

Morris County Advisory Committee on Women

November 19, 2019

Morris View Meeting Room

Present: Pam Bennett-Santoro, Lila Bernstein, Joann Bjornson, Kathy DeFillippo, Allison Delcalzo-Berens, Carole Harper, Elaine Muller, Gayle Pearson, Shelby Rhodes, Sharon Yoo

Guest: Lisa Firkser

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm by Chair Gayle Pearson.

MEETING SUMMARY

Guest: Lisa Firkser, CASA

Lisa Firkser is the director of the Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children (CASA) of Morris and Sussex Counties. She provided an overview of the program and indicated that over the last four years there has been a decrease in funding and a decrease in the number of children removed from households. She also explained that households are being reunified more quickly which sometimes can cause more frequent returns to the system. Firkser shared the ways that CASA supports parents, families, children and adolescents/teens. She noted that one area of need for women is that mothers who are reunified with their children have their cases closed and are shut off from funding for additional support. Possible outcomes of this are that mothers may return to a domestic violence situation or homelessness or experience relapse.

Reports

Human Services Report: Yoo reported that the warming center at Homeless Solutions is in operation and has been renovated. She also reported that the Morris Area Paratransit Services (MAPS) program is launching a new software to create a ride-sharing component. The centralization of community programming at 1 Medical Drive has increased access and coordination.

Freeholder Report: DeFillippo shared that the Seeds of Change award winner for this year will open the doors to increased nominations next year.

Chair Report: Pearson distributed information about the Voices of Women in America survey and asked members to complete the survey.

Seeds of Change Debrief

The members agreed that the Seeds of Change process this year went smoothly and the event itself was successful. Delcalzo-Berens reported that a reporter from WRNJ reached out to do an interview about the event. The contact information was provided to DeFillippo to follow up.

Select Project for 2020

Potential projects:

- Housing and homelessness: support current initiatives and new opportunities, for example the Ruth Davis Drive project
- Host a large meeting highlighting the history of the vote
- Quarterly stakeholders meeting for researching needs that fit into the goals of the women's committee
- Women vets helped by women business owners
- Research food insecurity
- Mentoring program to help rehabilitate formerly incarcerated women
- Mentoring program for women veterans

- Summit to bring together organizations working on women's focused projects and community members interested in volunteering

The committee discussed options at length and decided to support a current local initiative. The committee will revisit this early next year when there is more clarity on what is needed for the Ruth Davis Project.

Meeting Schedule 2020

The committee agreed to meet on the third Tuesday of every month, with the exception of August and December, starting at 5:30pm. The meetings will take place at 1 Medical Drive.

Membership 2020

All members, except Delcalzo-Berens, have reapplied for 2020 membership. Individuals who are interested in membership should apply through the biographical form online.

Officer Nominations: Bernstein nominated herself for the position of Vice-Chair. Pearson reported that she is unsure if she will be able to chair the committee next year. Delcalzo-Berens is not reapplying for membership for 2020 so there is a vacancy for the secretary position. No other members are interested in officer positions. Delcalzo-Berens will make a list of the job responsibilities of the secretary. Pearson will chair the first meeting of 2020. Bernstein will complete the meeting summary for the January 2020 meeting.

Announcements

Bjornson announced that Family Promise of Morris County, Family Promise National and Homeless Solutions have met with Mikie Sherril who has agreed to cosponsor a bipartisan bill that expands the national definition of homelessness to match the definition that the schools use for youth.

Pam reported that she left a message for the Chamber of Commerce but did not hear back. She will attempt to follow up again.

Meeting End

The meeting ended at 7:25pm

ACTION ITEMS

Who	What
Kathy (recycled)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring mission statement to the Freeholders for review