

March 20, 2019
Human Service Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
Minutes

Manager Fieldman called the meeting to order at 7:02. He stated that roll call was taken at the door and declared a quorum.

Members Present

Aycock
Campbell
Lohrmann
Marshall
Nagy
Wan
Williams (arrived at 7:12 pm)

Members Absent

None

Manager Fieldman stated that the meeting will follow the posted meeting agenda.

Manager Fieldman said the HSAHC should elect a chair and noted that Susan Wan has volunteered for the position. Ms. Aycock made a motion to name Ms. Wan as Chair, seconded by Ms. Lohrmann. The motion carried 6-0 (Ms. Williams had not yet arrived).

Manager Fieldman provided background information about the Village's Boards and Commissions.

Fieldman explained that the purpose of the HSAHC is to help the Village Council determine the roles and responsibilities for a reconstituted HSC. Manager Fieldman presented the two questions submitted to them by the Village Council.

- What role an appointed HSC shall serve in the Village?
- What can and should an appointed HSC do to assist the Village Council in promoting the function and mission of the Village on an on-going basis?

Fieldman stated that the HSAHC deliverables include:

- A written report to the Village Council
- Meeting minutes
- Recommendations related to the questions posed to the HSAHC by the Village Council.

Manager Fieldman summarized the key points developed from the February 26, 2019 meeting which may serve as the basis for the answers to the two questions.

The Human Service Commission should:

- Be a permanent, active commission which meets on a regular basis
- Work to make the Village of Downers Grove a Community of Inclusiveness where all residents and community members are welcomed and supported
- Review demographic data to identify social trends and issues facing the Village
- Identify gaps in services to those in need in the community
- Assist the Village in providing services to connect residents with social service providers
 - Create and maintain a database of social services available in Downers Grove
 - Consider hiring a staff member who works as an advisor and advocate for residents in need to social services
- Promote community events celebrating and promoting diversity
- Work with the Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation to address social issues through economic development activities
- Promote and facilitate diversity in community leadership positions
- Promote the inclusion of social service issues in the Village's Long Range Planning efforts
- Focus its efforts on:
 - Homeless
 - Elderly
 - LGBTQ community
 - Persons with mental health issues
 - Persons with disabilities
 - Youth

Ms. Campbell stated that the HSC should consider addressing affordable housing as it is an issue in the community.

Ms. Aycock noted that the Human Service Commission discussed homeless issues on several occasions from 2005 to 2010.

Ms. Wan said that data shows large Hispanic and Asian populations in the Village and the area and that these populations are projected to increase in the coming years. Asian Indian populations are projected to increase. The Village should consider using multiple languages to communicate to residents.

Ms. Lohrmann said that Village posters and signs should be printed in multiple languages.

Ms. Aycock said that the HSAHC should revisit the key point related to the Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation. She asked if the DGEDC President and CEO would be willing to meet with the HSAHC. She asked if the DGEDC would be interested in funding Human Service Commission related efforts. Manager Fieldman stated that most of the funding for the DGEDC is provided by the Village and that DGEDC funding of human service efforts would have the effect of the Village funding these items. Ms. Aycock noted that funding and budget support for the Human Service Commission is important. She was concerned about the Council not funding human service efforts without a specific plan to do so.

Ms. Wan said funding requests for the Human Service Commission should be included in this year's Long Range Plan.

Ms. Williams stated that there is a lack of diversity among the candidates running for Village Council positions. The Village Council should be trying to reach out to all members of the community, not just one group.

Ms. Wan said the Comprehensive Plan projections show an increase in empty nesters and asked if this changing demographic is driving the construction of multiple family residences in the downtown. She asked if these units are affordable housing. Ms. Wan noted that there are differences in the over 65 and under 18 age cohorts in the 60515 and 60516 zip codes. She asked if children living on the south side of the Village have easy access to the library.

Ms. Marshall said that the Village should connect with DuPage County and use the CRIS database.

Ms. Wan noted that 5% of residents in the Village are below the poverty line, 27% of residents have disabilities and 5% of residents are without transportation.

Ms. Williams said that her mother uses the PACE bus system and that there is a lack of transportation services in the Village.

Ms. Wan asked if the Village publishes information about public transportation options. Manager Fieldman stated that the Village does.

Ms. Aycock said she is concerned about accessibility to transportation options.

