

Citizen Advisory Committee
Minutes PY 47
Application Review
March 16, 2021
West River Hall, 37 Orlando Street
6:10 p.m.

The Meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. by CDA Manager, Mark Bisaccia.

Present: CAC Members: Jeffrey Moreno, Carol Eagles. CDA Staff: Mark Bisaccia, John Bernardo, Rosa Richardson

Absent: Victor Borrás

Human Resources/ Emergency Assistance: Ms. Sabo explained that if she were to come before this Committee and state that it was a successful year, she would not be seeking more funding. Unfortunately, COVID along with homelessness and joblessness has increased the burden on the city to assist families in need. When the eviction moratorium is lifted there will be a dramatic increase distressed families and she does not believe that anyone can be prepared for it.

She went on to describe just a few of the cases that she has managed and was very clear that without the assistance of CDA Funds and the Housing Authority, her cases would have been far more difficult to resolve. One gentleman found himself in a very difficult dilemma when both his brother and other died from the virus. He had resided in an apartment with them for many years but without their financial assistance, he was unable to maintain the rental fees. The homeowner did not want to lose him as a tenant and was very willing to work with Ms. Sabo to find a resolution for the tenant.

She also explained that a family with 8 children lost their jobs. Ms. Sabo was able to provide this family with gift cards for food, energy assistance, and some rental assistance. As she has explained in the past, just one relocation can wipe out the city's portion of the budget and she appreciates what CDA provides to supplement her budget.

Mark Bisaccia took a moment to thank Ms. Sabo for what she has done for our residents of our community throughout the years. He has seen, first hand, the dedication and commitment she offers and the heart she has for those in need.

Ms. Sabo thanked the Committee for their continuous support. She left at 6:24 p.m.

Columbus House/ Supportive Housing: Kathleen, Quality Assurance Coordinator and Caroline Perez (c.perez@columbushouse.org) introduced themselves to the Committee.

Kathleen stated that this has been an unprecedented year for everyone. One year ago, the shelter had to be shut down because it was not set up for Social Distancing. Columbus House with coordination from the Department of Housing had to rapidly remove our clients from the shelters and move them to hotels. The funds for this project was covered by FEMA.

Our supportive housing clients continued to get the services they required via telehealth, outdoor/ social distanced meetings and electronic devices. Some in person meetings were provided with all the necessary precautions per CDC Guidelines. Currently there are 24 WH residents in supportive housing. 3 clients have become employed, 2 are in school and all continue to receive all necessary medical, mental health and supportive services they need.

She explained that Columbus House has been able to provide Vaccine clinics on site.

There was some discussion on the procedures for the outreach process and how those in need are able to get the resources they need from their organization. It starts by, those in need, reaching out to 211.

The Columbus House thanked the Committee for their commitment to this organization.

They left at 7:25 p.m.

BH Care/ Domestic Violence: Maria apologized for her tardiness and explained that this was the first in person meeting she was attending for over a year and when she pulled out her laptop for her "Zoom meeting" it dawned on her that she was supposed to be present. She thanked the Committee for not turning her away since we had assumed she was unable to attend and were walking out the door as she arrived.

After formal introductions, Maria explained that it was a very difficult transition throughout this pandemic because the court systems were shut down and there was little/ no physical contact with the many victims of domestic violence. Court proceeding have been either postponed or via teleconference/ video conference. This has put a strain on not only the victims but the advocates as well.

The Committee is very much aware of the programs and services that Domestic Violence provides for victims and they are thanked Maria for their commitment and dedication.

She thanked the Committee once again for their time and patience this evening as well as their commitment to this organization.

She left at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rosa Richardson