

INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE NORTH RIVER EXPANDED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
PROGRAM GOVERNING COMMISSION—WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 2013

The inaugural meeting of the North River Expanded Mental Health Services Governing Commission was convened at 7 p.m. by Joyce Zick, at the Parish Hall of St. John Episcopal Church. The following Commission members were in attendance: Gloria Centeno, Joan Liataud, Roger McGill, Pastor Wilfredo Santiago, Mary Shehan, Carole Spreitzer, Mary Tinich, Rosemary Tirio, Joyce Zick. No one was absent.

Joyce Zick, as Governor Quinn's at-large appointee, explained that she had been asked by the offices of the Governor and the Mayor to convene the inaugural meeting. She welcomed all present, including Commission members and approximately 13 community residents and other observers.

She described her interest in the North River Expanded Mental Health Services Program as going back to when she was a student preparing for a career as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and was subsequently assigned to work at the City of Chicago's North River Center. She remembers the height of the center when services were outstanding and offered to everyone in the community. She also recalled the years of decline when services were slashed and staff was cut dramatically. She characterized the 74% vote in favor of the referendum last November as a mandate for the Commission to move forward with its business as much time has been wasted due to the Mayor's late appointments and the fact that important deadlines must be met regardless of the Commission's tardy beginning.

Joyce distributed copies of the proposed agenda along with copies of the Community Mental Health Services Act and a paper detailing requirements for the Open Meetings Act. After time to look over the agenda, Carole Spreitzer moved to approve the proposed agenda and Roger McGill seconded with all in favor.

Joyce then indicated a number of commissioners had been in contact with the Mayor's office in April and were told to begin laying the preliminary groundwork for establishing the Expanded Mental Health Services Program. As a result, the five Commissioners who had already been appointed by Gov. Quinn had developed the proposed agenda and several initial proposed plans. The representative from Gov. Quinn's office who was supposed to attend the inaugural meeting was unable to do so. Joyce indicated that her contact with the Governor's office had emphasized that the most important function of the inaugural meeting was the election of a chairperson.

Mary Tinich then moved that, in light of Joyce's contacts with the Mayor and Governor and because of her long history with the North River Mental Health Center, Joyce Zick should be nominated for the office of Interim Chairperson of the Governing Commission. Roger McGill seconded the motion, and a voice vote was unanimous in favor of the motion electing Joyce Zick Interim Chair of the Governing Commission.

Each Commission member then made introductory remarks identifying who they are and their affiliation with the North River Program prior to Commission appointment, as follows:

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| Gloria Centeno | Consumer at North River Mental Health Center for 13 years; acted as Spanish-speaking coordinator working with therapists and keeping case management files on peer consumers and advocating for them. Peer Specialist and Wellness Facilitator. |
| Mary Shehan | Resident of the Edgebrook neighborhood of the 39 th Ward; Chief Nursing Officer at Swedish Covenant Hospital. Has worked with the large volume of psychiatric patients treated at the hospital, and is pleased to be included in the Commission because she is concerned with the lack of continued treatment available to her patients after their release from the hospital. |
| Rev. Wilfredo Santiago | Senior Pastor of Rebano Church located in the Humboldt Park neighborhood; Resident of Sauganash Woods. President of LEAP, the Latino Empowerment |

Association of Pastors. He is eager for Hispanic congregations to be more active in outreach and in displaying the love of God with a focus on family needs and generally being more engaged in Social Justice emphasizing the spirit, soul and body.

