

**Helderberg Neighborhood Association
Membership Meeting**

Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2016

Meeting Start

The membership meeting of the HNA was started at 7:03 p.m. by Eric Huntington. The Board introduced themselves:

Eric Huntington – Chair
Tom Rees – Vice Chair
Sarah Shearer – Secretary
Alyssa Lotmore – Communications Director
Patty Pierce – Treasurer
Eddie Hitti – Business Outreach Director
Bill Paton (absent) – Events Committee Chair

The members of audience introduced themselves (name and street).

A) Presentation and Q & A: A panel of local mental health/substance use disorder service providers will describe their programs, and answer your questions.

- Capital District Psychiatric Center (CDPC)- Bill Dickson
Contact Information: William Dickson, Executive Director, CPDC, 75 New Scotland Ave, Albany NY 12208 TEL: (518) 549-6825 FAX: (518) 549-6804 EMAIL: William.Dickson@omh.ny.gov Website: www.omh.ny.gov
 - 1 million people catchment area, 124 beds, movement to decrease psychiatric beds run by the state
 - 24/7 psychiatric emergency room, aka crisis unit, unusual for state hospital, usually run by a local hospital, work very closely with Albany Med
 - 3,000 people use their crisis service every year; 500 people under 18
 - No in-patient under 18, need to help them find help elsewhere
 - Closest in-patient for children is Ellis in Schenectady and Four Winds in Saratoga
 - On-grounds, out-patient clinic with its own street level access, nearly 500 mentally ill people receive clinic treatment there, 97% are Albany county residents
 - Have a residence that's also on grounds, an out-patient community residence of 24 beds, (transitional placement residence); people can re-gain skills and opportunities of community living, 24 hour supervised and they move out from there to somewhere else, TPP (transitional placement program)
 - Also manage a community residence for adults on Cortland street, 12 mentally ill adults live there with 24 hour supports

- Residential Support Services (RSS)- John Paduano
Contact Information: John Paduano, Managing Director 314 Central Ave, Albany, NY 12206 EMAIL: jpaduano@rehab.org PHONE: 518.462.1094 ext.251 CELL: 518.421.7116 FAX: 518.432.6852 WEBSITE: www.rehab.org

- Most of what we do is residential, 24 hour residential services
 - Work with people in recovery and get them ready to move into an apartment
 - 7 locations; 4 in Albany
 - 2 types of apartment programs- 1) certified program (OMH certifies them and the site)- funded by Medicaid- people are seen 1-3 times per week, staff provides many services, see staff relatively regularly; and 2) non-certified- people hold the lease, choose where they want to live, they sign the lease, no restriction to where they live, they provide a housing stipend, staff sees them a minimum of once per month but usually once per week; housing issues, i.e. negotiating with landlord, getting along with neighbors, only help with housing issues, that's it
 - On Central they have 2 types of treatment programs- 1) prose- classroom type groups where people work on certain aspects of their recovery i.e. job, apartment, managing mental illness and unlike traditional therapy, they aren't 1-1 with a counselor, they are with a group and go from classroom to classroom; 2) typical mental health clinic, people meet 1-1 with a mental health clinical professional once per month or every 3 months, some group work, not a lot; 3) a lot of services around people getting a job, job coaches, work with them and the employer, go on site to make sure everything is ok, also have their own businesses where they employ people (Pie in the Sky Bakery, maintenance company, lawn maintenance, construction, etc.); some are certified by OMH, the housing
- Equinox- Dorothy Cucinelli
 - **Contact Information:** Dorothy Cucinelli, Executive Director EMAIL: dcucinelli@equinoxinc.org
 - 4 service areas- 1) domestic violence shelter- secret location, full almost every day of the year; non-shelter services- elder abuse counseling, helping people in shelters find apartments 2) youth services- a) youth shelter in downtown Albany for runaway youth or kicked out of their house by their parents, b) after school program for teenagers, there are lots of programs for 12 and under, not many programs for 13 and over, federal grant, drug abuse prevention, try to put a spin on it to keep it interesting for kids; 3) substance abuse prevention- state licensed clinic located on Central Ave., walk-in assessments, open Monday-Friday 9-6 no waiting; 4) mental health services- wide menu of offerings- prose program, main office on Central- a lot of groups, clients have a choice of different groups they can attend according to interests geared toward recovery, Monday-Friday 8-3, Board certified psychiatrist and nurse practitioner, active out-patient clinic, number of social workers work with prescribing staff, people very interested working with this population
 - Residential services are key to care for people, all programs are licensed by OMH, community residence on New Scotland, across from the bank, 12 bed program for men, been there 20 years, help people gain independence, 24 hour staff there; residential staff working closely with clinical staff
 - What happens in a residence on a daily basis? It is a converted home; residents are assigned to help with meals, they have separate bedrooms, try to have them do activities outside the home during the day, volunteer or classes and come back in

