



HOMELESS TASK FORCE Committee Meeting Notes

Wednesday, August 12, 2015
5:00 PM
2000 Main Street
Lower Level Meeting Room B-8

In Attendance

City Staff: Chief Robert Handy, Lt. Kelly Rodriguez, Teri Baker, Kellee Fritzal, Stephanie Beverage, Simone Slifman

Task Force Members: Vice-Chair Ralph Bauer, Bill Blair, Dave Moses, Ron Kuferstein, Joseph Sullivan
Chair Hector Valdez

1. Public Comments (Limited to 3 minutes/person):

Amory Hansen stated that based on his experiences as a bus passenger and his belief that way to solve homelessness is through punitive measures, he is starting an organization called Orange County Association for Victims of Homeless People and announced that the first meeting of the group would take place August 31 at 12:00 PM at 224 10th Street, Huntington Beach and that he may be reached by phone at 714-371-5578.

2. Approval of Minutes from the Meeting of July 8, 2015

A motion was made by Member Bill Blair to approve the minutes of July 8th. Vice-Chair Ralph Bauer said that he distributed written questions to the group at the last meeting and there is no mention of it in the minutes. He also said he is not able to download presentations posted on the website from prior meetings so he would like printed copies to be provided to him and that he believed not providing them is in violation of the Brown Act. He also requested a staff presentation of where we are currently and what we are doing and requested that the agenda for future Task Force meetings include time for members to express their concerns. Member Blair amended his motion to approve the minutes, as amended. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Bauer. Chair Valdez, Vice Chair Bauer, and members Blair, Moses and Sullivan voted in favor of approval, with Member Kupferstein out of the room. Kellee Fritzal also clarified that minutes do not require attachments and we are following and adhering to the Brown Act.

3. Presentation by Paul Leon, Executive Director of the Illumination Foundation, regarding the variety of services the organization provides to the OC Homeless population.

Leon presented a PowerPoint about the Illumination Foundation (IF), its history, programs/services related to healthcare and housing for the homeless, and results achieved. IF provides wraparound services. Their housing goal is to keep people housed once they have been placed. According to Leon, many of those who are mentally ill and/or have been previously incarcerated may stay in housing once they are housed. He stated that the Housing First model is the model they follow, which centers on providing the homeless with housing as quickly as possible and then providing other services as needed. He indicated that this model has resulted in great success, but that it doesn't work without the availability of actual transitional and permanent housing.

Leon presented information on their multi-service centers, recuperative care, and various housing opportunities and service programs they employ in working with homeless individuals and families. IF is one of 88 facilities nationwide certified to provide recuperative care, and is the only facility in OC to do so. Recuperative care acts as a bridge to permanent housing for those homeless who would otherwise not remain hospitalized but would be without a location in which to continue recuperating without unnecessarily returning to the emergency room.

They ultimately work to transition clients placed in housing to have their own permanent leases. They offer emergency and extended shelter housing units as well as scattered site housing. Leon mentioned that in addition to providing housing, IF also has housing in Stanton. They operate a Children's Resource Center in Stanton, which provides services to children who have been unstably housed.

Their Housing Assistance Pilot Program provides housing vouchers and placed 64 families into immediate housing in Anaheim. Of these families, Leon reported that 94% stayed in housing, and average household income growth went up by 52% within 12 months of entry into the program. IF's Chronic Care Plus works with substance abusers and the mentally ill. Leon indicated that they initially worked with 20 severely impacted individuals and all 24 have remained in permanent housing after two years.

An inquiry was made as to how we can communicate that the services of IF are available. Leon mentioned flyers and information can be provided to HBPD as referral sources. It is important when working with the homeless as a link and resource to continue to follow up.

Chief Rob Handy asked about the success in dealing with substance abusers. Leon said that the key is to get them into housing, and they are getting better at it, but still have a long way to go. Lieutenant Kelly Rodriguez asked whether people have refused to participate in one of their programs. Leon replied that, yes, people have refused, but after a few times of being asked they usually agree to participate.

