

Princeton Human Services Commission Minutes

Monthly Meeting

May 20, 2015

Monument Hall – East Meeting Room
One Monument Drive, Princeton, NJ 08542

Present:

Board Members:

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

Staff:

Elisa Neira, MSW
V Bea Snowdon

Liaison & Guests

Craig Garcia, *NJ Working Families Alliance*

Absent:

Laura Encinas
Robert Hackett

I. Open Public Meeting Statement and Call To Order

At 7:09 PM, Chairman 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*”.

II. Approval of April 17, 2015 minutes

Mr. Spruill’s motion, to accept the minutes, was seconded by Ms. Mann. All eligible members voted in favor of this action.

III. Pubic Comment & Guest – Craig Garcia, *NJ Working Families Alliance*

Hearing no response to a request for public comment, Chairman Wishnick introduced Craig Garcia of *NJ Working Families Alliance* as a guest. Mr. Garcia shared updates about the *Paid Sick Leave* initiative and other important initiatives to protect working families.

Paid Sick Leave legislation successfully passed through the Philadelphia legislature. The law is now in effect for those in the Philadelphia workforce. Nine New Jersey municipalities, including Montclair and Trenton, have also adopted *Paid Sick Leave* ordinances. Mr. Garcia requested HSC support for a similar ordinance that would require Princeton employers to provide 3 paid sick days a year, at minimum, for workers who are currently without leave benefits. This basic benefit will improve economic security and public health in the Princeton community. Members of the Human Services Commission expressed full support for this initiative, and encouraged further activity to explore its viability. Mr. Garcia will share this request and support with Council.

In a continued discussion about initiatives, a draft resolution from the *NJ Alliance for Immigrant Justice* (NJAIJ) was distributed and discussed. This resolution expresses support for access to driver’s licenses for undocumented New Jersey residents. The resolution was sent to Council in April.

It is felt that adopting this resolution will help move the State towards licensing for the undocumented. Societal benefits include increased mobility and opportunities for immigrants, improved driver proficiency, increased road safety, and economic gains for the insurance industry, the State-licensing agency, and auto-related businesses.

IV. Director's Report

General Assistance

The monthly General Assistance report is available on request. The caseload is fairly level month to month, ranging from 30 to 35 cases.

Community Needs Assessment

The *Community Needs Assessment* summary will be presented to Council on June 8th. Mr. Hackett, Ms. Forero, and others have continued to do an excellent job in producing a factual presentation of needs data and participant comments. Final recommendations were sought from Commission members

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)

The employer and youth application deadlines have passed. Many local employers applied to offer jobs for youth accepted into Princeton's SYEP. There are more youth applicants than funded positions. Job funding is pre-set by the SYEP program grant, for the minimum wage (\$8.38/hour) summer positions for local youth. A process to match applicants with employers will take place in a job fair event. There is concern that some youth applicants may not have a funded placement.

Parent engagement, to support participating youth in keeping work commitments, is seen as an important factor in youth success. Mechanisms to engage parents are included in the current program, and may be expanded.

V. Human Services Committee Reports

Civil Rights Presentation

Vice Chairman and Civil Rights Subcommittee Chair Fraga delivered her report on the work of the Civil Rights Subcommittee.

A summary of the interviews of four former Mayors, Council members, and the former CRC Director, was distributed. All but one stakeholder is in favor of a standalone Civil Rights Commission. Most also suggest that the CRC remain independent, to avoid any undue influence or conflict of interest in actions.

A comprehensive Committee Report has been prepared for Council, by Subcommittee Chair Fraga, Ms. Bates, Mr. Parker, Mr. Spruill, and Mr. Heilner. This was distributed to all Commission members present for comments and suggestions.

The Paul Robeson Center is being renovated and has offered physical space for the CRC.

Immigration

On May 18th, an Immigration Q&A session was held with guest attorneys, HSC staff and volunteers, at the *Princeton Public Library*. While public policy changes can be challenging, the concerns expressed by local immigrants will be addressed by the HSC, Health and Human Services Departments.

Mr. Heilner reports that letters encouraging Landscapers to register in 2015 have been mailed. Letter recipients and all 2015 registrants are becoming aware of Princeton's Wage Theft Protection Ordinance.

A brief, informal survey of Princeton's day laborers indicates that \$15 is becoming Princeton's typical, hourly wage for their work. This attracts workers from other areas. Mr. Garcia will conduct research in the future, to determine if this upward trend in wages is truly established, and if fairness in employer wage policies has improved. Promotion of wage theft protection and fair labor policies is ongoing and will continue.

SHUPP

The success of the *Truckfest 2015* was discussed.

The food quality provided in *Send Hunger Packing Princeton's* meals is a reported concern. SHUPP organizers, HSC members, and Dr. Chourney have discussed meal content, with hopes of determining the healthiest, available food options. It was suggested that a committee be formed for this task.

VI. Updates

Welcoming America

A Human Services Commission memo dated April 16th was delivered to Council. It recommends that Princeton join *Welcoming America*. Staff time, to facilitate the program, and a portion of travel expenses to conferences are the indirect costs of participation in this National program. The Mayor will issue a proclamation on acceptance of this recommendation.

Wheels Rodeo

Ms. Bates reported that the *Wheels Rodeo* was successfully held on May 16th. Turnout was excellent. The event was well supported by the police department, recreation department, and other volunteers.

TASK Dinner

Ms. Bates reported that the *TASK* dinners at the First Baptist Church of Princeton were launched on May 5th. The hard work of volunteers made this offering possible.

VII. Adjournment

Chairman Wishnick's motion to adjourn the meeting was seconded by Mr. Parker. With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:03PM

Respectfully submitted, V Bea Snowdon