Supportive Housing Commission Members

Kenyatta Yamel
Chair

Ald. Michael Murphy
Alderman, 15th District,
representing Milwaukee Common Council

Supv. Lynne DeBruin
County Board Supervisor, 15th District,
representing Milwaukee County Board

Mr. Corey Hoze
Director,
Milwaukee County Dept. of Health and Human Services

Ms. Joan Lawrence
Executive Director,
Our Space, Inc.

Mr. James Marks
Vice President of Grants,
Greater Milwaukee Foundation

Ms. Anne McDevitt

Mr. Jeff Seider
Red Cross of Southeast Wisconsin
(resigned December 2008)
Continuum of Care Representative

Mr. James Tarantino
Owner,
Tarantino & Co.

Ms. Paula John
President,
AMS Fund

Ms. Martha Rasmus
President,
Mental Health America of Wisconsin

Ms. Rochell Williams
Program Manager, Social Development Commission
Continuum of Care Representative

Ms. Suzanne Breier
Mayor's Citizen/Business Representative

Mr. Steven Mahan
Director, City of Milwaukee
Community Development Grants Administration

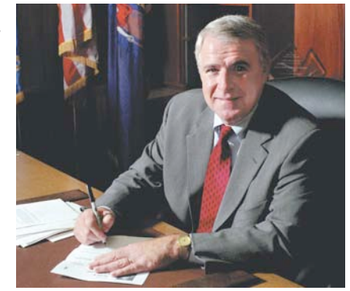
Mr. Tony Perez
Executive Director,
Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee

Ms. Cindy Archer
Director
Milwaukee County Dept. of Administrative Services

On the cover: United House, 2500 W. Center St., opened in August 2008 as Milwaukee's first new supportive housing development.

A job training program for residents of The Guest House, developed in connection with the construction of Prairie Apartments, employed several residents.

Message from Mayor Tom Barrett



2008 saw an important milestone for Milwaukee: the completion of the first supportive housing building for residents with mental illness. It is my hope and commitment that this project will be the first of many.

The impact of these developments can be tremendous. For residents, moving to a supportive building provides housing stability and a sense of community and belonging. For our neighborhoods, supportive housing development brings investment and revitalization. For our city, supportive housing means fewer expenditures for emergency room visits, shelters, and even jail, and a reduction in homelessness.

We need a sustained, community-wide effort to increase the inventory of supportive housing units in Milwaukee. I am grateful for the leadership of the Commission on Supportive Housing in this important endeavor.

Tom Barrett
Mayor

Message from County Executive Scott Walker

To the Members, City/County Commission on Supportive Housing:

Two years ago, Mayor Tom Barrett and I convened a task force to identify ways to improve the unacceptable condition of much of this community's housing available to people with mental illness. The study recommended, among other steps, the creation of your Commission. I am pleased to receive the Commission's first Annual Report. The report tells of some of the very good work that has been done by many caring people in the community over the past year to enhance both the quality and supply of housing for this particularly vulnerable and underserved population.

You are part of that group of caring people. I am grateful to you for having agreed to serve, and for your diligent oversight. I wish you well as you continue your important work.

Scott K. Walker
County Executive

supportive HOUSING MILWAUKEE

2008 Annual Report

City/County Commission on Supportive Housing

At the request of Mayor Tom Barrett and County Executive Scott Walker, the Milwaukee Common Council and the Milwaukee County Board both enacted legislation creating a City/County Commission on Supportive Housing in September and October, 2007. The commission held its inaugural meeting January 15, 2008. Kenyatta Yamel was elected as Commission Chair, and James Tarantino was elected Vice-Chair.

The enabling legislation provided for appointees to the commission representing the philanthropic community, the Milwaukee Continuum of Care, mental health advocacy organizations, mental health consumers, and citizen and business representatives. A list of the Commission's membership is contained in this report.

Mayor Tom Barrett (front) signed legislation establishing the Supportive Housing Commission. He was joined by (left to right) Ald. Michael Murphy and John Cianelli of the Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division.

Mission of the Commission

The enabling legislation established the following mission for the Commission on Supportive Housing:

"…serve as a community infrastructure with the institutional commitment and the financial resources necessary for providing safe, affordable and accessible housing options with supportive services for persons with mental illness or other special needs. The commission shall establish goals and benchmarks for the effort to address housing needs for persons with mental illness and other special needs in the community, and monitor progress and hold the community accountable for meeting those goals. The commission shall also provide input regarding special needs housing to the city of Milwaukee in connection with the preparation of the consolidated plan/action plan submitted by the city to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for Community Development Block Grant, HOME, emergency shelter grants and Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS funds."

