**April 19, 2024**

**Continuum of Care Governance Board Meeting Minutes**

**10:30am** – **11:45am**

**Recording:**  <https://youtu.be/5tlXpsMrYTg>

[](https://youtu.be/5tlXpsMrYTg)

**Attendees listed at end of document**

Materials for onboarding:

<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/n2WziuIqhbeYHMGi?ref=Link&loc=play>

<https://trello.com/c/a4QuZ1cd>

* You can use these resources to follow along with lessons
* Lesson 0 card is filled out and detailed in Sway

[Introduction of all members](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGCOIlOdkk/h58GjJrXlZ_aA6yI3T3o0A/edit?utm_content=DAGCOIlOdkk&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

* Samantha Grimaldi – extensive experience of DV (Domestic Violence) in many forms, studied policy and politics. Motivated to help others going through it
* Jamie Harunthunian, Nassau DSS – been with Nassau DSS for several years now since beginning of career and was placed in housing division in 2014. Housing is my passion area. There is a lot of bureaucratic red tape that prevents people from accessing resources. Want to have SROs for everyone
* Rhonda Gooden, community stakeholder – affiliated with various organizations. Lives and used to work for Town of Huntington getting exemptions for homeowners. In personal experience, trying to find housing as a mom of 4 was challenging. Implant from Brooklyn, born and raised, has been living in LI for 35 years. Demographics are totally different. There is a stigma when you do not own a house, even when it is so challenging to own a house. Part of precinct level advisory board, like neighborhood watch with more credentials. Owns Boutique in Huntington Village for past 5 years. Is position as a stakeholder on diverse levels as a community member and has a non-profit. When you have strong households, you have a strong community. When you have a stable household, it helps impact your community. It all begins with where you rest your head. Homelessness exists in Huntington too, even if it is not acknowledged. Understand multiple sides of the spectrum. Many hands make light work!
* Margaret Taormina, lived experience with a family slot. Professionally has done 8 years in customer service, 8 years of admin support, 4 years of debt settlement. Currently a stay-at-home mom. Started off in foster care at 12, spent 8 years in foster care system. Has experience as a homeowner. Experiences with homelessness as single adult and family for about 4 years spread-out. Passion for helping people comes from experience. There is a lot that happened in experience of homelessness that was preventable, and that caused suffering to this day. There is a lot that can be done to help people.
* Rachel Seiler, CDCLI, PHA (Public Housing Authority) slot. Grateful that others share their personal experiences. Being in a group of committed people is energizing. Vice president of residential services. Has worked with others in this space previously. CDCLI has been going through rebrand, refresh, and expansion. CDCLI is the local administrator for Homes & Community Renewals HCV (Housing Choice Voucher) program, administering 10,000 vouchers across Nassau & Suffolk counties, including tenant-based vouchers, project-based vouchers, and range of special vouchers. Was involved in CoC previously when org had supportive housing program. Has been working in housing entire professional career, social worker by profession. Housing is the foundation for everything, health, community, advancement. Coming together in this context will be a fantastic vehicle for justice on LI
* Kevin Crean, Town of Islip Community Development Agency. 35 years' experience working with CDBG (Community Development Block Grant). Passion for community development, which involves housing, which is the foundation for people interacting with their community. Affordable housing on LI is non-existent, not affordable. Can help different programs can come together to address available housing.
* Allison Karppi, Town of Brookhaven ESG (Emergency Solutions Grants). Has been doing housing for a long time. There is a housing is a crisis on LI, and ToB does anything that they can do to help. Believes that the role is to help take care of homelessness on LI. It is bad; it exists in different pockets everywhere.
* Sol Alfonso Jones, Program Director, and LI Community Foundation – grant making institution, part of larger organization. Gives grants to non-profits in Nassau and Suffolk, focusing on various issue areas. Work is to level the playing field for LI, so that everyone who lives here has an opportunity to benefit from the assets that some have. Has been in community with LICH in role as funder, got close to Greta during COVID. Understood magnitude of org and ways it is trying to help people out of circumstances that are circular and deep rooted, it is very difficult to remove yourself and your family from it without committed comprehensive strategy. Issue is not about a population finding themselves in an unstable situation, it is about everyone. LICF gives about $2-7 million per year. Philanthropy and government grants are not working in synergistic way, leaving a lot of the connective tissue out. Need to better address investments from community foundation perspective. At LICF, spends time raising awareness on challenges of the region to NYC based funders that have deeper pockets and more funding. LI deserves the same level of investments as NYC. Try to make a case and bring in more funders. Here representing philanthropy, but when growing up had family members living as “squatters,” did not realize that was not normal, living without utilities. Personal values include making sure all have access to stable safe housing. Housing should just be a human right. Newsweek released a story about tent cities on East End and immigrant freezing to death – that should not happen anywhere.
* Amanda Sanford, community stakeholder. Works for St. Joseph’s University unrelated to housing. Got into work through social work education. Interested in housing, had the opportunity to intern at a local library. Saw massive need for connective tissue to support people. At the libraries, there was a high population that was housing unstable, rent burden, or homeless. It was difficult even making referrals because the resources were not always suiting the need. Got interested in this work, pursued macro-social work specialization, learning about legislative advocacy and policy and how we can make changes there. When resources do not align with the needs, there are more macro things that can be done.
* Sarah Smith, community stakeholder – Currently a full-time law student, has been part of CoC Legislative Committee since its conception. Has 5-7 years' experience in the field. Used to run a homeless shelter in East Northport. It was a jarring experience seeing people being charged 90% of their income. Landed in law school to address injustices. Macro social worker by training. Going to be doing independent study on shelter system locally, auditing DSS, hopefully proposing an action plan to bring to legislators to save money and better serve people. Dad is one of 8 and family had a long history of homelessness and evictions.
* Greta Guarton, Collaborative Applicant – Executive Director at Long Island Coalition for the Homeless, worked at LICH since 1996. Worked at Options for Community Living and Concern of Independent Living prior. Long experience working in direct care services with people with mental health disorders and people experiencing homelessness. CoC has been facilitated by LICH since 1995, doing a lot of planning work. Social worker by education. Happy to see other social workers here, including macro work.
* Mia Baines, Nassau County ESG – started in August running ESG homeless prevention component. Prior, worked with Salvation Army administering ESG-CV for individuals in Nassau at imminent risk of homelessness. Was fair housing investigator for LIHS (Long Island Housing Services). Has been deeply rooted in the community, especially Rockville Centre. Anywhere where there is homelessness or inequitable distribution of wealth, has an interest and advocates. We are better together when we are not operating in silo, wonderful things happen
* Al Licata, LICH CoC Planning – Here to provide expertise and technical support. Role involves bringing people together to work on iniatives, compliance work, and involvement with HUD CoC funding round.
* Mike Giuffrida, LICH CoC Planning – believes in passion for learning more. Will be sharing data research and best practices, using networks and relationships with those committed to this work. Deeply impacted by homelessness generationally from parent’s experience of homelessness

