

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE, CDA  
MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 30, 2024, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Mark Bisaccia

Present: Members Michelle Miller, Roberta Garlock, Carol Eagles, Colleen O'Connor, Sammy Rivera, Staff: Rosa Richardson, Ron Dumas, Mark Bisaccia    Absent: Members Victor Borrás, Jeffrey Moreno, Paige Weinstein

**WH COMMUNITY HOUSE- Head Start-** Christina Mazzacane Director of Head Start, Peter Marelli, Director of Facilities and Amy Guay McFarlane, Executive Director introduced themselves once all CAC Members and Staff made their instructions.

Christina explained that there are currently 131 children enrolled in their Preschool and School readiness programs. They currently have 3 Full Day and 5 Part time programs running. They also have a Full Year Program. The CDBG CV funding they received last Amy allowed them to add additional activities in order to assist in the students behavioral, developmental and emotional skills. Children who are currently enrolled had missed out many of these skills throughout Covid and these activities, which include parental participation, have been very beneficial in each child's development. They are still very much behind, but WHCH continues to strive to ensure they are prepared for kindergarten.

Amy Guay-McFarlane informed the Committee that Head Start new Federal Guidelines have been implemented which includes increases in salaries for teachers. This is going to be very taxing on them as these new mandates do not include additional Federal Funds. Mark asked if Teacher retention has been an issue. Amy explained that they are very fortunate that the Teaching Staff are very committed to them. However, Teacher aids is not the case. There is a lot of turn-over in this field, mostly due to the salary limitations. CDA has been generous over the years, and those funds help us to add additional aids in the Full-Time program.

**WHCH Capital Improvement-** Peter, Facilities Coordinator informed the CAC Members that WH Police came to provide their Run/ Fight/ Hide program to WHCH Staff. While visiting the facility they brought up a safety issue with the front entrance door. It was explained that there is a very small rod that secures the door and Police Officers informed them that this was not safe, and it can be broken very easily. Peter informed the Committee that their request is to replace these doors with newer, safer doors that will provide a more secure locking mechanism, and will add handicap -push to open- from the inside of the new doors as well as maintain the current buzzer system to allow entrance from the outside. Currently, the front entrance is manned during business hours and people are allowed entrance using the buzzer. CAC Member Sammy inquired about security and whether there are cameras. There are cameras throughout the exterior of the buildings.

All Staff have badges for entrance which allows all exterior doors to always remain locked. CAC Member asked if there are other grant funds available to handicap accessibility and/or security. Amy stated that they have submitted a grant application for an elevator for those with disabilities. She explained that some staff members use mobility devices and currently have to climb stairs to get to their offices.

**BOE-** Michael McGrath explained that the Basketball Court at Forest School and used heavily by neighborhood children throughout the year. Although the court has been resurfaced in the past, it now requires that the asphalt be completely removed and a new asphalt surface be put down, then repainted. They also want to put new basketball posts and rims up. Mr. McGrath also explained that the new backboard will allow the backboard to be lowered. The Committee asked that he get additional quotes that will not allow the rims to be lowered as they feel it will only allow for more hanging on the rim. Mr. McGrath said he could do that, but he would prefer that the backboards remain the same style as placed throughout the other playgrounds. The Committee agreed.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rosa Richardson