



HOMELESS TASK FORCE

MINUTES

December 9, 2015
5:30 pm, City Hall

In Attendance

Task Force Members: Vicki Boatman, Ron Kupferstein, Bill Blair, Ralph Bauer

Council Liaisons: Councilmember Barbara Delgleize

City Staff: Chief Robert Handy, Lt. Kelly Rodriguez, Kellee Fritzal, Captain Dave Bunetta, Cathy Lukehart, Muriel Ullman, Bill Nelson

1. Public Comment: Susan Price – Discussed that homelessness is a polarizing issue; HUD coordinated entry system and the benefits of a regional approach.

2. Minutes of November 18, 2016 Homeless Task Force Meeting – Approved 4-0-3 (absent Moses, Sullivan, Valdez)

3. Presentation by Chief Handy regarding the Current Status of Police Activities regarding Homelessness - Chief Handy addressed current police resources dedicated to the homelessness in Huntington Beach. He provided the current funding and a breakdown of homeless-related calls. Chief Handy stated that only the first officer's time was accounted for in estimation of police resources utilized on homeless-related calls, so the Chief believes the time utilized is actually higher than the numbers he was able to provide. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of homeless related calls since last year. Officer Gabe Ricci is dedicated to the issue on a full-time basis. The Chief is working to have a second officer assigned to assist Officer Ricci in January. He also noted that Cathy Lukehart, a part-time employee, will also be assisting the Police Department. Chief Handy stated that there is an auxiliary team of 4-6 officers who have helped survey and build relationships with homeless individuals. The Chief stated that multiple contacts are required prior to a homeless individual being ready to ask for services. The Police Department distributes a resource list.

Member Kupferstein asked about repeat offenders and Chief Handy indicated that there were some. One gentleman has caused 36 call-outs individually. Vice Chair Bauer asked about training in dealing with mentally ill individuals. Chief Handy responded that officers typically have a minimum of 16 hours in crisis intervention training. Vice Chair Blair asked about management of caseloads and was informed there were multiple successes in housing and/or reuniting individuals with family members and some in the pipeline. Member Blair discussed the definition of chronic homeless.

4. Presentation by Kellee Fritzal on Affordable Housing Programs in Huntington Beach – Ms. Fritzal provided a definition of “Affordable” housing which means 30% or less of total household income goes to housing costs (mortgage, utilities, insurance, etc). Generally, Huntington Beach is an expensive place to live and has a low vacancy rate.

Ms. Fritzal discussed the different types of existing shelters within the City, the number of affordable rental units in the City, an explanation of inclusionary housing, and density bonuses. With the loss of Redevelopment and HUD funding decreases, there was a 90% reduction in the budget. Affordable rental units in the City are 98% full. Housing vouchers may go unused because landlords are unwilling to accept them.

Programs include the Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) and the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Rehabilitation Program. Interval House is the provider for the TBRA. They assist HB homeless who are employed or employable with rental assistance. Apartment owners must be willing to accept third party checks, which makes it difficult. IH helps subsidize rent for 6-12 months, typically and provides wraparound services to ensure success. CDBG provides grants and low income loans to homeowners for possible rehabilitation.

Councilmember Barbara Delgleize discussed that the City has a tremendous amount of rental housing and the City needs to market to the rental property owners to accept third-party checks and to help the homeless. Member Boatman discussed the need for a coordinated system to assist homeless. Member Kupferstein asked if there was a minimum square footage requirement for apartment units. Ms. Fritzal responded that in some Specific Plans there is minimum square footage for apartment units of 500 sq. ft.

Members of the various nonprofits that work with the City of Huntington Beach or with Homelessness were in attendance and added comments to Ms. Fritzal’s presentation:

Colette’s Children’s Home: Deby Wolford, Program Manager discussed that they have 3 transitional housing buildings in the City and 16 permanent housing units in the City. As part of the transitional program the clients save 80% of their income to help them start in permanent housing. On average clients are in transitional housing for 6 months.

Interval House: Sharon Wie, Director of Programs discussed that Interval House has a 6-bed transitional house in Huntington Beach for domestic violence victims. She explained that they use TBRA HOME funds for homeless, vets, seniors, domestic violence victims and individuals with extremely low income. They reach out to landlords and apartment owners for units.

Mercy House: Larry Haynes, Executive Director discussed the upcoming Mercy/Wakeland project. Mercy House administers the armory shelter program. There was a consensus on the need to create more housing – to identify apartments and developers open to this possibility. For every dollar driven by the City, there are multiple benefits to the City. As part of the Housing First model, he challenged everyone to think that each member of a civilized society is entitled to housing.

Jamboree: Helen Cameron, Director of Supportive Permanent Housing; discussed Jamboree's recent projects in Irvine and Buena Park which connects homeless people with medical services – wrap-around service for permanent housing.

American Family Housing: Donna Gallup, President discussed that AFH has 53 properties in 3 counties. She discussed AFH new project – Potter's Lane in Midway City where there will be 16 new units for homeless clients. They assist with interim and rapid rehousing. They are open to different housing models, such as shared housing.

Build Futures: Kathy Tillotson, Executive Director described the focus on housing young people ages 18-24, typically in sober living. She pays the weekly rent and helps them get back on their feet by looking for jobs. She had a very high number of individuals housed and she makes a commitment to find them housing within 24 hours of meeting them. She has no staff and takes no salary. Is critical because the 2-1-1 coordinated entry only focuses on a score of "8" and above, but cannot commit to immediate housing of others.

5. General discussion by Homeless Task Force Members:

Member Boatman asked Lt. Rodriguez what was being done about panhandling. She was informed that panhandling in an aggressive manner was addressed by a City ordinance, but everyone is allowed public access to the streets and has a first amendment right to solicit donations. You need a willing "victim" for any type of prosecution.

a. Review of Recommendations: Vice Chair Bauer discussed briefly some of his recommendations. Member Kupferstein asked about the value establishing subcommittees. All members agreed to put together 3 person subcommittees. Ron Kupferstein moved to establish subcommittees on housing, police, coordination of services, health services and economic self-sufficiency. Bill Blair seconded the motion. Approved 4-0

Member Kupferstein and Vice Chair Bauer discussed what the protocol should be if more than three members wished to be on any subcommittees and whether staff should be present in order to have a meeting of the subcommittees. Member Kupferstein suggested that staff was not necessary unless the subcommittee desired such and Vice Chair Bauer suggested the subcommittee meetings did need staff present. Bill Blair had to leave the meeting, at which point Kellee Fritzal informed everyone that the quorum was lost.

Meeting adjourned at 7:22