time for dinner, many are participants in AA groups, not a locked facility, people are free to come and go, “dry” premise, no drugs or alcohol

- Different levels of supervised living, apartment program on Warren, staff there
- Apartments in other locations as well, scattered across the city

Written questions received from neighborhood before meeting:

- **Question #1** for John Paduano For RSS specifically - My understanding is that the individual who was placed in our neighborhood and committed the assault had no prior history of this type of behavior, which arguably would have one conclude that there was no way for the organization to foresee the risk of the assault occurring at the time of the individual's placement. That said, how could the organization possibly be able to place other individuals within the neighborhood responsibly?

Answer:

- Everybody who comes to our programs are intensively screened in order to determine the best program for them however we cannot predict exactly how each person will react; although a lot of the people we serve have mental illnesses, a lot of people have interactions and their mental illnesses have nothing to do with it, they are just like the rest of us and we can't control that
 - If somebody is moving into the neighborhood you don't know whether they will be a threat to the neighborhood, these people have support from staff, they aren't moving in without any supports, there are other people in the city without supports for whatever reason
- **Question 2:** Is the neighborhood is put on notice when an individual is placed, and where they are placed. In other words, is this information public? Do the police or the city have this information, at least?

Answer:

- The neighborhood is not on notice, people have the right to move into neighborhoods without being stigmatized; we have notified the police of our apartments so that the beat cops could get to know the individuals there and let them know if something doesn't seem right; if they come to a call and they already know somebody there has mental health issues they know to respond in a certain way
- **Question #3.** Business owners report that clients are purchasing beer at Stewart's, then becoming publicly intoxicated. Are clients supposed to be using alcohol, especially when it often contributes to aggressive / illicit behavior? If not, how can this be stopped?

Answer (Equinox):

- No, part of the rules, do not allow alcohol on the premises, not even mouthwash, alcohol is not allowed, if a client becomes aggressive we would direct staff to get in touch with police, always responsive and helpful, we don't allow aggressive behavior, it is not acceptable, it is a violation of the contract that the client signs when they come into the program
 - True in other 2 programs as well (CDPC & RSS)- move them to a rehab or drug and alcohol residential program
- **Question #4** What kinds of crimes are clients allowed to be convicted of, and yet are still eligible for living in an unsupervised location? Please provide lists of specific laws and regulations for sharing.

Answer: RSS

- When we screen people we look at background of criminal behavior, it doesn't preclude someone from coming into our program, we try to target support around criminal behavior so it doesn't happen again, we are there to reintegrate people, best we can do is offer supports so that people don't go back to the criminal justice system, we are involved with parole etc.
- **Question #5** Neighbors report that once a week, a car will pull in the driveway, and clients empty out of the house to get pills from the driver. It is assumed the driver is a service provider. Is this the recommended method of supervision?

Answer: RSS

- No it is not, we have had this complaint over time, we have found staff to be doing this, we discipline staff for doing this, we don't always find out about this as we should, if you see this happening give us a call, we want to know ASAP and date, time, address so he can identify the staff person
- In the programs where we do bring medication, we go to the door, key in if no one opens it, work with the client to fill and take their medications in the home and then they leave, they are not supposed to be calling clients down to their car, that is not acceptable from RSS, County, or OMH perspective
- **Question #6** If neighbors notice something that doesn't seem right, such as behavior, individuals (clients or service providers) or events, it is assumed the police should be called. However, residents have been told to contact the service provider directly. This seems like an unreasonable expectation given the number of service providers. What is the proper protocol?