Ms. Campbell said that getting to the bus stops can be challenging.

Manager Fieldman provided a brief explanation of the Village's taxi coupon program, the PACE commuter shuttle, Ride DuPage and township transportation services.

Ms. Marshall said that the Village should provide information about transportation services in new resident mailers.

Ms. Lohrmann said that healthcare providers are located in downtown Downers Grove and that transportation to health care may be available. The Village should communicate directly with healthcare providers about transportation services.

Ms. Wan said that the Village should consider using volunteers to provide services.

Ms. Marshall stated that studies show that recidivism rates decline when social workers help provide people with access to employment, housing and transportation options.

Ms. Wan asked if the Village partners with community organizations on events such as blood drives. Manager Fieldman said yes.

Ms. Marshall stated that sponsors would help promote social service events.

Ms. Aycock said the HSAHC report should include ideas on how to offset the cost of providing services and should include volunteerism.

Ms. Campbell asked how specific and how detailed the report should be. Ms. Aycock stated that the report should include objectives and potential resources to be used to achieve the objectives.

Ms. Nagy stated that candidates for Village Council are not mentioning social services. Ms. Williams said that people not affected by social service issues don't think about these issues. Ms. Campbell noted that residents in need of these services may not be engaged in the election process.

Ms. Aycock said the report should include demographic data which relates to the objectives and recommendations.

Ms. Wan stated that the Village should observe Women's month and Black History month and similar designations and publicize the observation. Ms. Nagy agreed.

Ms. Aycock noted that the observation can be done at little cost. All members noted that budget and funding for recommendations is a key component of the report.

Ms. Aycock noted that there have been multiple attempts to reconstitute the Human Service Commission and is concerned that there may not be continued support for sustaining the commission.

Ms. Williams said that any funding and support would be appreciated and would be better than the current situation.

Ms. Nagy stated that the recommendations in the report should be prioritized.

Ms. Marshall noted that resources are available from other sources and the Village should pursue partnership opportunities. Ms. Nagy said that the report should include ideas for sustainable funding.

Ms. Campbell stated that the Impact DuPage site is a great source for information and noted that 13% of Village residents have incomes of less than \$25,000/year. This translates to 6,000 to 7,000 residents. Ms. Wan said that any percentage of the population living in poverty is an issue and was concerned that his population includes children and elderly. She asked if the homeless were included in these numbers and stated that PADS may have data on the homeless population. There was some discussion on how children and persons with some wealth with low incomes may affect this number. Manager Fieldman stated that additional research on this issue could be undertaken.

Ms. Wan asked if the Council is “data driven” in their approach. Manager Fieldman noted that much of the analysis the Council considers is based on data.

Ms. Aycock noted that the Human Service Commission discussed homelessness related issues on several occasions.

Ms. said that the youth serving on boards and commissions is interesting. Manager Fieldman said that the Village is not operating this program.

Ms Williams and Ms. Lohrmann discussed how students in need of community service hours for school programs may be interested in working with the Human Service Commission.

Ms. Marshall said the Human Service Commission should have representatives from the populations it wishes to serve. The HSC should communicate directly and receive input from the people in need of services.

Ms. Wan asked when the Village last completed a citizen survey. Deputy Manager Baker said he thinks it was completed in the mid 2000’s. Ms. Lohrmann said the library could be used as a resource to have surveys completed by persons who may not otherwise have access to a survey.

Members of the HSAHC discussed the idea of using sub-committees to work on items identified in the report. This would allow for more public input and engagement and allow more work to be completed. Members also discussed the idea of expanding the Human Service Commission to include more than 7 members. Ms. Campbell suggested that the Village consider a 9-member HSC. Ms. Marshall noted that the commission should be limited to 12 members to facilitate more effective communication. Ms. Lohrmann stated that the quorum required for a meeting increases as the total membership increases.

Ms. Aycock discussed the structure of the report to the Village Council stating that each topic or issue could be an “umbrella” which could be assigned to a sub-committee.

Ms. Wan inquired about Village staff training on diversity, inclusion and bias. Manager Fieldman noted that training was scheduled for April and he would share the materials with the HSAHC members.

Manager Fieldman said that staff would revise the Key Points to include the items discussed at the meeting. Staff will also start to draft the report and will share it with HSAHC members.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 23.

Ms. Wan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.