

Cambridge Human Services Commission
Minutes of Meeting 4/12/2012
5:30 – 7:30pm
3rd Floor Resource Room
51 Inman Street

Commissioners present: Ayse Atasoylu, Deputy Superintendent Christine Elow, Lori Likis, Claudia Hill, Khari Milner, Christopher Hall, Rev. Lorraine Thornhill

Regrets: Kati LaBraico, Nan Stone

Presenting on Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) site visit reports and agencies' performance: Jose Soares and Jolyon Cowan

DHSP staff: Janice Alger, Jolyon Cowan, Jose Soares (recorder)

There was a brief discussion and feedback on the annual CDBG event. Overall, Commissioners thought it was a well attended and welcoming event. Claudia Hill mentioned that next year we should acknowledge agency staff with awards as in the past.

Christine Elow, Deputy Superintendent of the Cambridge Police Department (CPD) and Human Services liaison, introduced an upcoming CPD initiative including a series of dialogues with the community around the concept of "procedural justice."

She explained that procedural justice emphasizes open communication and the perception of fairness especially as it relates to law enforcement. This philosophy came to the forefront in the aftermath of the arrest of Harvard Professor Louis Gates Jr. by Police Sergeant James Crowley. The Cambridge Review Committee, established after the incident, published a report called "Missed Opportunities, Shared Responsibilities." The report took a holistic view of CPD policies and procedures to understand how this situation could have been handled in a different way.

One of the key outcomes of this report was a focus on procedural justice and its importance in de-escalating conflicts. Even though Police Officers need to and are trained to exercise authority in situations, procedural justice dictates that they should explain the reasons for their actions either before during or after an incident depending on safety concerns in any given setting. The rationale being that this improves communication and ultimately understanding between the police and the public.

Deputy Superintendent Elow said that procedural justice is now a guiding principle in the CPD's work and the CPD's internal review of policies and procedures. In CPD trainings, Police Officers share stories and experiences of procedural justice. CPD personnel are now even training Police Officers across the state in the concept and implementation of procedural justice.

Former Human Services Commission member Marian Darlington-Hope is working with Police Commissioner Robert Haas and the Deputy Superintendent on developing a series of trainings for the Cambridge community. The hope is that these trainings will help members of the CPD and the public have positive discussions about policing and the community. Human Services Commissioners together with the Peace Commission and Police Review and Advisory Board members will serve as a test group

for the series of dialogues in the evening of May 23rd from 6 to 8pm. Several Commissioners showed interest in participating.

Jolyon Cowan and Jose Soares then presented on their monitoring and site visits of CDBG funded agencies including updates from quarterly reports and conversations with key agency staff (please see attached document). They also encouraged Commissioners to reach out to them if they were interested in attending any site visits in the next fiscal year.

A brief discussion of the CDBG re-application process followed. FY13 CDBG applications are due from agencies on the 26 of April. Applications will be either mailed or hand-delivered to Commissioners on April 30th. At the next Human Services Commission scheduled for May 10th, Commissioners will deliberate and recommend CDBG funding allocations.

Meeting adjourned