

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
HOUSING AND HEALTH SERVICES COORDINATION COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING

Room 216
Lubbock Regional MHMR Center
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Lubbock, Texas

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10:00 a.m.

PRESIDING OFFICIAL:

ASHLEY SCHWEICKART, HHCC Council Coordinator

ON THE RECORD REPORTING
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INDEX

SPEAKER

PAGE

Mary Mitchell 8

PROCEEDINGS

MS. SCHWEICKART: This is the Lubbock public forum of the Housing and Health Services Coordination Council. And I will start by introducing myself. I'm Ashley Schweickart. I'm the Council Coordinator. And I will let the two council members that are here introduce themselves.

MR. DARDEN: My name is Kenneth Darden, and am a gubernatorial appointee for the minority representative in Livingston, Texas.

MR. GOODWIN: My name is Mike Goodwin. I'm a governor appointee representing the housing developers.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Thank you. So the background for the council, I have provided a handout of PowerPoint slides that has what we are all about. And I will go over the slides as a background.

We were created by the 81st Texas Legislature in 2009. And we were based on a report by the Legislative Budget Board. Our council includes 16 members; eight appointees by the governor and seven members that are state agency representatives. And then the last member, who is the chair, is the Executive Director of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

So we meet quarterly. Our next meeting is on Monday, September 10, in Austin. And the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs provides the clerical and advisory support. And myself, as the coordinator, I'm that support.

The main deliverable that we provide is a biennial plan that is due to the Legislative Budget Board and to the Office of the Governor on August 1st of every even numbered year. So our biennial plan is due on August 1, 2012.

The next page just shows all of the agency representatives and

Governor appointees that we have on the Council. And so we are both -- the state housing agency, as well as the state health and human service agencies, are coming together in this Council.

The purpose, as written in statute for the Council is that they have five main duties. The first is to develop and implement policies that coordinate and increase efforts to offer service enriched housing in Texas.

The second is to identify the barriers that are slowing that service enriched housing process. So those could be financial barriers, administrative barriers, regulatory barriers, or barriers of coordination.

The third duty is to develop a system to cross educate staff and state housing and health services, so that we have staff in both of those agencies that are conversant in housing and health services. The fourth purpose is to identify opportunities for the state agencies to provide technical assistance and training at the local level.

So to provide to our local partners that are housing providers or service providers, provide that help. Finally, the last duty is to develop performance measures to track the progress of barrier elimination, coordination between health and human service staff and housing staff, and the provision of technical assistance.

So to give a little background on the Council, one of the first things that we were asked to do by statute is to define service enriched housing. So what is service enriched housing?

And the way that the Council defined is, integrated, affordable and accessible housing that provides residents the opportunity to receive on site or off site health related and other services and supports that foster independence in living and

decision making for individuals with disabilities and persons who are elderly. So that is what the Council is here at public forum to promote.

Also the public forum series was created to get feedback on our latest plan, which is the 2012 - 2013 biennial plan due August 1st. So we are holding four public forums across the state. This one in Lubbock is the last one. We went to Austin, Corpus Christi, Plano, and then this is the last, in Lubbock.

And we do have copies of the biennial plan in the back. But I can provide a brief breakdown of the structure of the biennial plan that we have created, and that we are looking for feedback on.

The first section of the biennial plan addresses the current state of service enriched housing in Texas. And it looks at what activities have been undertaken since the last biennial plan was submitted in 2010.

So that looks at what were the effects of the 82nd Legislative Session on the state's housing and health and human service agencies in terms of the funding sources, and the policies that promote service enriched housing. Section two looks at research and information gathering efforts that staff has undertaken to help inform Council members on the methods for implementing service enriched housing.

So this is looked at, what is the capacity at the local level for service enriched housing. What providers exist at the local level that could provide both affordable housing and or services and supports. And how do they link together at the local level. So we get that provider capacity survey.

We also did a case study. These are best practices around the state, looking at nine different organizations that provide service enriched housing in the State. And interviewing them about how they developed and financed that housing.

Then Section 3 looks at the recommendations that the Council is proposing to overcome barriers that have identified earlier in the plan. And also to achieve the overarching goal of increasing state efforts for service enriched housing.

So there is a chapter on the service recommendations. And there is a chapter on the housing recommendations. And that deals with both funding, and as well as public policy.

And finally, Section 4 looks ahead to the possible implementation of the Council's recommendation. And it also looks at the current efforts that are being undertaken to increased service enriched housing.

So currently there is an effort with the Texas Department of Housing and the Department of Aging and Disability Services to partner to partner, to apply for fundings at a federal level. And that is currently underway.

