



Board to Promote Self-Sufficiency

6751 Columbia Gateway Drive, Suite 300 • Columbia, MD 21046

Minutes of the January 28, 2016 Meeting

Attendance

Appointed Members: Mike Couch, Bitu Dayhoff, Joan Driessen, Andrea Ingram, Lisa Jablonover, Julie Keough, Brad Closs

Ex Officio Members: Karen Butler, Tom Carbo, Patty Keeton, Fran Trout, Rachel Choo Quan (for Donna Wells), Phyllis Madachy

Absent: Stephen Martin, Matt Poole, Jack Kavanagh, Ronna Gotthainer, Diane Martin, Sherry Banks

Guests: Millicent Nwolisa, Executive Director and Keisha Benjamin, Deputy Director from Bridges to Housing Stability, Inc., Nikki Zaahir and Phil Holmes from Vehicles for Change

Staff: Kathy Swanson, Michelle Hippert, Wanda Travis

Meeting called to order at 9:15 A.M. by Mike Couch, Chairperson.

Presentation

Nikki Zaahir and Phil Holmes from Vehicle for Change discussed various requirements to get into the program which include;

- Vehicles for Change Inc. (VFC) empowers families with financial challenges to achieve economic and personal independence through car ownership and technical training. Some of the challenges they face are finding people with basic knowledge of cars and car donations.
- Main pipeline of referrals for clients come from Maryland Department of Corrections, as they have option to learn the mechanic trade while in detention. Those that complete the course, when released, bring a letter of recommendation. VFC is a placement for work release from detention and assist with obtaining a driver's license and on the job training.
- Ways to support VFC include: donate Howard County cars, refer persons in need from community organizations, inform local companies of the opportunity for hiring graduates of VFC and as a repair shop for business or government fleet.
- A year after a household has received a donated car from VFC, on average, the annual income increases by \$7,000. VFC seeks to develop a model of service with Howard County and increase the number of cars donated from within county and persons served.
- Suggested to connect with Getting Ahead graduates to VFC for cars, celebrate successes so far, and continue pursuing a partnership with County government fleet. VFC receives funding from selling their used cars through Freedom Wheels and public and private grants. Abell and Weinberg are strong foundation supporters and the Department of Human Resources (DHR) is a strong state supporter.
- Vehicles for Change are asking Howard County to help develop its model by referring people to the program.

Meeting minutes from the December 4, 2015 Board meeting were approved on a motion from Julie Keogh and seconded by Joan Driessen.

Updates

- Continuum of Care. Michelle Hippert.
 - CoC project application submitted in November 2015.
 - CoC policy and procedures on County website.

- Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) awarded the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) five months early. Both the Department of Corrections and Hope Works will be new sub-grantees of for rapid rehousing.
- The final rule on the definition of chronically homelessness was released and in effect on January 15, 2016 by HUD. Some of the changes include how to document length of time homeless and time not homeless between episodes.
- Non-Profit Center. Joan Driessen.
 - The Howard County Housing Commission will be the Master lease holder, and within the next two to three weeks, ACS will begin a size assessment to determine square feet needed, and negotiate property locations. Central Columbia is the target area for the Center.
 - It was suggested that an invitation to the Director and Deputy Director of Transportation to assist in the planning phase for space needs.
 - Howard Community College may provide training i.e. GED, job training, and continuous education.
 - Seeking a workforce development or social enterprise opportunity for revenue for the Center.
- Strategic Plan. Mike Couch.
 - Strategic Plan: Goal #3: Create and maintain effective and responsive mechanisms to communicate the work and achievements of the board both internally and externally.

Discussion

- Committees
 - *Community Outreach Award Committee*.
 - Hire Power has five nominations to date.
 - Working on a flyer with Leadership Howard County.
 - A Committee meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2016.
 - All flyers and links of the Board's work will also be included on Howard County's new website – to be released soon.
 - *Getting Ahead (GA) Committee*. Lisa Jablonover.
 - Five new groups starting in spring 2016: Laurel Woods Elementary, Bridges to Housing Stability, Department of Social Services (DSS), Hope Works and Department of Housing.
 - Another community training will be held with a DSS focus in 2017.
 - Discussion about forming mini leadership group within Staying Ahead.
 - Staying Ahead social event on February 10, 2016 at Union Jacks from 6:00 -8:00 p.m.
 - Leadership Howard County is working on an element of Getting Ahead, proposing a graduate program, mentorship, to meet the response that graduates requesting more accountability and partnership upon graduating.
 - Suggested to create a series of videos about the Getting Ahead program.
 - Currently Leadership Howard County is focused on networking rather than a mentoring program
 - For mentorship, a starting place could be Howard Community College, and secondly could be a training program for mentors
 - *Evaluation & Resource Allocation (ERA) Committee*. Karen Butler.
 - Stan Levi, Karen Dixon and Christiana Mercer have been added to the Committee membership

- *Childcare Action Group*. Karen Butler.
 - Members please send the Group's recommendations to the Board, which was led by Mary Kay Sigaty.
 - Mike Couch reminded the Board that the Childcare Workgroup was paused as the Childcare Action Group was being held at the same time, and to wait to see what the Group's recommendations were before the BPSS acted.
 - Major recommendations included:
 - Awareness of early childhood education versus BPSS's interest in increased access to affordable childcare for low income households in Howard County.
 - Option to discuss employer-based child care with community-based businesses that employ low-income households.
- *Housing*. Andrea Ingram.
 - The Single Efficiency Apartments/Day Resource Center (SEA/DRC) has been officially named by the County Executive and groundbreaking ceremony will be scheduled in spring 2016.
 - Columbia Downtown Housing Corporation facilitates affordable housing conversations in the community. Negotiations occurring for creating more affordable units in downtown Columbia. Different proposals for creating new affordable units in Downtown Columbia are in the process of being finalized, which include MIHU requirements that 15 percent of all new development reserved for households of moderate income. It is expected that by end of April 2016, it will be clearer what will be recommended, as the full legislation package is slated to go to the Planning Board in early April. Fifty-five (55) residential affordable housing units planned in downtown Columbia.
 - HUD proposed to eliminate Columbia City, MD for Fair Market Rents (FMR) determinations. County negotiated with HUD and requested to approve 132% of the Baltimore Metropolitan Area amounts, to be applied to all of Howard County.
 - Tom Carbo updated on the proposed reorganization of the Department of Housing, the Howard County Housing Commission (Commission) and the Department of Citizen Services. It is proposed that the Commission be separated from the County, and the remaining programs and staff be transferred to DCS. Federal grants, MIHU and DSLEP will be transferred to DCS.

New Business

- Announcements.
 - Office of Workforce Development will be working with an entrepreneurship program in Anne Arundel County for veterans. Starts March 2016 for ten weeks, and four slots are reserved for Howard County veterans.
 - Free tax preparation flyers are available by makingchange, as tax season is now open.
 - VFC flyers are available.

Meeting adjourned at 11:04 A.M.

Next meeting: March 24, 2016 at 9:00 A.M.

Minutes submitted by Michelle Hippert, CoC Manager