Answer

- **RSS-** We go back and forth on that a lot, had a meeting with chief of police 1 month after the January 9th rape incident. For immediate issues, the protocol is to let the beat officer and police know and they will take care of it. If it's quality of life issues, not so sure police should be notified, has no problem with people calling him at RSS, may not be his apartment (RSS), but he will reach out to the appropriate agency / person. Example: If people are hanging out on the doorstep causing an issue, call him/RSS, he'll look into it. If it is an immediate issue, call the police. [Special Note from HNA:
CDPC- if you feel someone is at the level of distress where they are putting themselves at risk, call us or the police, they need emergency treatment; having a beat officer in the neighborhood is great, the more apartments that Albany police know about, the better off we all are
- Judy Doesschate - acknowledge 2 people from Parsons here- is there anything you would like to add in regard to protocol?
 - The same thing, if it's very serious like an emergency, call the police
- **Question #7** Is it possible for service providers to contribute to the City of Albany (PILOT's?) to help increase the size of the police force?-

Answer (RSS)

- we have looked at pilots for new projects going forward, we can't determine if it goes to the police department, it goes to the City and they determine what to do with it
- Olga- What is the maximum time they can stay at CDPC?

- More people are spending less time, we don't institutionalize for life anymore
 - More short term stays, shorter than decades prior
- So do we as HNA know which houses serve this clients?
 - No- we don't have a list, **the police do**, that is a new development since the January 9th rape incident
- So how do we make a complaint if we don't know if a person is in a program?
 - RSS- I can't tell you where they are, some are public record, others are just apartments that people rent with stipends, if you think it is someone with a mental illness you can call him and if it's one of his, he'll take care of it
 - Dorothy Cucinelli - HIPPA- we can't tell you who are clients are but we can always take the information down and respond accordingly.
 - Bill- we can't confirm or deny, but we can always listen, take down the information and respond accordingly.
- Leo- the pilot question . . . question for law enforcement, is there more work for our police force because of these residences?
 - Sargent Eric Crist, APD - We deal with a lot of calls on a daily basis, people with needs are more of our calls, we might not have had a list of RSS houses before, but we would know when we showed up, so it's hard to quantify because the houses have been here so long, but we do spend a lot of resources on calls like this
 - Judy- being so close to a community residence where there are a lot of calls to some residences, not all residences
 - Bill- there are a lot of different groups of people who have a lot of issues, not just people with mental health issues
- Cathy- when we are talking about certified houses- intensive case work if someone is there 1-3 times per week, if you had to indicate an area of the city where your OMH houses are, what area of the city would that be?
 - RSS- New Scotland Ave. (here) 10-15 between Sage college and St. Peter's and going back a street or two, Center Square/Delaware Ave.; he could tell us how many houses by zip code
 - Judy- that's RSS, we do kind of have an entire corridor along New Scotland Avenue, we also have Equinox and Parsons, supportive housing RSS, St. Catherine's, etc. etc. It is said we have become an out-patient wing of CPDPC; this does cause a concentration of issues in our area, the question about Stewart's and alcohol relates to the entire business strip and issues that have arisen; understands they need to deal with it on an individual basis but there are drunk people walking along New Scotland Ave who are clients, it's happening, please be aware that it is an observation that we are seeing in the neighborhood
 - Bill- one of the restorative skills people are seeking is how to be a good neighbor and get back into society.
- Olga- Has a friend who isn't well, just in an apartment and he's not doing well, he needs help but he doesn't want to be with a group, he's on Grove
- We're not a large neighborhood but there are a lot of agencies in our neighborhood, what percentage of your clients go back to their neighborhoods or do they just stay in ours because of proximity to treatment

- Bill- For in-patient care we try to get people back to their life routines, reunified with circles of support in most integrated settings.
- RSS- all from the city of Albany, usually go back to the neighborhoods that they know by friends and family
- Alyssa- Licensed social worker- wants to thank them for coming here, good to be able to give feedback

