

CITY OF
PORTAGE

A Place for Opportunities to Grow

**HUMAN SERVICES
BOARD**

May 3, 2012

CITY OF PORTAGE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

A G E N D A

Thursday, May 3, 2012

(6:30pm)

Conference Room #1

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

* March 28, 2012

NEW BUSINESS:

- * 1. Fair Housing Activity Update – Presentation by Bob Ells, Executive Director, Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan
- 2. Metro Transit ADA Advisory Committee – Update by Board member Meulman
- 3. Resignation of HSB member Cory Puterbaugh
- 4. Board meeting schedule for summer 2012

OLD BUSINESS:

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

ADJOURNMENT:

MATERIALS TRANSMITTED

Star (*) indicates printed material within the agenda packet.

CITY OF PORTAGE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

Minutes of Meeting, March 28, 2012

 DRAFT

CALL TO ORDER: Approximately 6:40 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cody Dekker, Diane Durian, Angela Manahan Ilori, Elma (Pat) Maye, Nadeem Mirza, Cory Puterbaugh, Sandra Sheppard

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Marc Meulman, Ray LaPoint, Kyle Huitt (Youth Advisory Committee Liaison)

STAFF PRESENT: Vicki Georgeau, Director of Community Development, Elizabeth Money, Neighborhood Program Specialist

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: A motion was made by Durian and supported by Mirza to approve the March 1, 2012 minutes as submitted. Upon voice vote, motion passed 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Public Hearing - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program: FY 2012-13 Annual Action Plan: Sheppard opened the public hearing. Georgeau provided an overview of the plan and summarized proposed activities with the funds available next fiscal year. In review of the comparative budget table, staff noted that despite reductions in federal appropriations for the CDBG Program, the city will experience an increase in funding due to increased poverty rates for the community. Staff noted that in an effort to address reduced funding trends over the past several years, and further cuts anticipated in future years, a portion of the costs for grant administration and neighborhood improvement/code compliance activities has been shifted to the General Fund to ensure a significant level of CDBG Program funds are directed to assisting low income residents with housing maintenance and rehabilitation activities, which has been the cornerstone of the CDBG Program. Sheppard asked if the 2010 Census data impacted the entitlement grant. Georgeau explained that while the decennial census is considered the official data count, HUD now uses five-year estimate data available through the American Community Survey to determine the amount of funding entitlement grantees receive. Pat (Elma) Maye, an employee of the Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan (a CDBG sub-recipient) disclosed a conflict of interest and abstained from discussion. Staff explained that each year funding is provided to the Fair Housing Center of Southwest Michigan to assist with fair housing education and enforcement efforts. Dekker requested an overview of the activities provided by the Fair Housing Center. Staff noted that the Executive Director of the Fair Housing Center would make a presentation to the Board at the May 3, 2012 meeting. Dekker expressed an interest in the Board reviewing adoption of a local fair housing ordinance, which should also address discrimination based upon sexual orientation. Georgeau added that HUD recently adopted a federal rule that prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation with housing funded by HUD. In conclusion, staff explained the next steps in the process were a City Council budget workshop on May 1, 2012 and City Council review and approval of the CDBG Program document on May 8th, and submission to HUD by May 15, 2012. As no further comments were received, the public hearing was closed.
2. 2011-12 Goal Update and Proposed 2012-13 Goals – Board Discussion: The Board reviewed the draft memo to City Council and proposed 2012-13 Goals. The Board discussed a city-wide anti-discrimination ordinance, the need for research into discrimination in Portage, further understanding of discrimination laws, and the role the HSB would have in preparing and recommending such an ordinance. The Board concluded this activity would fall under the goal of fair housing activities and it could be discussed at future meetings. Maye moved and Ilori seconded approval of the Goal Update and 2012-13 Goals and Objectives as proposed. Upon voice vote, motion passed 7-0.
3. Metro Transit ADA Advisory Committee – Update by Board member Meulman: As Meulman was not present, no report was provided.

STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Money, Neighborhood Program Specialist



CITY OF PORTAGE
FAIR HOUSING REPORT

July 1, 2011– April 23, 2012

Fair housing Action Plan:

1. Host a minimum of two fair housing presentations to property owners, attorneys, community organizations, realtors and/or financial institutions

- The Center provided Fair Housing two trainings to an audience that included seven Portage-based property managers.
- The Center also provided Fair Housing Training for 20 sales agents and other staff of Allen Edwin Homes, a firm with a Portage office location.
- The Center provided Fair Housing Training for 75 members of the West Michigan Property Managers Association, some of whom manage properties in Portage.
- The Center also provided Fair Housing Training for seven property managers of Eenhoorn Property Management, some of who manage properties in Portage.
- Additionally, The Center provided training for 12 staff of Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services and 24 volunteers and staff of Kalamazoo County Senior Services. In both of these instances, the home address of those in the audience are not known, and while they are reported to the City of Kalamazoo under our HOME contract with them because the agencies are physically located in Kalamazoo, it is likely that some of the staff persons serve residents throughout the County, including the City of Portage.

2. Host a fair housing education event targeted toward Portage residents and/or businesses during Fair Housing Month. (April)

- The Center is currently planning for the annual event to be held on April 27, 2012 at the Radisson Hotel.

“A Community Partnership in Fair Housing.”

410 East Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Toll Free: 1.866.637.0733 * Kalamazoo Office: 269-276.9100 * Fax: 269.276.9101
www.fhcswm.org

- The Conference is being promoted to Portage residents, housing organizations and providers, real estate agents, community leaders, attorneys and elected officials.
- 3. Present an overview of fair housing activities to the Human Services Board and accept a fair housing resolution at a meeting of City Council in recognition of National Fair Housing Month.**
- The Center received a resolution from the City Council of Portage on April 10, 2012.
 - The Center will make a presentation to the Human Services Board on May 3, 2012.
- 4. Provide fair housing activities targeted toward Portage residents and/or businesses including information and referrals, education and outreach, and fair housing enforcement services.**
- During the period July 1, 2011 through April 23, 2012, the Center has processed 248 complaint inquiries. Of those, twelve were made by residents of the City of Portage. Nine of the Portage inquiries were non-fair housing related and, therefore, referred to other appropriate agencies and three – one race-based, on disability-based -- were opened as Fair Housing complaints. Eleven of these twelve were individuals/families with incomes in the 0 – 30% of Median Income range.
 - During the period July 1, 2011 through April 23, 2012, the Center performed one audit paired-tests in the City of Portage. It was a rental test, the results of which were inconclusive because only one of the two testers completed the test.
 - Four newsletters providing information about the Center's services, updates on complaints and other fair housing related information were sent out during this six month period (one each in July, October and December) to 625, 626, 627 and 628 Portage address, respectively (as defined as having a 49002 or 49024 zip code).
 - Center staff participated in a "volunteer opportunity" fair at a Stryker facility in Portage. This provided an opportunity to not only recruit potential testers, but also to provide basic fair housing information on a one-to-one basis to attendees who visited our booth.
 - Daily notices are running in the Kalamazoo Gazette in the "Houses for Sale" section of the classified ads urging people to call the Center if discrimination is experienced.
 - 125 Fair Housing Center brochures were placed at four locations in Portage, including Portage Senior Center, Portage Library, Neighborhood Cleaners Laundromat and Portage Cleaners Laundromat.
 - During the time period July 1, 2011 – April 23, 2012 the Center's web page had 1,881 unique visitors, visiting the site an average of 2.3 times, viewing an average of 4.7 pages

each visit. While it is not known how many of these visitors are Portage residents, it is apparent that the website is a valuable resource individuals living throughout the entire Center's service area, including Portage.

- The Center provided a training session for seven new fair housing testers. While none of those trained during this period are Portage residents, we currently have seven active testers who are Portage residents – three of whom are among our most frequently utilized. Two are “inactive” because they were testers in response to complaints that are currently in pending litigation. Moreover, it is important to note that, regardless of their residency, all fair housing testers may conduct tests any where within our service area, including the City of Portage.
- The Center recruited one Portage-based attorney who will work with the Center and claimants to determine if litigation is an appropriate avenue for resolving a complaint and represent complainants on a contingency basis when selected by the complainant.
- Lastly, we participated in two events for, and provided fair housing information to, 224 homeless/low income individuals and families. One of these fairs was help specifically for Kalamazoo County veterans. Some homeless and/or low income individuals/families served may be residents of Portage or may have resided in Portage prior to moving to a shelter outside of the City or may reside in Portage when they secure their next dwelling.