

## CITY OF PORTAGE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

Minutes of Meeting, March 3, 2011

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:35 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Diane Durian, Angela Manahan Ilori, Bill Lenehan, Elma (Pat) Maye, Marc Meulman, Genna Nichols, Sandra Sheppard, Kyle Huitt (Youth Advisory Committee Liaison)

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Pamela Gilchrist

**STAFF PRESENT:** Vicki Georgeau, Deputy Director of Neighborhood Services

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** February 3, 2011 minutes were approved as submitted, 8-0.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Human/Public Services Public Education – Community Forum – Board discussion: The Board discussed hosting a public information meeting either at City Hall or the Portage District Library open to the public in the Fall 2011. Existing and past grantees and others such as the Portage Senior Center could attend and provide an overview of services available to Portage residents. The Board discussed using the Portager, the city web site and direct mailings to promote the event. In addition to the general public, community representatives that work with residents in need, such as school counselors, church pastors and social justice committees, teachers, etc. would be invited to attend to learn more about human services available to assist Portage residents.
2. Selection of Human Services Board representative to Metro Transit ADA Advisory Committee: Lenehan provided a review of the work and meeting requirements for representation on the committee. Nichols suggested that Gilchrist may be a good candidate for the position. Meulman added that if Gilchrist is not available, he may be able to serve. As Gilchrist was not in attendance, action was postponed until the next meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Fair Housing Activity Update – Draft Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing study and presentation by Bob Eells, Executive Director, Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan: Staff summarized the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Study, including: an overview of fair housing laws, fair housing services in southwest Michigan, trends in regard to housing discrimination complaints in the region and within Portage, results of fair housing testing in the region and within Portage, data on home mortgage lending, and actions recommended to address potential impediments to fair housing. Maye noted most complaints involving persons with a disability could be avoided through landlord education. Eells suggested the city may wish to consider adopting a local fair housing ordinance, citing data that most complaints are better handled at a local level. Nichols indicated that a County ordinance may be a better approach. Meulman noted there would be costs of administering and enforcing such an ordinance, but the County may have an interest in this issue. Maye indicated some communities include source of income as protected from discrimination through local ordinances. Staff indicated a final draft of the study would be provided to the Board along with a complete draft of the 2011-15 Consolidated Plan and FY 2011-12 Annual Action Plan at the next meeting during a required public hearing, which will then be reviewed by City Council.

Eells provided an overview of fair housing services provided to the City of Portage over the past year, which included training for property managers, realtors, housing service providers, and volunteer testers located within the city, or providing services to Portage residents. The Fair Housing Center responded to 31 housing complaints, four that involved housing discrimination relating to disability, race, marital status, and age. Additionally, the center announced its annual Fair Housing Conference on April 29<sup>th</sup>, and the award of a three-year HUD grant for \$308,000.

2. Metro Transit ADA Advisory Committee – Member report: Lenehan indicated there was no meeting in February and there was nothing new to report.

**STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:** Councilman Bailes asked if the Board will meet in the summer. Meulman indicated the Board had not discussed the schedule, but in the past has taken June and July off, unless there is an action item.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Vicki Georgeau, Deputy Director of Neighborhood Services