Vice Chair Ralph Bauer asked how we can participate in Huntington Beach. Leon said that they accept clients by referral, with Hoag and Fountain Valley Hospital providing the majority of

referrals of HB people. Since IF's service is based on capacity, most people do have to go to Stanton to get services. Leon stated that there are many grants for housing first programs and that the County needs to begin working to implement housing in their SB2 zone(s). Bauer asked what their counseling program consists of and Leon indicated that their staff are mostly mental health professionals and case managers, and that it is often misrepresented that the mentally ill are making a choice to be homeless, which is not true.

Member Joseph Sullivan inquired about the source of IF's funding. Leon replied that funding is provided through a combination of private donations from individuals and corporations, and various government funding, including a few recent Federal grants, although the County does not receive as much federal funding than do other places.

Billy O'Connell commented that housing first programs do not fix every problem and that transitional housing also helps to fill many needs.

Barbara Delgleize asked Leon what he would do if he were an individual serving on a new committee like the Homeless Task Force. Leon replied that he would badger the County and City for more housing and assistance and increasing advocacy, which is key.

4. Presentation by Pastor Bill Nelson, Executive Director of Fresh Beginnings, Regarding an Overview of Efforts Being Made by the Faith-Based Community to Assist the Homeless

Pastor Bill Nelson presented a PowerPoint identifying various nonprofits in Huntington Beach and the services they provide to the local homeless population. He stated that there are two types of faith-based services – churches and para-church organization, as well as a large number of non-faith based nonprofits. He stated that the key to all of these services and their success is in establishing relationships with the people in need to establish trust.

Of the faith-based organizations, Nelson reported that Beach Cities Interfaith Services is currently seeing volume of 105-112 people a day during their limited hours. First Christian provides services which include utility assistance. Their staff is trained to talk with the homeless, and served about 600 people in their first year. Nelson's Organization, Fresh Beginnings, provides a mentoring course and will be graduating 90 new mentors in November. Coast to Coast Foundation also provides outreach and referral services in Huntington Beach.

5. Task Force Wrap Up with Pastor Bill Nelson, Executive Director of Fresh Beginnings Ministries

Nelson asked the Task Force members what new thing they learned from Paul Leon during his presentation:

Member Sullivan stated that he learned about the need for a lot of mental health professionals and case managers, and, when asked by Nelson, responded that he does believe Housing First works. Barbara Delgleize stated that she learned that it is possible to solve these problems but it is a matter of figuring out how to pull it all together to

make it work. Paul Leon added that putting a mentally ill person into housing does work.

Vice Chair Bauer said that the reality of the housing shortage means that rents increase and that there is no penalty to cities for not complying with providing five levels of housing. Bauer said it is necessary to put four people on City Council to approve/promote housing and that it is important to educate and re-educate the public. He also mentioned that the ACLU sued the City of Laguna Beach.

Member Moses asked Leon whether they were putting people into rooms or into entire apartments. Leon replied that they place most into one-bedroom apartments, although some people do want to share.

Vice Chair Bauer said that Single Room Occupancy (SRO) facilities are cost effective but no one wants them. Kellee Fritzel replied that there is an SRO in HB and that it has been a significant source of calls to our police and fire departments.

Billy O'Connell stated that he is issuing a challenge to each member of the Task Force to take one homeless person off the street by the next meeting and start helping them.

Barbara Delgleize said when she encounters someone homeless and wants to assist she doesn't know who to call first. Leon replied that 211 has improved quite a bit and the Illumination Foundation can also assist. Delgleize said we need some "wins" in order to have anything accepted by the community. O'Connell said that Colette's has taken people off the street and turned entire neighborhoods around – the "win" is showing benefits to the taxpayer.

6. Adjourn to September 9, 2015 at 5:00 P.M.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 PM.