

**Metropolitan Homelessness Encampment Task Force**  
**Public Comment Session Meeting After**  
Tuesday, March 16, 2016  
at Metro Social Services  
800 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North

Present: Sgt. John Bourque, Lindsey Krinks, Alex Smith, Traci Pekovitch, Renee Pratt, Wendell Segroves, Tommy Lynch, Jennifer Williams (in for Marvin Cox)

Staff Present: Judy Tackett, Karri Simpson

Public: Chris Scott, Haley Spagner, Kate Waide, Samuel Lester

Meeting started at 9:00 a.m.

**Approval of Minutes from March 2<sup>nd</sup>**

The minutes from March 2<sup>nd</sup> were approve.

**Agree on structure for the next four meetings**

- All agreed on the continuation of the rules from the previous meetings.
- All agreed on continuing using the grid template for future goals.
- Task force members stated they have spoken to people who have watched the previous Metro 3 recordings and would like that to continue. Judy Tackett will reach out to ask they be present at all other meetings.
- All agreed that they would like designated time at each meeting for the public to speak.

**Review of Recommendation Document**

Lindsey Krinks asked that the statement “all parties agree that no additional campers will move to this site (if they do, they will be asked to leave or evicted by Metro),” be stricken from the document.

Conversation ensued and included:

- That the statement should be left so that campsite sizes can be moderated, especially regarding encampments on private property.
- Confusion from Chris Scott, in the public, since there are currently no authorized encampments so that this statement would apply to all camps.
- Thoughts that this statement is more of a recommendation and not implementation, than the ideal is to have a sanctioned vs. unsanctioned and this would apply to an unauthorized camp which would imply that there is the option of a sanctioned camp.
- Concerns that this statement doesn’t account for the differences with each encampment and that many camps have welcomed people who have no place to stay.

The discussion concluded with an agreement that the statement should be reworded, but left in the document as there needs to be something that speaks to oversight. Traci Pekovitch, Lindsey Krinks, and Sgt. Bourque will all draft an alternative statement to be presented at the next task force meeting.

**Discussion**

Task force members were asked to associate words and short thoughts with the three areas of focus. The following is the list they compiled:

Authorized Encampments

Currently the least expensive option and least amount of barriers

Two tracks: on religious land and on non-religious land  
Example of : Green Street in Nashville

#### Alternative Safe Places

Utilizing a building

Camping indoors instead of outdoors

Remove the word alternative; the current wording associates too much with being in jail

Expense and barriers increase

Example of: Right to Dream in Portland, OR

#### Interim Housing

Utilizing a building

Have your own housing

Can only stay for a certain length of times, transitional for short term (90 days)

Have rules and costs for existing housing

Example of: Safe Haven at Park Center in Nashville

The task force asked that the official definition for interim housing be looked up for the next meeting.

Many members felt showing the progression of options would help to educate the public and Mayor's Office on what is needed to make steps toward permanent housing.

Discussion around the ideal models continued. Many agreed that the models on the west coast were lauded as best practice when they were first created but now have proven chaotic and a lot of money spent. Taking different elements from the current models across the country and building upon them in Nashville was discussed.

Samuel Lester, participating as part of the public input, brought up implementing the KOA model, where you could legally pay to camp. This model currently allows for people to live in cars and trailers, but Nashville could modify it to allow people to live in tents or structures they build on the property they rent.

All agreed that for the next task force meetings they need to focus on a recommendation regarding a solution for when unauthorized encampments are closed.

Judy Tackett will send a blank grid for task force members to briefly fill in, so that it will help guide the discussion at the next meeting. Each member is asked to fill in with their unique ideas for what they envision, keeping in mind exits to permanent housing.

Task force also requested a list of vacant metro properties be shared with the task force if available. Judy Tackett will follow up.

During this discussion, Chris Scott asked for moratorium on the destruction of camps until an alternative site is located. Ft. Negley will be closed in 3 weeks and there is no time for the current discussion the task force is having. What can be done now? He feels that what this task force discusses doesn't matter and won't stop the closing of Ft. Negley. He has no place to go in three weeks. Ft. Negley is their home.

Tommy Lynch stated that there was a moratorium last fall, when the original closing date was pushed back to April 15, 2016. Every effort is being done to see if there is an alternative place for residents of Ft. Negley to go. They are talking with different departments, non-profits, and faith organizations to try and find a solution.

Traci Pekovitch stated that the impending timeline is a stressful situation for Ft. Negley residents. Ft. Negley is a piece of the big picture that this task force was charged with addressing though and not the full picture. This task force is making progress and it is unfortunate that the timelines don't align.

Lindsey Krinks is in conversation with Green Street, which already has an authorized encampment set up on their religious property. Currently discussing having Green Street speak with other churches and educating them on how to set-up an encampment on religious land.

All agreed that they have no control on the decision to close the encampment at Ft. Negley.

**Public Comment:**

Samuel Lester: He doesn't think it is right to leave out the possibility that park land could be used for authorized encampments. A great deal of money is spent on people with special interests, like mountain biking or dogs, within the parks, but for people with special needs, like those without homes, there is no focus or land carved out for them. For authorized encampments, there is the opportunity to have more oversight. People in the unauthorized encampments are just as appalled with the crimes committed and grateful to police for removing those individuals from their community. While not everyone would be open to the idea, many would like an authorized encampments because of the oversight that would prevent crime. A lot of the available land in Metro is owned by Parks, and while Ft. Negley isn't the ideal location, there must be some other area that could be used for this purpose.

**Homework:**

- Task force members are to fill out the grid with what they envision as a solution to when unauthorized encampments close
- Judy Tackett will reach out to Metro 3
- Judy Tackett will invite members from Metro Legal, the Public Defender's Office, and Caleb from Green Street to upcoming meetings
- Traci Pekovitch, Lindsey Krinks, and Sgt. Bourque will all draft an alternative statement for one sentence in the unauthorized encampment recommendations (see minutes) to be presented at the next task force meeting

The meeting concluded at 10:24 a.m.

The next Encampment Task Force Meeting will be on Wednesday, March 30, at 9 a.m. at Metro Social Services, 800 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North.