

Minutes

AD HOC Committee Group Home Replacement

July 15, 2015

Alan Naylor called this meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Present at the meeting were Steve Elliott, Bob Boydston, Alan Naylor, Anita Hartman, James Landrum, Cindy Sevier, Pete Hall, Julie Grower, Holly Wilmes, Jim Huffman, Wendy Witcig and Brian O'Malley.

After introductions Alan opened the first agenda by asking for feedback about needs of the community. Alan noted Sherwood and Northland both needed discussion. James Landrum stated that everything he is hearing is that there is no encouragement to build group homes. Steve said that's one of the big concerns i.e. "If we build it will they come". Alan, next invited Jim Huffman to distribute a q and a report regarding the rules governing group homes that gave some direction to how the new rules are being interpreted. In general there are rules governing maintaining a non- institutional setting.

Steve asked if it is possible to simply develop a new home. James said it is very difficult working with landlords and they would never go that route again. Steve said he was more concerned about the funding from the Feds, State, Medicaid. Jim said the report he distributed noted there was more interest in helping people remain independent and with control over their choices. Wendy clarified how some of the rules were interpreted. How community integration was demonstrated was important to the State. This led to the advantage of an ISL as it allows greater flexibility. Group Home living has limited funding. James noted that his agency has to raise funds for additional staff. Pete Hall raised the concern that long term the staff funding cannot be sustained. Brian said there is a need for greater flexibility. Anita pointed out the flexibility in ISL is more current. Pete Hall said for the long term the ISL funding is not forever. Group Home funding is more stable. There is not enough funds to serve all the people it needs to serve.

Steve probed how Concerned Care would fund the additional costs. Anita said the State's stance for a long time was not to fund more group homes. Pete Hall said the group home

versus ISL funding should be balanced. So, Steve said we would want to create a home in a neighborhood similar to the houses in the area but would create an interior with all the needs for the disabled. This would help integrate the home into the community. Steve reminded the group the Board is trying to replace some of its run down homes with ones that are more efficient and effective. Brian raised the question of if we build it can Concerned Care afford to run it. Steve said that was one of the goals to avoid putting more costs on Concerned Care or TNC or Immacolata. Anita joined in by assuring Steve if all we did was replace one home with another the State has always approved that as long as it is the same contract. Steve said that was helpful. Anita said that her concern is the staffing of group homes and wheel chairs especially in an emergency. James admitted it is difficult to maintain staffing and again emphasized how the agency writes grants and does fund raising to supplement its funding. Anita pointed out that some providers reduce the number in the home from six to five to manage the needs of the residents. James also pointed out that the need for referrals is also a problem. Anita said that the referrals always follow the needs of the consumer. Bob asked for clarification about how the complement of staffing is managed. Jim noted that it is truly difficult to meet the staffing needs no matter what the housing.

At this point Steve came back to the main question of what makes sense for the Board to provide better quality homes. Pete Hall said the idea is to replace what you want to replace i.e. either a group home or an ISL and there should be no problem. Pete noted how difficult it is to find property. Alan noted he had been in contact with Rainbow Village that owns third party housing. Alan has invited Mike Brea and his housing director. Alan said in his position that we should not be landlords we should be funders. Steve said we went down that road and it didn't work. Pete said it would be good to hear from Rainbow Village how they achieved their balance of ISL's and group homes and how they fund staffing. Brian said it seems like a good idea to invite the people from Rainbow Village. Steve questioned how Rainbow Village is appropriate and Wendy clarified that they are dealing with many of the same issues. Alan said that once again, he wants people who know what they are talking about. Alan asked everyone to consider questions to be addressed to Mike Brea and send them to Brian so we can send them to him.

Alan said he would try to get together with Mike Brea to find a date for another meeting. Steve asked Anita to clarify what would happen if we built a new home to replace Sherwood House and Anita said in her experience there would not be a problem. Anita went further to say that the people who use the group homes should be asked for their preferences. Pete said Concerned Care receives feedback that folks are satisfied and if not it is addressed immediately. Staffing issues were once again noted as the key along with transportation to making the home work. Jim said that is one example of the many issues along with the fact that so many of the people are ageing.

Alan asked what the economics of simply building on the Sherwood lot and then demolishing the current house. Pete thought the house was well built and would be difficult to destroy. Alan asked Anita if the scenario of dismantling Sherwood House could the people be housed. Anita said it would be difficult but not prohibitive. Steve said it sounded more difficult than necessary to move people out and then move them again. Pete Hall said that obviously more research was needed. Brian raised the question of Flora House which needed lots of work and was the least valuable property with only two residents. Brian suggested Flora House should be added into the discussion.

Brian then suggested the Board did not need to become involved in development activities of housing but should limit its role to funding. James pointed out that's how they do it in Jackson County. James said they would prefer to develop ISL's as they work better than group homes. Wendy said that while the Board is discussing housing needs there is a great need for housing for those with behavior needs. In addition, Wendy suggested working with the State to clarify the rules before planning any housing. Wendy suggested we invite Angie Brenner from the Central Office who had some authority to give us answers and to help us. Brian agreed to follow up on Wendy's recommendation.

Bob said he thought the Rainbow Village folks should be invited to look at the Sherwood House site as they are the experts. Bob reflected on how well done the homes the Tri County Mental Health Center developed. Wendy agreed the homes were very well done. Anita reminded everyone we serve are not in need of housing but for those who do they don't have

access to housing. Anita said a new idea for housing is needed as those who are in need of housing are not a priority because of the funding approach. Wendy said surveys were being developed to try to clarify the needs. Steve raised the challenge the Public Administrator has finding housing. Steve said first we should address our current housing needs. Cindy said she felt the first choice should be Flora House.

Alan said we need to clarify all our direction and started with is there consensus to meet with the woman from the State. Most people expressed support for that. Bob said again he thought Sherwood House needs to be examined by the Rainbow Village people. Bob thought calling it Sherwood House would invite unintended issues. All the folks present agreed calling it Sherwood was not important.

Anita emphasized the importance of working with the Regional Office on this project. Steve said they should be willing to help us. Alan closed the meeting by stating the tasks before us: Brian will contact Angie Brenner and Alan will contact Mike Brea from Rainbow Village.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian O'Malley, Administrative Director