

Metropolitan Homelessness Executive Commission Meeting

Tuesday, October 13, 2015

at Metro Social Services

800 2nd Avenue North

The meeting began at 8:30 a.m.

Present: Steven Samra, Diane Kuhn, Erik Cole, Wendell Seagroves, Renee Pratt, Josh Lee, Kirby Davis

Staff: Will Connelly, Judy Tackett, Karri Simpson, Deon Trotter, Leslie Head

Minutes:

The minutes of the September 11, 2015 Metropolitan Homelessness Commission Executive Committee meeting were approved.

Financial Report

Lisa Ricketts stated that How's Nashville has \$35,225.54 remaining. How's Nashville received a check for \$10,000 last month and a \$1500 donation check; neither are reflected in the current budget. Credit card donations have begun online.

There is currently \$4,706.65 remaining for Project Homeless Connect.

Directors Report- Will Connelly

- How's Nashville- Over 1500 people have been housed since How's Nashville began in June 2013 and housing placements continued to be documented. From January through June 2015, 648 people have been housed; this includes approximately 200 veterans. approx. The average retention rate for this past year is 82%. T support services work group is working to collect rehousing data to evaluate what happens when someone falls out of housing. Conversation around CTI ensued.

There has been a focus on veterans and ending veteran homelessness. Nearly 200 veterans have been identified through a by name list, and there are a list of 100 names who have stated they are veterans and their veteran status is currently being verified. For the current identified 200 veterans, How's Nashville is trying to quickly get veterans access to shelter, transitional beds, and a clear pathway to housing (if they want it; once in housing working to connect them to ongoing support. The deadline for the goal to end veteran homelessness is the end of this year and there are approximately 200-300 veterans still needing housing. A conversation with the VA surrounding the current timeline is happening.

- Strategic Planning- A report will be delivered on November 6th at the next Metropolitan Homelessness Commission meeting. This report will give a focus and framework on what to work on for the next year and how funds can be allocated better to get a greatest impact; as well as if additional resources are needed and where those resources should be targeted. There will also be recommendations on leadership. The overall goal of the report is to build a healthier system of care and to move from individual program focus to community wide solutions focus.
- Cold Weather planning- Judy Tackett reported that there is a community service providers meeting this coming Thursday to continue to finalize these plans. At a minimum, it will be the same as last year. Youth services have increased to more days a week and currently have a 15 bed capacity. People with pets is still a gap that hasn't been met. Work with the new administration

on category four plan is currently under way. Additionally, there is a meeting with MTA to continue last year's pilot program.

Encampment Discussion

Will Connelly stated that encampments have dominated the conversation around homelessness recently and generated a lot of rich discussion. Public input has been received and now there needs to be a discussion around what to do with that input. Will stated that when he thinks about this, he thinks of staff capacity and that staff is almost tapped out with their current work load, and that staff want to continue to focus on housing as they have since 2013. He feels that commission staff time should continue to be focused on housing and ending homelessness. However, staff is also at the bidding of commissioners and staff will try to assist and set-up meetings, but commissioners need to step up if they want to focus on this.

Steve Samra stated that he volunteers time to step up and lead the discussion around encampments, but the reality is that the lack of affordable housing needs to be a focus. He thinks encampments have become a priority and that it infuriates people experiencing homelessness that necessary resources can't be provided when they need some place to go. Every year there is a discussion about camps closing and the challenges it puts on the community. It is a piece of the work the commission needs to do. He appreciates that staff is at capacity and it's not going to be easy but until there is enough affordable housing, camps will exist. He thinks it will be a big challenge to coordinate.

Wendell Seagroves also volunteers to lead the discussion surrounding encampments and thinks this should be a primary focus. There is a need for it and he knows there are a lot of organizations out there that want to take it on.

Kirby Davis thinks that Will is correct that the focus should remain on housing and another full time staff member would be needed to focus on encampments. Based on public comments, the faith and support community needs to get behind the encampment discussion and the Commission should endorse their efforts.

Erik Cole stated that the Mayor will support the efforts the Commission chooses to take on but her message is that the Commission should continue to focus on housing and if the community can come up with a plan, looking at public-private partnerships, she will certainly support the effort. The Commission's focus should continue to be permanent housing. The Mayor did state that if there are any resources within Metro, like engaging codes, that those resources are available.

Diane Kuhn stated she is hearing that there is a need for the Commission to focus on this but she has a hard time asking staff to take on more than they are already doing. How's Nashville is already behind on our goals and the staff are working hard to meet these. Based on how the Commission is set up, with four council members, and representation from police, social workers, and the Mayor's office, that it would be best to bring this conversation to the full commission and engage who is currently at the table and what they can do. Staff will attend but they should not be orchestrating these efforts. Ideally a Commissioner should step up and lead and coordinate these meetings and efforts. This won't be a single meeting with a decision but rather a long term discussion. Many key players needed for this conversation are already sitting on the Commission.

Will Connelly stated that staff is working to remove barriers to current programs and shelters, making them more appealing and more easily accessed by individuals on the streets and in camps. Continuing to work on permanent housing will also help individuals on the streets and in camps.

The next commission meeting is in a few weeks and Diane Kuhn is working to have Council members appointed prior to that meeting. Steve and Wendell volunteered to take charge of leading the encampment discussion and will begin to engage all Commissioners from different fields and work with them on this discussion. All agreed.

Strategic planning will remain the main focus of the November Metro Homelessness Commission meeting.

Announcements

Will Connelly announced that Open Table Nashville is having their 5 year anniversary tonight.

No other announcements.

Wendell Seagroves motioned to adjourn. Steve Samra seconded.

The next Executive Committee meeting is on Friday, November 6, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the Howard Office Building. The full meeting of the Metro Homelessness Commission will immediately follow at 9:30 a.m.

With no other comments the meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.