Introduction of Liberated Spaces (5 min)

* Liberated Space: A type of social space that affirms and validates the perceptions and experiences of vulnerable and marginalized communities to reflect upon and discuss historical and contemporary forms of oppression, escape from embodiment, uplifting of peoplehood and social identity, liberation expression, and praxis.
* [Creating a Liberated Space](https://osf.io/qr8d5/download#:~:text=A%20type%20of%20social%20space,%252C%20liberation%20expression%252C%20and%20praxis.)
* Suggestion: create community agreement. This can be a few lines assuming people have good intent, challenge the idea not the person. We all have similar ideas of ending homelessness, hopefully within our lifetime
  + Good thing to talk about once entire board is here
* CDCLI joined the READY initiative – Race Equity, Diversity & Inclusion process that required challenging dialogue and mutual respect. There is a difference between safe space and brave space, must be willing to step into brave space
* We must come to collective agreement and a shared perspective, produce a shared objective on how we see homelessness.
  + Federal, state, and local all have different definitions, which tend to be the narrowest possible, but we may want to serve more than that
  + Where can philanthropy fill in the gaps?
  + Local government definition of homelessness is important when looking to reshape interpretations of regulations, which can be gray. Need to look at what regulations say and how they can be interpreted to be housing first
  + Bringing back the person when helping people is important. Due to funding sources and the paper trail, people we are hoping to help tend to feel not seen or heard.

Breakout rooms of 3-4 people each (7 min)

* What are some strengths you bring to the board?
* What are goals or initiatives you hope the CoC GB (Governance Board) can accomplish?

Group discussion of GB interest areas & strengths (15 min)

* Improving coordination between Nassau DSS and CDCLI to help people coming to shelter to get vouchers. Great connections have already been made!
* Governance Charter approved? Yes, but GB must review on annual basis and can make changes as needed
* Alignment between group members, similar visions on what we want to see board accomplished. Talked about Legislative Committee – GB can do CoC work but has challenges with what local governments impact work we need to be able to do. We need to get the word out to the people that we are helping and get them interested
* Looking forward to being able to pull from experiences with policy drafting. Zoning has made it difficult to keep up with the times and keep up with our folks. Excited to be together in a team of sectors that do not typically work together. There needs to be more education for those affected and those who want to find their way in this work as volunteers, advocates, etc.
* Want to make assisting Nassau get facilities for people experiencing homelessness a priority. The county is down 10 shelters since 2020. School access is an issue. Jamie is McKinney Vento liaison and there is a need for school districts to follow MCV. Some districts just will not provide busses
* No transparency mechanisms on what people are living through. Important to get to mainstream, raise awareness. Opportunity for group to raise transparency
* Going upstream is important – why do we have to wait until the last minute to help people? Families already know they need help before everything gets ripped away from them. Systems know too. What can we do to help that?
* Do we already have an agenda to follow? - there is a lot of room for self-determination, even though we must meet certain requirements
  + Coc is a group and a funding source. The group will be discussing how we align needs of LI with funding and how we can apply it to best serve LI.
  + Other issues we may want to weigh in on - such as MCV law violations
  + There is going to be a lot of new ideas and energy in space. Failed when expected 1 group of people to accomplish everything. We have a lot of mechanisms within CoC to use so it just does not fall on one committee. For example, establishing working groups. Generate ideas and figure out who could move those ideas forward.
    - Diverse body, can help identify others who can take on projects
* Is there anything that precludes us from partnering with other organizations / groups?
  + Pro-housing coalition for example
  + GB can make decisions on if they can sign on to things. Independent orgs sometimes have challenges signing onto letters because they are not allowed to lobby, but the CoC is not a nonprofit.
* Continue to share your feedback so we can develop training and hit on things you are interested in

**Attendees**

Greta Guarton, LICH

Alison Karppi, Town of Brookhaven

Rachel Seiler, CDLI

Rhonda Gooden

Stancy Stazione, Maureen’s Haven

Amanda Sanford

Jamie Harunthunian, Nassau DSS

Samantha Grimaldi

Margaret Taormina

Sarah Smith

Mia Baines

Sol Alfonso-Jones