So that is what the plan looks like. And we are accepting public comment at these public forums. But we also are accepting it through email, mail and fax. So the last slide of the presentation has the website of the Council.

If you want to have any additional information about who we are, what we are doing, what we have provided to the public, or if you would like to provide written comment, we are taking comment until this Friday, June 22nd. Is the end of our comment period. So that is the end of my presentation. Who we are.

And at this point, what we can do is, open it up for any discussion, or any questions that you may have. Are there any questions about the Council or any thoughts about what we should be doing in the future?

(Pause.)

MS. MITCHELL: Okay. My name is Mary Mitchell. And I'm just

curious, if this could have been a forum for the Lubbock Housing Authority or the Lubbock County General Assistance. These are both agencies here in Lubbock that is just low income families with housing issues.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Those individuals would definitely be the local providers that we would like to work with in our efforts. Yes.

MS. MITCHELL: Thank you.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Yes.

MR. GOODWIN: Wouldn't the housing authority have been on your notice of the meeting?

MS. SCHWEICKART: Do you mean, would they be receiving the LISTSERV, or the press release?

MR. GOODWIN: Yes. The press release that came out that says we are going to be holding a forum in Lubbock?

MS. SCHWEICKART: Well, I can certainly check with our media liaison. But he typically provides the press release to all of the major media outlets. And then our LISTSERV goes to any housing entity that is interested in our programs.

And it is posted on our website, and so that is -- and we provided a save the date to Roger Cart here at the Aging and Disability Resource Center for him to provide to local organizations that may be interested. So that is the way that we -- many ways in which we got the word out.

But we certainly would love, if you have connections at the public housing authority, or at the City's general assistance division, to be able to provide them you know, just say that there is a forum for -- or an online I guess, opportunity to provide public comment on the plan, and pass on our website. That would be great.

MS. MITCHELL: I would be glad to do that.

MS. SCHWEICKART: That would be great. Thank you.

MS. YEVICH: How did you hear about it? Through Roger? I'm a little curious.

MS. MITCHELL: Through Roger.

MS. YEVICH: Okay. Yes.

MR. GOODWIN: Our focus, and this is maybe one to turn off at housing authority level. Our focus is not the mainstream housing need of the City of Lubbock. We are looking at elderly, and persons with disabilities, which are probably two of the most underserved communities.

And so finding their voices if you will or the people who represent them as organizations to try to create or find housing and service situations for them. That is who we are after. That is where this whole project is oriented.

How do we provide decent, safe, sanitary housing tied to services for a community that is probably one of the least served in the whole state. And there is a pretty good need out there.

MS. MITCHELL: It is.

MS. SCHWEICKART: And as part of the Aging and Disability Resource Center, as one of the staff members, how do you feel about your connection to the housing providers or the local public housing authority? Do you feel like there is a connection between the two of you? Has there been any conversation; communication back and forth.

MS. MITCHELL: There is communication with me, with housing authorities and agencies that work with seniors.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: But there is not enough housing to address some of the needs of the people I come in contact. Income is a big problem with the people that I serve, qualifying.

MS. SCHWEICKART: And would you say that that is the main barrier, or are there other key barriers to them being able to access that affordable housing?

MS. MITCHELL: I think there are other barriers. In a lot of cases, there are lengthy waiting lists, which is a big problem. Several of the people that I serve are, I would say, marginally homeless. Living with family members. Living with others. Really needing their own place.

But usually, the money is a problem, and then the waiting list. And just the qualifying elements.

MR. GOODWIN: Just out of curiosity, do you know if there have been any -- what I would call old program, Section 811 housing development for persons with disabilities in Lubbock?

MS. MITCHELL: Not that I'm aware of.

MR. GOODWIN: Is there a need?

MS. MITCHELL: I would say yes.

(Simultaneous discussion.)

MS. SCHWEICKART: And I know that with the Aging and Disability Resource Center, that the state agency that you work most closely with is the Department of Aging and Disability Services. But have you also been working any other state health and human service agencies to provide the resources that you

provide? Or do you have any other state funding sources, or maybe federal funding sources that you provide to the local community?

MS. MITCHELL: Would you give me an example of that?

MS. SCHWEICKART: So I know that the Aging and Disability Resource Centers are supposed to be bringing together the local providers of community based health and human services. That that is the role that they play in the local community.

And some communities have continuum of care dollars for persons who are at risk of homelessness or homeless, to try to provide some essential services to those individuals. So I know some ADRCs are connected with the local homeless coalition or continuum of care provider.

There are some that are connected with the local Department of State Health Services entity in the area, and work with local mental health authority and the funding that they provide. So I didn't know how the Lubbock Aging and Disability Resource Center, how you guys are operating in terms of the different organizations that you work with.