B) HNA Board Business

- Updates from the Chair (Eric)
 - **Moved Neighborhood Picnic to Sunday August 21, 2016 1-4 p.m.**
 - Free self-defense training course from RAD instructor for senior citizens, class filled up and has started, she can't tell me who is going from the neighborhood. The instructor is Amanda Kyle-Sprague from Albany County DA's office.
- Movie Nights Need You! Volunteers, Donations, Services
 - We need volunteers for movie nights, they have been decided and purchased, we haven't come out with our flyer yet, 3rd Friday nights in June, July, August, September, HNA has July 15 (Inside Out) and September 16 (Zootopia).
 - We need volunteers to set up the bounce house, stage, sound system, tables.
 - Still looking for people who do services i.e. balloon animals, face painting, live music or other donations of warm-up activities
 - Contacted Albany Fire Department and to try and get a fire truck to come (kids love it)
- New Scotland Ave Businesses (Eddie)
 - Advertising deadline for May/June issue is May 25th
 - Working on a "business association" for the New Scotland Ave businesses, looking into how best to organize everybody
 - Restaurant week/night, some of the proceeds will come back to this new business association for improvements, starting with utility poll banners
 - Beautification: Planter boxes around trees in disrepair, some businesses want to put up utility poll banners
 - There is a lot going on with Albany Med, we want to get and keep people coming to the businesses in our neighborhood
 - Working on finding the best legal entity for us to associate as
 - Feel free to reach out to Eddie Hitti (Business Outreach Director), this is all very preliminary
- Neighborhood Yard Sale is June 11! (Alyssa)
 - Rain date June 12th
 - If you are interested in participating just e-mail HNA with name and address and we will advertise your address for you, if it is rained out,

we will let you know by Friday at 5 p.m. if it has been rained out, Sunday will be rain or shine

- Will be publishing in the classifieds in the Times Union and various websites, a lot of people heard about it from us and then put it on a lot of sites we hadn't even heard of, so let's get the word out.
- The list is being published, you can check to see if your neighbor is participating
- We will not have information of what everyone is selling
- Business Advertising Deadline for HNA Reporter is May 25, publish date is June 3 (Tom)
- Treasurer report & Membership Report (Patty)
 - Board approved \$600 to spend on hosting informal gatherings every other month to get members and potential members to meet and chat. Good ideas and relationships often come from these types of events.
 - Try to get businesses involved with us
 - Revenue- \$245; Expenses- \$1,479.16; balance- \$5,009.40
 - Are all of our business members listed somewhere? There is a list of businesses on the HNA website but it may not be up-to-date.

C) Membership & Audience

- Parsons / Northern Rivers - Family carnival- Wednesday June 8th, you're all invited. Contact Information: Darlene A. Olivieri, Chief Communications Director 60 Academy Rd. Albany, NY 12208 PHONE: 518.426.2608 CELL: 518.396.6799 WEBSITE: www.northernrivers.org
- A member stated people should mow their lawns.
- Bike fixing station at Bach Library now, they will be keeping their Sunday hours

D) Albany Common Council Update / Q & A

- Hon. Judy Doeschate (Ward 9)
 - When the light poles fell in front of The Fountain last year, that sparked a conversation about improving the street, proposal for bonding for street-scaping, New Scotland has been identified for funding, \$1 million bond, that can be used for New Scotland Avenue first and could level out the sidewalks, note: businesses don't want sidewalks torn up, but we will be having discussions about what to do; between St. Peter's and Albany Med is a really great area, it just needs to be beautified, was passed by the council, the funding is there, if this doesn't pan out due to resistance from businesses than it could go to another location in the city but it is for street-scaping; Member noted the sidewalks should not be split level like across from St. Peters.
 - Resolution Opposing Pilgrim Pipeline- it will make it cheaper to get unrefined oil from the City of Albany to NYC and NJ where the oil can be shipped out of the country, seen a decline in the number of

trains because fracking is less profitable; the pipeline will encourage people to take advantage, we are getting all the risk and little if any benefit and some people are having health issues from the fumes

- Hon. Catherine Fahey (Ward 7)
 - Property assessment help- around the corner at AOH, every day 9-5;
 - Mayor formed an advisory committee to make sure we are ADA compliant, even our website, communications, playground, a group of community volunteers and staff working on this issue, it's been a problem for quite a long time, also business plans and when people are doing construction
 - Re-zone Albany, module 3 they are looking for people to comment on it rezonealbany.org once this is passed it will be the blueprint for how our city is going to look
- Gene- flood remediation plans?
 - Judy- August 5, 2014 flood- Hanson and Warren; 2 major projects on result of Pine Hills flooding workgroup, there's going to be a constructed wetlands behind the Babe Ruth fields and under the basketball courts and put a retention field and specific changes to street grates; no bonding is needed, they put it in their budget and got some funding

E) Meeting Wrap-up

- Next Meeting is Wednesday July 20, 2016

Meeting End

The membership meeting of the HNA concluded at 8:48 p.m.