Parker and Larry Spruill provided additional information, to address the many questions posed by HSC members present. Everyone acknowledged the fine work of those on the Subcommittee, to address all concerns.

Robert Hackett moved that a standalone Civil Rights Commission be established. This motion was seconded by John Heilner. All present voted in favor of the re-establishment of the existing Civil Rights Commission as an active, standalone entity in Princeton.

Immigration Subcommittee Report

Responding to proposed changes in the DACA and DAPA legislation for immigrants, several organizations are providing information sessions. Their intention is to prepare municipalities for the influx of immigration applications and other changes. John Heilner explained Princeton's need for better outreach, for local information sessions, and for volunteers' support to address these changes.

Noting responders already in place, Mr. Heilner shared that:

The NJ Immigration Alliance and the AdminRelief.org website now offer comprehensive pre-screening questionnaires. Princeton's Health department is willing to waive fees for birth certificate copies, for those wishing to apply. Princeton University students will also support outreach and education as well.

Wage Theft Ordinance

A broader wage theft ordinance is now needed with a focus on other businesses. The mechanism to address this need was analyzed by Director Neira, Craig Garcia, Heather Howard and the municipal attorney. After two mailings have been sent, Princeton has 38 registered landscapers. Compliant, registered landscapers will be listed on the municipal website.

Community ID cards will no longer be issued at Nassau Presbyterian Church. New locations for issuance and a mobile ID card service are now being considered.

SHUPP

SHUPP is currently averaging 117 distributions per week. This represents a slight decline from the previous average. 3,400 meals have been distributed to date, in 2015.

The JW Middle School launch is now being planned to take place in 2016. \$52,000 remains in the budget for meals and program expansion.

Public Relations

Laura Encinas presented a report of public relations activities. She announced that the public relations committee needs help from volunteers.

VIII. News and Upcoming Events

The Wheels Rodeo will be held on May 16th, with a rain date of May 17th.

John Heilner's motion to place the Human Service Commissioners names on the letter for a *Stand Against Racism* was seconded by Robert Hackett. All present voted in favor of this action.

XI. Adjournment

Laura Encinas seconded Thomas Parker's motion to adjourn. With no further business to discuss, all voted in favor of this action. The meeting adjourned at 9:45PM

Respectfully submitted, V Bea Snowdon