MS. MITCHELL: In terms of funding, there is no other funding other than what comes with the grant. We are sponsored by Lubbock regional MHMR.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: There are housing programs within the agencies that I occasionally am able to benefit from, if an individual has a mental disability, and if they are homeless, there are grant funds through MHMR where I can link and refer it that way.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Uh-huh.

MS. MITCHELL: I work a lot with -- I just had a mental block, Adult Protective Services. Many times we have worked together.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: In terms of me referring linking and sometimes in paying deposit rent.

MS. SCHWEICKART: So Adult Protective Services pays deposits for some clients?

MS. MITCHELL: They have.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Oh really? Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: Or more, not deposit rent. Let me take that back.

MS. SCHWEICKART: That is actually really good to know because you know, we as a housing agency, we know the programs that we are funded to provide, which include rental assistance. But maybe don't always have a local provider of that type of assistance.

But it is interesting to know what other agencies provide that kind of supplement to individuals to be able to get into affordable housing units, and to be stable-y housed. So that is really interesting. So that is really interesting.

MS. MITCHELL: And we also have the Lubbock County General Assistance Program here, that is very involved with ADRC. Individuals that qualify there, they also can help with housing and paying rent. They are mostly there to help individuals maintain housing.

MS. SCHWEICKART: So at the county level, that is that resource for you?

MS. MITCHELL: Uh-huh.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay. And in terms of the connections that your clients have to services, so if somebody was wanting to say, relocate from a nursing facility, into the community, but perhaps needed some home health care, or just maybe they just needed someone to provide transportation to their doctors' visits or to get groceries. What would be the entities in this area that could assist with that kind of service, those kind of services.

MS. MITCHELL: Under the umbrella of ADRC, we have grant sourced funding for money to follow the person.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay. So there are those --

MS. MITCHELL: We have full time staff.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: That works directly with the nursing home.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: To make that transition.

MS. SCHWEICKART: The money follows the person. The relocation specialist does that assistance from a nursing home to the community. And then after that, is there any type of ongoing assistance, after the relocation has occurred?

MS. MITCHELL: I'm not sure about time frames. But that same person does a follow up.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: And also, there are times when I have assisted with transportation. I have sent bus passes.

I have assisted that way, to individuals that is not in a nursing home but need the transportation piece to get to, particularly seniors, medical or community

appointments. We have the City access, where those are qualified, the bus can go directly to the home, pick him up. Back and forth.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Great. Okay. Are there any other questions by our Council members?

(No response.)

MS. SCHWEICKART: All right. Do you have any questions for us? Any other questions for us?

MS. MITCHELL: No. I'm just curious. The information that I have heard so far is very good.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Yes. Well, and I would say, I know that it says sample. But please do take a copy of the biennial plan and bring it back to Roger and to those individuals that you were talking about, that could possibly be interested in the recommendations that we are providing to the Governor and to the Legislature. We really appreciate it. All right.

MR. DARDEN: Actually, I wanted to ask, what kind of feedback do you normally get from the people that you serve down at the Centers, like to be better service for them?

MS. MITCHELL: The people that I serve are, I guess, different places, stages. Some of the people that I serve, like I said, are marginally homeless.

And their biggest concern is to get from where they are to their own place. And their concerns a lot of times is that the system doesn't work or it is too slow, because usually when I make referrals, application fees or money issues, and then they are usually put on a waiting list.

So a lot of the feedback, even when I'm trying to make referrals is, we

have done that. It doesn't work. It takes too long. People that already are in housing usually, I don't get a lot of negative feedback. They are just happy that they have a place. But that is mainly what I have heard.

MS. SCHWEICKART: And the referral for housing is typically to the public housing authority or are there other organizations, that --

MS. MITCHELL: It is public housing authority. I have a list of housing that are available for seniors in this area. I just --

MS. SCHWEICKART: And do those properties have waiting lists, too?

MS. MITCHELL: The majority of them will have waiting lists.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: And then the ones that don't have waiting lists, a lot of times, safety individuals are concerned about safety.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: Or would rather not live in that particular area. So safety is a concern.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: Did I answer your questions, sir? Okay. And the Lubbock Housing Authority here has public property that they own. So a lot of times, if the lists are closed for other housing, sometimes that is an easier door to go through, to public housing.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay. And is there any connection between the MHMR Center and the Center for Independent Living in this community? Because I know that there is a Lubbock -- I can't remember the exact name. But it is the Center

for Independent Living for Lubbock County.

MS. MITCHELL: Life Run?

MS. SCHWEICKART: Yes.

