

MINUTES – APPROVED
October 18, 2018

MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY BOARD

September 27, 2018

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

1400 Emeline Avenue, Room 206, Santa Cruz, CA

Present: Aimee Escalante, Bek Phillips, Jodie Wells, Kathleen Avraham, Rebekah Mills, Xaloc Cabanes

Excused Absence: Hugh McCormick, Lynda Kaufmann, Supervisor Greg Caput

Unexcused Absence: 0

1. Public Comments

- Public Comment #1: MHCAN Board Member – MHCAN is the most grass roots program in the community, bringing people who are vulnerable and often not yet in service, or have been coming in and out of service, and have difficulty finding the support they need, to be stable. MHCAN is the most basic entry level mental health care that could be found.
- Public Comment #2: Executive Director of MHCAN – MHCAN funded by MHSA funds. Second Story is asking for already committed funds; none of the jobs are being lost by the closing of Second Story. Any reallocation of MHSA funds will mean lost jobs for other programs not run by a huge non-profit like Encompass. Encompass is a huge non-profit corporation not peer run. If MHCAN lost MHSA funds, we would close with all jobs lost. MHCAN is the only peer-run program in Santa Cruz County. MHSA funds Community Connections and other great peer staff programs. Asking the MHAB not to put other programs at risk to save Second Story.
- Public Comment #3: Neighbor of Second Story – in addition to funding issues, there are other significant problems with the program in a residential neighborhood. It is not a residential application and does not fit under the laws of a residential application. Law talks about 6 or fewer persons who “reside” in the home, no one resides in the home therefore it is not possible to be a residential facility. Many other issues with the program itself; I have lots of information regarding the laws and issues that have occurred. Even if you get the money, it can’t happen because it is not legal.
- Public Comment #4: Assistant Manager at Second Story – although no jobs will be lost due to the closing of the program, it will be a loss to the community; it is a valuable asset and resource for people in the community; service 144 people that come stay with us every year, and changing over to the community-based program is not going to offer the same type of support that Second Story can offer them now. Peers that have used the house find that the value is coming and being in a community at the house, rather than having someone come visit with them a couple of hours a day or week.
- Public Comment #5: Staff member at MHCAN – shared her personal story and requests to not alter the funds for MHCAN
- Public Comment #6: Volunteer Housing Navigator – have seen success of this program, 100% those that have come out of Second Story have stayed and sustained their housing as opposed to other County Mental Health patients; advise the Mental Health Advisory Board to advise the MH Director and the CAO to reconstitute the budget and sustain Second Story

- Public Comment #7: going to MHCAN for 6 years; grateful for MHCAN because I don't isolate myself; teaching classes at MHCAN for 6 years has given me a sense of purpose, however I see a lot of homeless people pass through there and know that we have been saving for a long time for a shower; plead to make funds available so showers can be installed at MHCAN
- Public Comment #8: MHCAN employee – shared personal story of being a member at MHCAN, then became an employee. MHSA funding for MHCAN is vital
- Public Comment #9: Staff at MHCAN – ask the Board to prioritize MHSA funds for MHCAN because it is a valuable service
- Public Comment #10: Outreach worker for MHCAN – MHCAN provides a wide range of services that are valuable. Aside from providing a sense of community, MHCAN services a lot of people, provides food, provides individual counseling, it is a good bridge to County services, gives people transportation, and is the only peer run organization. To reallocate funds to keep Second Story open and perhaps remove funds from MHCAN would be a mistake; we do a lot to diversity funding, however, cannot survive without MHSA funds.
- Public Comment #11: new to Santa Cruz (4 weeks), initially picked up by someone from MHCAN and opened their arms to me and offered me job, now work for MHCAN; great place for people to go to, gives people an outlet to be able to talk to someone and let go of things they may have been holding on to; great program; to take away the funding would be detrimental to society
- Public Comment #12: the defunding process has been opaque; the only outreach I have received regarding the defunding has been from peers; 3 MHSA Meetings scheduled with no bus services; make your letter to Board of Supervisors strong
- Public Comment #13: shared personal story regarding experiences with MHCAN and Second Story; continue MHCAN funding
- Public Comment #14: Staff member at MHCAN - shared personal story with MHCAN; feel there is deficit of peer services in Santa Cruz county; please prioritize MHSA funding for MHCAN; want to see expansion of peer services in Santa Cruz County
- Public Comment #15: currently going to MHCAN, shared personal story; don't close Second Story; don't change MHSA funding
- Public Comment #16: currently going to MHCAN – shared personal story; sorry to hear about the closure of Second Story, but don't alter the funds that are going to MHCAN
- Public Comment #17: shared personal story at MHCAN and Second Story
- Public Comment #18: Employee at MHCAN – MHCAN serves populations that other programs turn away; ask that we do not alter MHSA funds that are already allocated for MHCAN
- Public Comment #19: Patient's Rights Advocate for 25 years – MHCAN is a place where life happens; believe all peer run programs should be supported

- Public Comment #20: Staff at NAMI (used to work at MHCAN and Second Story) heartbreaking to see competition between two real important and wonderful peer-run programs
- Public Comment #21: Staff at Second Story – Second Story does not want to defund any program; we don't know the funding source; we are not just losing one peer program in town, we are losing an entire movement across the nation and across the world. It is beyond a peer program being shut down, it means losing a flagship of peer respite movement; important we do not lose momentum for peer national movement of respite houses
- Public Comment #22: Second Story a valuable program in our community, first in the state; surprised that there was no input from the MHAB regarding the decision to close Second Story; fight to save Second Story, ask to find the money
- Public Comment #23: Staff at Community Connection – here to support Second Story and represent Community Connection; 10 programs, 3 sites, 8 peer staff, 7 bilingual staff, unique dual diagnosis program; vital we keep our funding as well
- Public Comment #24: newbie at MHCAN – we should join together and add more MHCAN's and other affiliates to help the people in this County; this County needs more, not cuts
- Public Comment #25: Worked at Second Story – respite beds necessary for people to keep housing, for people to stay connected to recovery; encourage the Board to ask that the money be found in other funding streams that don't include MHSA funds being redistributed; essential that we fund all these organizations and expand them
- Public Comment #26: I believe we need so much more Mental Health Services in the County; Second Story does an amazing job; their purpose is needed and MHCAN amazingly more; it's about doing it right – problem with Second Story is that it was executed incorrectly. It is a disservice to the clients and the people the organization is trying to help, and they end up paying the ultimate price because of a poorly thought out plan for the program.

2. Letter to the Board of Supervisors divided up into four sections:
 - a. Issues
 - b. Solutions
 - c. Acknowledgements
 - d. Community Input Process

Motion by Jodie Wells to approve letter and submit to the Board of Supervisors. Second by Kate Avraham.

AYES: Aimee Escalante, Bek Phillips, Jodie Wells, Kathleen Avraham, Xaloc Cabanes

ABSTAIN: Rebekah Mills

ABSENT: Hugh McCormick, Lynda Kaufmann, Supervisor Greg Caput

The letter composed during the emergency meeting was not submitted to the Board of Supervisors since Second Story was saved.

Motion to adjourn made by Rebekah Mills. Second by Jodie Wells. Meeting adjourned at 5:21 p.m.