

## CITY OF PORTAGE HUMAN SERVICES BOARD

Minutes of Meeting, August 2, 2012

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Cody Dekker, Angela Manahan Ilori (arrived 6:45), Ray LaPoint, Elma (Pat) Maye, Marc Meulman, Sandra Sheppard, Kelly Williams, Tim Wilger (Youth Advisory Committee Liaison)

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Diane Durian

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Nadeem Mirza

**STAFF PRESENT:** Elizabeth Money, Neighborhood Program Specialist

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion was made by Maye and supported by Dekker to approve the May 3, 2012 minutes as submitted. Upon voice vote, motion passed 6-0.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Human Services Information & Referral Resources video: Due to a computer problem, staff was unable to play the video. The video will be played during September 6, 2012 meeting.
2. Human/Public Services Funding application: After a brief discussion on the proposed changes, Sheppard moved and LaPoint supported a motion to accept the proposed changes. Upon voice vote, motion passed 7-0.
3. Metro Transit ADA Advisory Committee: No update was provided as the July 2012 Metro Transit meeting was canceled. However, Meulman indicated that ongoing positive improvements in service and ridership are being made.
4. Local Housing Antidiscrimination Ordinance: Dekker indicated an ordinance was needed that addressed sexual orientation and gender identity for housing, public accommodations, and public places. Currently, Dekker had no figures to provide but could obtain additional information. Meulman added gender expression is often included with this issue and listed several other cities in Michigan that have antidiscrimination ordinances. Dekker indicated that it was legal to discriminate against this group and a local law would prevent this from occurring and went on to provide examples of discrimination against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community. Maye interjected that it is not considered discrimination if it is legal and that the correct terminology would be that it is lawful to not rent to someone because they are gay rather than they were being discriminated against- which implies it is illegal. Maye also stated that housing and employment are the two major areas of discrimination in general but that studies indicate the biggest area in this community, particularly for gay men, is in housing lending. Sheppard questioned if the ordinance was being proposed to stop something that was occurring or prevent something from occurring. Dekker indicated it would do both. LaPoint questioned how it would effect religious institutions. Dekker indicated that churches are separate and a local ordinance would not affect them. LaPoint suggested taking on antidiscrimination in pieces rather than as a whole and that something like housing was an issue directly related to the Board. LaPoint then asked what the process was for adopting an ordinance. Money explained that a memo from the Board was required to City Council with detailed information regarding the need and rationale for an ordinance amendment. It would then be at the City Council discretion to proceed and who they turned the project over to (back to the Board, city staff, City Attorney, etc.). Maye inquired what kind of citizen input would be required and how they could demonstrate there was a problem in Portage. Meulman stated the Board would need to come up with a rationale as to why the city needs to move forward with this ordinance. Sheppard asked for clarification on how this ordinance fits with the Board goals. Meulman reiterated the three main goals for the Board: CDBG program, resource for public transportation, and resource for special projects. He indicated that discrimination in housing and transportation was part of what the Board addresses. LaPoint supported and Maye seconded a motion that Dekker and anyone else interested research this topic and bring information back to the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Upon voice vote, motion passed 7-0.

**MATERIALS TRANSMITTED:** Meulman indicated a communication was included from City Council regarding the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city and suggested Board members bring ideas as requested by Council to the September HSB meeting.

**STATEMENT OF CITIZENS:** None

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Money, Neighborhood Program Specialist