MS. MITCHELL: Yes. We have a very good working relationship with them. In fact, they do have a very good relocation program. And they work with the nursing homes.

And the difference in their program and ours, they work with individuals with Medicaid. We work with Medicare. And they were able to get grant money to see the process to the end.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: When they start working with an individual that is trying to get back to the nursing home, they have funds where they can do, save up for the apartment, furniture, or whatever. They have that piece.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: We only have the person that is working directly with nursing home. But we don't have funds.

So we are kind of at the mercy of the community, once our full time person identifies an individual that needs to go back, they still have those barriers that I was talking about. Funds, safety issues. But we work very well with Life Run. They are one of our partners.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Great. And in terms of Life Run and kind of the partnership that goes on, do they -- I know that you are saying that they typically work with the Medicaid clients in terms of their relocation.

And do you ever see that they have difficulties relocating somebody,

just due to the fact that there is no affordable housing in the community? Are they seeing the same barriers that you are seeing?

MS. MITCHELL: I think they are seeing the same barriers. But I think the difference is, with our clients we are totally dependent on what they bring to the table. With Life Run, since they have money for relocation, it is what they have, plus what the consumer has.

MS. SCHWEICKART: I see.

MS. MITCHELL: So it would be additional funds that would kind of remove some of that financial barrier, in my opinion. And they are established, you know. They have established landlords and places that they have placed individuals before, which makes it, I think, a bit easier.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Right. Do you find that in trying to, do you ever converse -- communicate with property management, with landlords? And do you find any hesitations or preconceived notions on their part, in terms of when you are trying to relocate a client?

MS. MITCHELL: Okay, that piece, all of the money follow the persons works more directly --

MS. SCHWEICKART: With the landlord.

MS. MITCHELL: Than I do.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: There have been occasions when I will partnership with an individual to call that up, to make sure there are openings, vacancies. Find out about how much, what it would take.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Sure.

MS. MITCHELL: Sometime advocate if the criminal background issue is a problem. But I don't do that. I don't do that as much as Jerry does.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Okay.

MS. MITCHELL: She is sick today. Sorry. That is the reason she is not here.

MS. SCHWEICKART: That is okay. Do you find that criminal background is a barrier for a lot of the clients?

MS. MITCHELL: I do. Particularly some of our clientele; individuals with mental related issues. That is a big barrier. Which means that sometimes, it is the reason that some of them move into places that are in my opinion, less desirable. And then again, safety is an issue.

MS. SCHWEICKART: And do you, I don't know if this is something that the ADRC witnesses. Do you see a lot of I guess, cycling of individuals that can't find stable housing, back into either the criminal justice system or back into a mental health facility, or a nursing facility? Do you see that cycling happen?

MS. MITCHELL: We do.

MS. SCHWEICKART: That is unfortunate. I mean, that is basically one of the main things that this Council is looking to prevent, is that cycling, because obviously, that not only is costing the taxpayer an additional amount of money, but also it is obviously a detriment to the individual if they can't find that housing with those supports that they need. So that is definitely something that we hope to address through the recommendations of the biennial plan.

MS. MITCHELL: The things with -- before I started working in this current position, I worked as a service coordinator. And I saw that over and over,

particularly with individuals with mental issues.

It wasn't that they didn't have money. It was that sometimes the misuse or not spending their money wisely, or being taken advantage of. Not wanting a payee. Drug related issues. So we saw that over and over: getting them a place, losing it, over and over.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Sure.

MS. MITCHELL: And a lot of the individuals do have support. But their behavior has caused family members and others to kind of close the door.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Sure.

MS. MITCHELL: Over and over the same behavior.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Sure. I think that is -- I know I have asked you a lot of questions. I'm sorry. It feels like it's a firing squad here. Are there any other questions that the Council has?

(No response.)

MS. SCHWEICKART: Thank you so much for coming, Mary. We really appreciate having this dialogue with you.

MS. MITCHELL: I'm glad I came. And I do apologize that we didn't get more people involved.

VOICE: No need to be sorry. It's not your fault.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Yes. Thank you.

MS. MITCHELL: Thank you all.

VOICE: We're glad you're here.

MS. SCHWEICKART: Yes. We are.

MS. MITCHELL: I'm glad I came. Is there anything I can do for you

all before I leave?

MS. SCHWEICKART: I don't think so. I can give you my card.

(Whereupon, at 11:40 a.m., the hearing was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

IN RE: HHSCC Public Forum

LOCATION: Lubbock, Texas

DATE: June 19, 2012

I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages, numbers 1 through 20, inclusive, are the true, accurate, and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording made by electronic recording by Penny Bynum before the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

06/22/2012
(Transcriber) (Date)

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