- Carole Spreitzer Retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker who worked for 42 years, 38 of which were with the Jewish Children and Family Services. Since retiring three years ago, she has become involved in several social justice issues. She had heard that the North River Center was a “gem” and would like to work to restore it to that condition. She has been a member of the Coalition to Save Our Mental Health Centers for 4+ years.
- Joan Liataud Senior Director of Clinical Operations, Heartland Health Outreach. At first this agency dealt only with refugees, but now they assist the homeless, HIV victims, and many persons with mental disorders as well. Heartland provides outpatient services including housing and oral health assistance. They concentrate on providing housing, as housing is the first priority in health care.
- Rosemary Tirio A resident of Sauganash for 35 years, she recalls when the North River Mental Health Center was open to all area residents and wants to restore that capability of the institution as many ordinary people suffer from mental problems for which they have no sources of treatment. A facility in their own community might prevent a good deal of potential violence.
- Roger McGill A 65-year resident of the Mayfair area, Roger is Staff Assistant, Vietnam Veterans of America Service Office. He served in Vietnam. He is affiliated with the VA hospital where he advocates for the needs of veterans including homeless issues, unemployment, and health problems particularly those caused by exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. They treat Korean War, World War II Veterans, Persian Gulf War Veterans and Veterans from the Iraq-Afghanistan War. Roger is a member of the Mayor’s Veterans Advisory Council.
- Mary Tinich A resident of Sauganash, Mary is a retired teacher of English as a Second Language and, for the last 13 years has taught at Haugan and Murphy Schools, both located in the area served by North River Mental Health Center. A member of the Coalition to Save Our Mental Health Centers for seven years, Mary was amazed to find that so many area residents were so concerned about mental health issues and willing to help to improve them. Mary hopes to be “the voice for this community that wants this [expansion of mental health services].”

Chairperson Zick then proceeded to the matter of determining regular Commission meeting dates which, according to the Open Meetings Act, must be determined and posted in advance for the year. As the inaugural meeting was being conducted on the third Wednesday of June, Joyce proposed that the third Wednesdays of the next six months be designated Governing Commission meeting dates. She also indicated that these dates would not interfere with Christmas or Thanksgiving and that the meeting place at St. John’s Episcopal Church Parish Hall would be available for the Commission’s use.

It was agreed by consensus that the third Wednesdays of the next six months, (July 17, August 21, September 18, October 16, November 20, and December 18) be designated meeting dates for the Governing Commission.

The next agenda item, was Establishment of Committees. Committees were formed as follows:

Bylaws – Mary Tinich, Chair; Rosemary Tirio; Mary Shehan
Finance and Tax Levy – Carole Spreitzer, Chair; Joan Liataud, Rev. Wilfredo Santiago

Program Services – Gloria Centeno, Chair; Joyce Zick, Roger McGill

Moving on to the “Other Business” section of the agenda, Carole Spreitzer moved and the Rev. Santiago seconded that Rosemary Tirio, due to her experience as an English teacher, be elected Secretary of the Governing Commission. The unanimous voice vote carried the motion, and Rosemary Tirio is the interim Secretary of the Governing Commission.

Chairperson Zick then suggested that Rosemary also undertake the duties of the Ethics Officer. Hearing no opposition, she appointed Rosemary to that position.

Chairman Zick then asked Michael Snedeker of the Coalition to Save Our Mental Health Centers to explain requirements of the Open Meetings Act. Mike said that, because we are a public body, we are bound by the requirements of the Open Meetings Act which include posting the regular meeting schedule including dates, times and places at the start of the year. Agendas for each meeting including actions to be taken must be posted 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The minutes of each meeting must be posted within seven days of approval of those minutes. Additionally, the Press must be notified of meetings if they so request.

Mike also pointed out that the time, place, date and agenda of committee meetings must be posted 48 hours in advance of the meeting at the place where the meeting is to occur. He suggested that all the details of the OMA would become clear once Commissioners completed their Open Meetings Act training, The Ethics Officer will follow up on commissioners’ participation in ethics training as well.

Commissioner Carole Spreitzer added that no more than two committee members can be together to discuss Commission business because three members would constitute a majority of a quorum and so be a public meeting.

Chairman Zick introduced the Public Comments portion of the meeting by introducing “important people who have worked hard and waited long to have this meeting come to fruition.”

The public comments were made by community members and were all positive in nature and expressed the gratitude of those observers that the proposed expansion of mental health services in the North River Community is finally coming close to reality.

Commissioner Spreitzer then moved that the meeting be adjourned. Commissioner McGill seconded the motion, and the Inaugural Meeting of the North River Expanded Mental Health Services Program Governing Commission was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Tirio
Interim Secretary