2008 Activities

The Commission held quarterly meetings, on January 15, April 22, July 29, and October 22, 2008. Agendas and minutes of these meetings are available at **www.supportivehousingmilwaukee.org**.

The Commission adopted a statement of mission and guiding principles, and adopted a policy on advocacy for supportive housing activities.

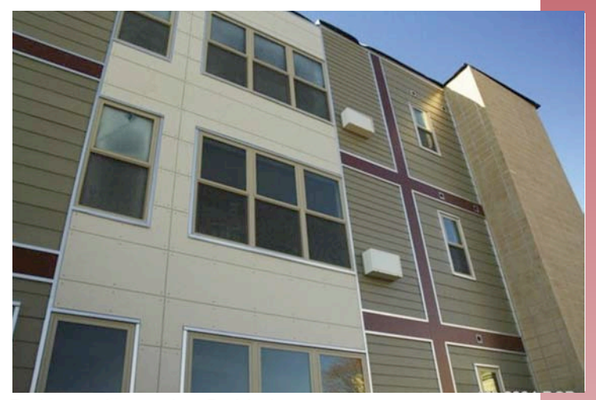
The Commission received quarterly updates on the development of supportive housing units in Milwaukee County.

The Commission created a web site providing information about supportive housing, including policy and best practices resources and descriptions and updates regarding local supportive housing developments. The URL is **www.supportivehousingmilwaukee.org**.

2008 Supportive Housing Development Activity

Two supportive housing developments that received allocations of low-income housing tax credits in 2007 from the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) were constructed in 2008.

United House, a 24-unit building constructed on vacant property purchased from the City of Milwaukee at 2500 W. Center St., opened its doors in September 2008. Its one-bedroom units are available to individuals experiencing mental illness. Supportive services at the building are provided by Our Space, Inc. and funded by Milwaukee County. The building was developed by United Christian Church and Cardinal Capital Group, a Milwaukee firm. The Milwaukee County Housing Trust Fund provided a $344,000 grant to the project, and the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee and HUD's Shelter plus Care Program provided 24 rent vouchers.



Residents will move into Prairie Apartments, 1218 W. Highland Ave., in early 2009.

Prairie Apartments, a 24-unit building at 1218 W. Highland Ave., will be completed in January 2009. Guest House of Milwaukee and Heartland Alliance of Chicago teamed up to sponsor the development. The project will provide 24 new one-bedroom and studio apartments with private baths and kitchens. Other amenities include a fitness center, technology center, laundry facilities, and tenant storage. Rent subsidies are available for two-thirds of the units. Prairie Apartments will serve individuals at risk of homelessness because of mental health or other conditions. Supportive services will be provided to tenants by Guest House of Milwaukee and funded by Milwaukee County. The City of Milwaukee Housing Trust Fund provided a $125,000 grant to the project, and the County Housing Trust Fund contributed $158,000.

The City of Milwaukee approved rezoning and the sale of the vacant Johnston Community Health Center, 1230 W. Grant St., to Mercy Housing Lakefront of Chicago for development of **Johnston Center Residences**. The project includes creation of 91 studio units through the renovation of the clinic building and construction of a building addition. Mercy Housing Lakefront will provide supportive services at the building. The project received a partial low-income housing tax credit allocation in late 2008, and the developer expects to seek additional credits in 2009. The City and County Housing Trust Funds have provided grants to the project, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is providing rent vouchers through the Shelter Plus Care program.

In December, the Milwaukee County Board approved $277,000 in County Housing Trust Fund, added to $200,000 provided by the City, to support the **Washington Park Apartments** supportive housing development at 39th St. and Lisbon Ave. United Methodist Children's Services will develop and manage the project and provide support services to the residents. The project will create 24 units of permanent housing for families. Ten of these units will be made available to County behavioral health system consumers with children. These 3-bedroom supported apartments are in extremely short supply, and City and County support for this project helps to address an especially critical need for supportive housing. Construction is expected to begin in late December.

The Milwaukee County Housing Division and the Milwaukee Center for Independence (MCFI) co-sponsored a **seminar on housing for people with mental illness** in Milwaukee County in early December. More than 70 people attended the seminar, titled "A Place to Call Home," which was moderated by *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* reporter Meg Kissinger. Ms. Kissinger's series of articles in 2006 generated significant public attention and prompted the creation of the Special Needs Housing Action Team. Seminar panelists reviewed what has happened in the community since those articles first appeared, what Minnesota is doing regarding supportive housing, and what challenges lie ahead.

