



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 10, 2015 – 3:30 P.M.**

The Mental Health Commission met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at 3:33 p.m. in the Administration Building, 1717 N. Indian Hill Blvd. # B, Claremont, California.

CALL TO ORDER Chair Whitlock called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL A visual roll call was taken.

PRESENT: Sylvia Whitlock, Ph.D., Chair
Toni L. Watson, Vice-Chair (arrived at 3:38 p.m.)
Betsy MacLaren, Secretary
Cheryl Berezny
Arny Bloom
Paul Capraro (arrived at 3:36 p.m.)
Ashley Nielsen, MSW
Donald R. Perez
Davetta Williams

ABSENT: Twila L. Stephens

STAFF: Toni Navarro, Executive Director
Elizabeth Owens, LMFT, Acting Director of Clinical Program Services
Diana Acosta, Controller
Rimmi Hundal, MHSA Manager
Dana Stein, MSHA Projects Coordinator
Christopher Anzalone, Community Capacity Organizer
Jamie Ritchey, Community Capacity Organizer
Luis Resendez, Marriage & Family Therapist I
Donald Pruyn, Housing Project Manager
Mica Olmos, Executive Assistant

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 13, 2015 MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEETING

There being no comments, Commissioner Nielsen moved, and Commissioner Perez seconded, to approve the Minutes of January 13, 2015. The motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Commissioners Berezny, Bloom, MacLaren, Nielsen, Perez, and Williams; and Chair Whitlock. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Commissioner Capraro and Stephens; and Vice-Chair Watson.

II. PRESENTATION

Christopher Anzalone, Community Capacity Organizer, provided an update regarding the Community Wellbeing Grant Program, noting that it is a Prevention and Early Intervention program with the intent to capture those people that are not necessarily seeking support and services but might eventually need them if they do not receive some other form of support. He explained that the grant program is Tri-City's way to support communities, people in relationship with each other who are already doing the vital work of supporting and caring for each other. He then reported that this is the fourth year of this program and 15 communities were awarded grants ranging from \$9,000 to \$10,000 this year.

At 3:36 p.m. Commissioner Capraro arrived at the meeting.

Community Capacity Organizer Anzalone continued to report that the cities are represented by 4 communities from Claremont, one from La Verne, and 10 from Pomona; and within those communities there are 642 members in Pomona, 150 members in La Verne, and 233 members in Claremont. He then talked about success stories from the program, including Westmont Elementary School, where the parents started a community garden to connect with their children; the CalPoly Veterans, to connect with one another and feel respected in the community; African-American Museum of Beginnings, to learn about one another and connect with one another; and the Youth Partnership for Positive Pomona, who are High School kids that have a strong passion for reducing the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco in the Pomona area.

At 3:38 p.m. Vice-Chair Watson arrived at the meeting.

Community Capacity Organizer Anzalone then talked about the outreach and marketing he has been conducting in preparation for the upcoming Cohort 5, noting that tonight a program information meeting will be held; that a mandatory bidders' conference will take place on April 17th and 24th; and asked the Commissioners to invite anyone that they think might benefit from a community grant.

Jamie Ritchey, Community Capacity Organizer, talked about Tri-City's *Room4Everyone* Stigma Reduction Campaign new website noting that it is fully operational and expressed excitement about it. She explained that the website was designed in ways that people would move through information and she navigated through the website to showcase the web page design. She then announced that Green Ribbon Week will take place on the Week of March 16th-22nd and distributed *Room4Everyone* campaign buttons and information to share. She encouraged everyone to visit the website as visitors can also make a pledge to reduce stigma and personalize it. However, the website is not currently collecting stories on the website, but there is an application available to become involved in the Speakers' Bureau. She explained that as the website moves into further development, staff will look into blogging where people can submit comments or their own personal story. She then announced that during Green Ribbon Week, Tri-City is partnering with Shield of Faith Church for an event for stigma reduction.

Vice-Chair Watson inquired if this information was posted on social media. Community Capacity Organizer Ritchey replied that Tri-City is not there yet; however, it is something currently in discussion regarding the how, the when, and the who.

Commissioner MacLaren inquired if staff had considered approaching CBS or NBC or ABC about this campaign to spread the word.

Community Capacity Organizer Ritchey replied that it is a great idea as staff is always looking for creative ideas about how to generate traffic to the website. She then announced that next week staff will be traveling to San Francisco to attend the 7th International Stigma Reduction Conference being held in the United States for the first time, noting that they will be taking a professional banner to highlight Tri-City's success through MHSA programs and services, which will be displayed at the conference. Executive Director Navarro added that the Room4Everyone and the Landlords' Project will be highlighted on the banner as they are the two main stigma reduction projects at this time.

Luis Resendez, Marriage & Family Therapist I, provided an update of the Therapeutic Community Garden Program, noting that it is a horticultural based therapeutic program where gardening, horticultural activities, as well as group exercises, are used to provide therapeutic services to portions of the population who might be underserved, at risk, or have the need of therapeutic services. He then distributed business cards/seed packages as a means to promote the program, which include the days and times when groups meet. He then talked about how groups interact, grow what it is in season, how being present and connecting with nature helps distract from stressors. He explained that Tri-City partners with Dawn Van Allen, of the Van Allen Trust, a horticultural instructor to teach clients the right way to seed, water, and care for the garden. He also stated that staff leads therapeutic discussions on what they are doing, mindful practices, meditation exercises, and extra curriculum activities in order to bring people together and talk about their experiences and connect with one another, since clients tend to isolate themselves and do not have a big social support system. He also reported that tenants at the Park Avenue Apartments have been tending to gardening beds at their site and are finding that this is a way that they are connecting with each other.

