

## **Metropolitan Homelessness Encampment Task Force Meeting**

Tuesday, February 24, 2016

at Metro Social Services

800 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North

The meeting began at 9:00 a.m.

**Present:** Will Connelly, Wendell Segroves, Phil Duke, Traci Pekovitch, Lindsey Krinks, Sgt. Brian Williams (sitting in for Sgt. John Bourque), Renee Pratt, Charlie Strobel, Erik Cole, Alex Smith, Tommy Lynch

**Public:** Steve Lindstrom, Denis Huey, Nathan Scarlett, Cayla Wilson, Chris Scott, Anne Havard, Angie Hubbard, Jr Davis, Tracey Harris, Caleb Pickering, John Dettering, Haley Spigner, Kate Wade, Jayce Freeman, Elli Whiteway, Diane McNamara, Adam Graham, Lesley Head, Elizabeth Langgle-Martin, Ingrid McIntyre, Samuel Lester

**Staff:** Judy Tackett, Karri Simpson, Katie Downey (Metro Legal)

### **Approval of minutes:**

The minutes from the February 17, 2016 meeting were approved.

### **Housekeeping Items:**

Judy Tackett went over what was included in the task force member's packets: a draft of their recommendations including policies around unsanctioned encampments and creating sanctioned encampments. The final draft needs to be ready prior to next Wednesday.

### **Review Recommendations:**

Task force members read through the draft recommendations in silence individually.

### **Discussion among Task Force members:**

The task force discussed the draft document, by breaking it down into sections beginning with the introduction. Charlie Strobel asked that literal homelessness be clarified. Literal homelessness is defined as people living on streets, shelters, cars, and people living in places not meant for human habitation. It was determined that this and other definitions should be included within the final recommendation document. The Tennessee Department of Health also has rule and definitions in regards to a sanctioned camp. It was decided to also include the vision the task force voted on previously to be included in the introduction.

### First recommendation

Objective: Our community needs to have clear policies around how to deal with unsanctioned camps."

Specifics on this recommendation were broken down:

1. Establishing clear protocol that outlines how Metro government responds to community calls about an unsanctioned campsite.
  - Discussion included:
    - o Encampments on private property and codes.
    - o Taking out the specific hour limitation for when the eviction process from an unsanctioned encampment begins.
    - o Adding clarification to encampments on private vs. public property.
    - o Who will enforce the policies for unsanctioned encampments? The lead agency hasn't been defined but the spirit of the documents discussed collaborative

- partnership between residents, property owner, and organizations. Recommendations are broader and defining the lead agency is part of the implementation phase.
  - Including more specifics on sanitation.
- 2. Establishing a HOT unit within Metro government to serve as trained unit to deal with encampments and street homelessness.
  - Discussion included:
    - More clarity is needed regarding the HOT team being located within a specific Metro department, what they do and the supplemental nature of it, and referencing other city models.
    - Defining “HOT” within the document.
- 3. Utilizing a common assessment tool and working toward housing solutions.
  - Discussion included:
    - Adding the word “permanent” to housing solutions.
- 4. Continuous engagement of individuals experiencing homelessness through outreach efforts:
  - No additional input was given.
- 5. Avoidance of actively seeking out and dismantling encampments without alternative places to go.
  - No additional input was given.
- 6. Exploring the creation of centrally located storage space for people’s belongings.
  - Discussion included:
    - Including that this resource could be used for people who are experiencing homelessness and incarcerated for related reason.
    - Stating somewhere within the document that the task force is aware that costs will be associate.

Duration of the project: All agreed on this drafted section.

Anticipated outcomes: Alex Smith initiated conversation around the wording of “targeting the most vulnerable.” He did not like the current wording and felt that everyone is equally vulnerable. The task force agreed to re-word this statement to state “seek to provide services to everyone, with special attention to those with the most urgent need.” It was also included that communication of expectations to people in campsites should also include “written” and “in contract form.”

Potential partners: No additional input from task force members was given.

Risk and challenges: Erik Cole brought up that an overarching goal should be creating a housing crisis resolution system. Within this section it was decided that wording should be changed to “a strong housing crisis resolution system would ameliorate many of these risks and challenges.” The creation of the housing crisis resolution system should also be included in the “action steps” portion of this overall recommendation.

Action Steps: Task force members requested that the first action step be clarified. In addition, it was decided that the next step includes bringing these recommendations back to the Metro Homelessness Commission, followed by collaboration between the task force and Commission members, with the intention of sending the recommendations to all relevant Metro departments and the Mayor’s office. With the upcoming April 15<sup>th</sup> deadline to vacate Fort Negley, the action steps should have a specified timeline.

- Judy Tackett will redraft this section and email out tomorrow for approval from the task force.

### Second Recommendation

Objective: Create sanctioned camps as a temporary alternative site.

During the last meeting there was not enough time to fully discuss the recommendations around creating a sanctioned encampment. The drafted recommendation is based on the limited conversation. Lindsey Krinks shared a separate draft recommendation document, created by herself and outreach staff, also based on the discussion from previous meetings.

Katie Downey, with Metro Legal, briefly discussed that The Tennessee Department of Health has laws and regulations around encampments. Task force members asked that the link to these regulations be emailed and all task members committed to reading, so that further thoughts around the sanctioned encampment recommendations could be emailed to Judy Tackett prior to the next encampment meeting. Judy will work to further draft this recommendation.

Phil Duke wanted to know what a successful meeting looks like at this time next week. It was determined that they have consensus on the recommendations and a plan to present to the Metro Homelessness Commission.

Phil Duke would like a preamble to be included with the recommendations but didn't feel his was the most knowledgeable to begin the draft. Lindsey Krinks volunteered to do so.

Tommy Lynch reflected on the recommendation steps for unsanctioned encampments and stated that many of these were taken at Fort Negley this past summer. He is optimistic that something productive can come out of this task force, he just doesn't know about the by in from various other sectors. He is hoping that sanctioned encampments can be created. In regards to deadline at Fort Negley, he will approach the Metro Parks Board to see if there is another site within Metro Parks that residents can move to until some action can be taken on these recommendations. He doesn't have the authority to designate an area but will ask that an area be designated.

Renee Pratt has concerns about sanctioned encampments and wants to make sure it is done right, being realistic about the funding, who will oversee, and creating protocols.

**Public Input:**

Since there was not time for public input during the meeting, the public is welcome to email Judy Tackett, by Monday at noon, and she will share all comments with task force members.

**Homework to prepare for next meeting:**

Lindsey will work on preamble draft. Charlie Strobel offered to help and ask that Will Connelly and Judy Tackett participate.

Judy Tackett will send out all documents and links for legal to task force members.

The meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 2 at 9:00 a.m. at Metro Social Services, 800 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South.