City of Lansing HRCS Advisory Board Meeting Summary
Tuesday, June 27, 2023
5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Foster Community Center
200 N. Foster, Room 211, Lansing, MI

Andy Schor, Mayor

Attendance: Paul Dripchak, Ron Embry, Sean Gehle, Melissa Horste, Frank Lee, Versey Williams, and Thomas Woods

Absence: Jody Washington

Staff: Kimberly A. Coleman, Renee Morgan Freeman, Joseph McDonald, Willard Walker, and Toni Young

Others: Amany Williams, OCA

The meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m. by Chair Ron Embry.

R. Freeman conducted a roll call. A quorum was established.

V. Williams moved for approval of the agenda. T. Woods seconded it. Motion carried.

P. Dripchak moved to accept the meeting summary of May 16, 2023, which was advanced— seconded by T. Woods. Motion carried.

There was no public comment.

Director Coleman reported that the city budget has been completed. HRCS amendments, which included general fund grant recommendations and fund carryovers, were approved, resulting in some agencies that could not utilize 100% of its funds for various reasons. This year's amount is $728,000; prior years' carryover funds are over $300,000. Plans for the funds are for community problem solving, a hotel program, chronic outreach, police, and fire emergencies/PATH program, subsidized rental prevention, and rapid re-housing. She and M. Horste have a meeting scheduled with Rex LaMore of MSU to discuss strategic planning and environmental scanning of the community.

There was discussion about the warming center and the cost to operate, space requirements, and other factors. Director Coleman stated that the initially proposed funds of $800,000 were not sufficient for the warming centers to be sustainable. It is estimated that using four community centers (Letts, Gier, Alfreda Schmidt, and Foster) as warming centers could cost $250,000 each, not including staffing and security for 24/7 furnishings. Some benchmarking and best practices of warming centers were conducted. Director Coleman shared that she met with Sen. S. Anthony to discuss the possibility of receiving state funding for warming centers to help people achieve self-sufficiency. Chair Embry indicated that he would like for the advisory board to visit the Oak Park site, which is being considered for a warming center. Director Coleman will inform you of a future meeting date.

Housing Ombudsman, Joe McDonald, reported a need to advocate for fair and affordable housing. As he deals with landlord and tenant complaints, it has been discovered that landlords are neglectful and not doing what they are supposed to do. More emphasis is needed on informing tenants of their rights and what they are entitled to, such as how to escrow their rent and what it means. Some brief information was shared in this regard. In conclusion, he again stated that more protections are needed for tenants. M. Horste asked if there were any data on the outcomes. J. McDonald said there is none at this time. M. Horste referenced the implied warranty of habitability.

T. Young shared information regarding Contract Managers being in the process of monitoring agencies, shelters, and ESG programs.

Chair Embry commended F. Lee for his services, as Mr. Lee said he would not continue his service. However, technically he is recognized as an advisory board member until Mayor Schor makes an appointment to fill his seat.

Chair Embry gave the floor to Director Coleman to open the floor to accept nominations for officer positions from July 2023 to June 2024. M. Horste moved to nominate Ronald Embry for Chair. V. Williams seconded her. Motion carried. R. Embry moved to nominate Melissa Horste for Vice Chair. Seconded by T. Woods. R. Embry moved to nominate Paul Dripchak for Secretary. Seconded by T. Woods. P. Dripchak moved to closed nominations. Seconded by Tom Woods. Motion carried.

Elections will be held by a closed slate at the Tuesday, July 25th meeting.

Members were asked to sign-up for committees. M. Horste shared that V. Williams and P. Dripchak accepted to serve on Policy Committee. T. Woods reported that, at this time, the Program Committee is being populated. S. Gehle stated that the Budget Committee is open to anyone and would like to connect with Chair Embry to discuss this further. Chair Embry would appreciate committees being established prior to the next meeting.

Amany Williams, Assistant City Attorney, reported that the HRCS ordinance changes had been uploaded to Laserfische for the necessary review and signatures.

Director Coleman asked those interested in attending Lugnuts Outing on Friday, August 18 to contact R. Freeman. Tickets are being offered to the HRCS & DEI Advisory Boards and HRCS Staff. Embrey shared that V. William's term expires on June 30, 2023, and she will continue to serve until reappointed.

M. Horste suggested that for a future meeting, a discussion could be regarding grantee visits. It was stated that this is in the works.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

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