Executive Director Navarro added that the Therapeutic Community Garden Program is also being utilized as a step down for people that have been in therapy that allows them to go to a place that has nothing to do with talking about their symptoms but learning a skill set and applying it in a different way to their everyday life.

Chair Whitlock indicated that at her school they are thinking of starting a community garden and inquired if staff can give them some advice. Marriage & Family Therapist I Resendez replied in the affirmative.

III. REPORTS

Executive Director Navarro talked about the Vital Volunteer Project, a monthly flyer that features a volunteer, noting that this month's edition featured our own Commission Member Don Perez and distributed a copy of the flyer. She also reported that Steve Wakimoto submitted a story to CalMHSA for a yearbook of recovering stories that will be published and presented statewide.

Housing Manager Pruyn provided a supporting housing update and stated that the Park Avenue Apartments Project had been completed; that the Cedars Springs Project in La Verne broke ground on January 29th and anticipate a grand opening ceremony in March of 2016; that the Clifford Beers Project is moving forward and has submitted an application for their MHSA Loan

to the CalHFA and, if approved, will submit an application for tax credit financing; that the Holt Avenue Project by the Related Companies are in the process of relocating all the site residents and the historical house currently on the site, once finished they will begin construction by March 1st; that staff is actively seeking housing in Claremont, noting that Claremont is also working with the Cities of Pomona and La Verne to do a veterans housing project in large scale; and that the City of Pomona has been negotiating with the PUSD to swap easements with their respective properties, and if done, the City will be giving Tri-City the 15 ft. easement for the clinic.

Executive Director Navarro added that once the easement issue is resolved, staff will be bringing issues for discussion to the Commission and Governing Board regarding options available to address needs such as additional parking.

Housing Manager Pruyn then talked about the property adjacent to the Wellness Center, noting that Tri-City was in current negotiations to acquire said property to provide immediate parking and additional needed administrative office space.

Executive Director Navarro explained that the stakeholders allocated \$4 million to build the Wellness Center and there is over \$200,000 available that was never spent, stating that the cost for the parking lot is \$205,000 which includes the purchase and upgrades such as slurry, lighting, and removal of trees that are causing structural problems. Regarding the purchase of the property next door, staff is currently conducting a Capital Facilities Plan Update, which was established to spend towards technological needs or capital facilities for MHSA programs. She reported that in April 2013, there was an allocation of approximately \$2.2 million for the CAPTECH Plan and, after the three IT projects, there is a balance of approximately \$1 million to be spent for capital facilities. Therefore, the CAPTECH update will include a request for \$825,000 to purchase a building to provide additional office space needed to provide program services.

Housing Manager Pruyn continued with his housing report and indicated that Tri-City's offer to purchase the parking lot has been accepted in the amount \$145,000. He noted that the offer on the building was \$675,000 and has also been accepted; however, there are some building and construction permits and zoning issues that need to be resolved before acquiring the building.

Executive Director Navarro then talked about the Little Hoover Commission Report on MHSA spending, whose job is to review and identify different policies and different initiatives that have been approved in the State to determine how they are functioning and how well they are doing. She indicated that last year they reviewed MHSA; unfortunately, they reported that there is minimum data to show that MHSA has directly reduced homelessness incarceration, emergency room utilization for Californians with serious mental illness. However, Mental Health Directors beg the difference because all counties submit data on a regular basis to the State and the concern is that we do not receive any reports back from them. She then distributed "talking points" that was put together by the California Behavioral Directors Association with factual information to be used in the event there are any questions from the community.

Chair Whitlock indicated that it should be published in the newspapers. Executive Director Navarro concurred. Thereafter, discussion ensued regarding how the Little Hoover Commission conducted the MHSA review.

COMMISSION ITEMS AND REPORTS

Commissioner Capraro reported that he attended a community meeting regarding the homeless population, noting that it was not a friendly meeting and some made allegations that homeless individuals congregate around Tri-City's Wellness Center. He indicated that he provided factual information that Tri-City's clients are not the ones they are referring to as committing crimes. As result of the meeting, the Pomona City Manager concluded that it was necessary to create a homeless summit and would like Tri-City to participate. He indicated that the City of Pomona has many homeless services that this particular community group saw as a negative for the City. Lastly, he stated that he believed it was important for Tri-City to be proactive on this issue.

Discussion ensued regarding Pomona Homeless Shelter program and associated concerns by a few Pomona residents.

Commissioner Nielsen announced that there will be a screening of Still Alice tomorrow in Claremont in support of older adults' mental health.

Chair Whitlock reported that she had attended two Stakeholders Meetings and praised Dana Stein for doing a great job. She then suggested publishing and advertising in the newspaper what Tri-City is doing and provide an email address where residents can contact the Mental Health Commission.

Executive Director announced that the MHSA Annual Public Hearing will take place on Wednesday, May 20th at Taylor Hall and that the Joint Meeting with the Governing Board will take place on the same date at the Garey Building at 4:45 p.m. She also stated that next month is social work month and, since Commissioner Nielsen had asked to highlight some of the staff positions, there will be staff present to do a case presentation.

Dana Stein distributed information about two Stakeholder meetings being held in March.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:47 p.m., on consensus of the Mental Health Commission its meeting of February 10, 2015 was adjourned. The next Regular Meeting of the Mental Health Commission will be held on **Tuesday, March 10, 2015**, in the Administration Building, 1717 North Indian Hill Boulevard #B, Claremont, California.



Micaela P. Olmos, Executive Assistant