The Milwaukee County Housing Director has been appointed to serve on the Qualified Allocation Plan Advisory Committee of the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA). This committee reviews and recommends changes in the criteria WHEDA uses to determine how low-income housing tax credits are allocated to projects. The appointment fulfills another of the recommendations made by the Special Needs Housing Action Team in its final report.

Staff of the Milwaukee County Housing Division's Special Needs section implemented an **Approved Provider List**. The list contains the names and addresses of landlords who work with County staff to provide scattered site housing for Behavioral Health Division consumers. These landlords agree to allow staff to inspect their buildings at all reasonable hours to ensure that they meet acceptable standards. The landlords also agree to undergo annual re-evaluation and to maintain their properties in strict compliance with municipal zoning laws and building code requirements. At year's end, the list included 28 different kinds of facilities located at more than 30 different addresses in Milwaukee County.

Officials celebrated the grand opening of United House in August 2008. From left to right: Erich Schwenker, Cardinal Capital Group; Supv. Elizabeth Coggs-Jones; Corey Hoze, Milwaukee County; Rev. Elloyd Jones, United Christian Church; County Executive Scott Walker; Ald. Willie Wade; Rocky Marcoux, Dept. of City Development, and Jesse Greenlee, Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority.

Status of Recommendations
Special Needs Housing Action Team Final Report
January 2009

Recommendation	Status
Establish permanent Commission on Supportive Housing	Commission established by City and County government November 2007. Began meeting quarterly in January 2008.
Establish City-County staff-level Supportive Housing Development Committee	City and County staff are working together on an informal basis, but no formal Committee has been established.
Common Council and County Board should establish gap financing fund to encourage greater use of 4% tax credits and bond financing for supportive housing development	City and County both have used their Housing Trust Funds to fund supportive housing development projects. See attachment for details of funded projects.
City, County and Continuum of Care should coordinate application processes and deadlines for resources related to supportive housing.	To be considered.
Mayor and County Executive should convene local philanthropic leadership to discuss supportive housing needs.	Two representatives of the philanthropic community serve on the Commission on Supportive Housing.
City, Milwaukee County and local philanthropists should increase administrative support for the Continuum of Care.	City and County are both providing $50,000 annually toward the Continuum's administrative expenses.
City and County should ask WHEDA to appoint individual with knowledge of supportive housing to the Qualified Allocation Plan Advisory Committee.	James Hill, director of housing for Milwaukee County Dept. of Health and Human Services, served on the QAP in 2008.
City and County should recommend various changes to QAP that would have the impact of making supportive housing development more competitive for 9% low-income housing tax credits.	Recommendations were submitted in 2008.
WHEDA should create a State low-income housing tax credit to be used exclusively for supportive housing development.	Effective in 2008, WHEDA has created a set-aside of federal low-income housing tax credits for this purpose.
Mayor and County Executive should jointly nominate an individual knowledgeable about supportive housing needs to the Community Investment Advisory Council of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago.	JamesHill, director of housing for Milwaukee County Dept. of Health and Human Services, was appointed to a three-year term on the Council in 2008.
Governor, State legislature, and federal government should work in partnership with City and County to adequately fund treatment and support services for people with mental illness.	The Make It Work Milwaukee Coalition has identified the need for state assistance for supportive housing as a priority in its 2009 legislative agenda.

City & County Housing Trust Fund Contributions To Supportive Housing Developments in 2008

Table includes projects that are under construction as well as proposed projects to which funds have been committed or for which requests are pending.

Project	Units	Cost	City Trust Fund Contrib. (% of Cost)	County Trust Fund Contrib. (% of Cost)
United House	24	$ 3.6 m	0* (n/a)	$ 348,000 (9.7%)
Prairie Apartments	24	$ 5.0 m	$ 430,000 (8.6%)	$ 157,000 (3.1%)
Empowerment Village	34	$ 5.6 m	$ 350,000** (6.3%)	$ 500,000 (9.0%)
Johnston Center Residences	91	$ 13.0 m	$ 750,000 (5.8%)	$ 750,000 (5.8%)
Washington Park Apartments	24	$ 7.1 m	$ 200,000 (2.8%)	$ 277,000 (3.9%)
Total	197	$ 34.3 m	$ 1,730,000 (5.0%)	$ 2,032,000 (5.9%)

* City contributed vacant parcels of property and project-based rent assistance vouchers.
** Requested support.

Prepared by James. M. Hill
Director of Housing, DHHS
January 22, 2009