

**Village of Downers Grove
Human Service Commission**

Village Hall
801 Burlington Avenue
January 25, 2022
Meeting Minutes

Chair Aycock called the meeting to order at 7:03pm and asked for a roll call.

Members Present

Chair Aycock
Member Drabik
Member Galvez
Member Loftus
Member Skerjan

Members Absent

Member Nicholson
Member Silvester

Chair Aycock declared that a quorum was present.

Chair Aycock noted that this was the first meeting of the Human Service Commission in several years and that all of the members have been recently appointed by the Village Council. She introduced herself. All other members of the Commission introduced themselves. Village Manager David Fieldman and staff Social Worker Heather Lippe also introduced themselves.

Chair Aycock called on Manager Fieldman to provide an overview of the Human Service Commission. Fieldman stated that the Village has 16 Boards & Commissions (B&C's). Each board has its own powers and duties enumerated in the Village Code. For most B&C's, members are appointed by the Mayor with confirmation by the Village Council. The engagement of B&C's is based on the following key operating concepts:

- Provide Advice to the Village Council
- Provide a Venue for In-Depth Discussions
- Reflect a Cross-Section of the Community
- Staff as Subject Matter Experts and Liaisons
- Communicating with the Village Council

The HSC consists of seven members appointed for staggered terms of three (3) years each, and an ex-officio member representative of a Downers Grove unit of local government. The HSC has the following powers and duties:

- To review and evaluate matters of social concern in the Village, including issues related to youth, senior citizens, families, minorities and other social groups.
- To consider such matters of social concern as may be referred to them by the Village Council and to recommend the adoption of policies or ordinances or the taking of other actions in the best interest of the Village as a whole.
- To consider the benefits to individuals and the public of proposed policies and actions and to consider the public and private costs and sources of revenue to support such policies and actions.
- To hear and investigate any matter referred to it by a court pursuant to the procedures set forth in DGMC Section 13A.24 and DGMC Section 13A.25 of the Fair Housing Article, Chapter 13A.

The HSC has not met for several years. In December 2020, the Village Council created a plan to implement recommendations in the Human Service Ad Hoc report.

Chair Aycock called on Manager Fieldman to provide a preview of the task that the Village Council has referred to the Human Service Commission. Fieldman stated that the Village Council has directed staff to develop and implement a social services referral program and to prepare a report identifying gaps in the provision of services along with strategies to address the gaps.

The Village is currently developing the social services referral program designed to connect individuals in need of service with the agencies that provide the services. The program will consist of multiple methods for individuals to contact the Village including in-person, by phone and on-line. Individuals who contact the Village will receive personal referrals to specific social service providers. Further, the Village will actively seek to identify and contact individuals who may be in need of services.

Each resident who requests referral services or who is identified by staff as described above will be contacted by a professionally trained staff member. Upon completion of a discussion, the staff member will refer the resident to the appropriate service providers.

Staff will present the social services referral program to the HSC for review and comment at the February meeting.

Member Galvez asked how the calls for social services have been addressed prior to the arrival of the social worker. Ms. Lippe stated that the dispatch center, police department and fire department have responded to these calls and have expanded their ability to provide referrals to social service providers.

Member Drabik asked about the types of referral requests that the Village has been receiving. Ms. Lippe provided several examples including homelessness, mental health, financial and other service requests.

Chair Aycock asked if the Village has a way to follow-up with residents who have received referrals. Ms. Lippe stated that some of the residents report back to her with updated information and that some service providers let her know the status of the referrals. Some providers allow access to an on-line portal.

Member Skerjin asked how the Village plans to assess the effectiveness of the program. Member Drabik asked if the Village has established performance metrics for the program. Manager Fieldman stated that a few performance indicators are being tracked and will be shared at the next meeting.

Member Galvez asked how many referrals have been made. Manager Fieldman said that the Village is tracking this information and will include it in next month's report.

Chair Aycock asked if the Village Council will refer additional items to the HSC. Manager Fieldman stated that it is likely that additional items will be referred upon the completion of the first task.

Chair Aycock asked Manager Fieldman to provide an overview of the Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act. Fieldman stated that the Open Meetings Act is a state law designed to ensure that public bodies act deliberatively and openly. The Act requires that all HSC meetings are open to the public. Meetings will take place only when a quorum is present. Fieldman stated that two members of the HSC may meet to discuss HSC related matters and that a discussion of three or more members outside of a scheduled meeting would be in violation of the Act. Gatherings include email, electronic messaging, social media postings and other forms of communications. HSC meetings require an agenda to be posted 48 hours in advance of the meeting and the preparation of minutes. The state requires HSC members to take an on-line Open Meetings Act class, however, the website is not functioning and the state has placed the requirement on hold.

Manager Fieldman stated that the Freedom of Information Act is a state law designed to ensure open and transparent government. The Act applies to all records of the public body. All emails and texts sent to Village accounts are public records and communications made during the HSC meetings are public records.

Chair Aycock asked for any public comments.

Chair Aycock asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion to adjourn by Loftus; seconded by Galvez
Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:42pm.