



WESTSIDE CITIES

· BEVERLY HILLS
· CULVER CITY
· LOS ANGELES
· SANTA MONICA
· WEST HOLLYWOOD

Homeless Issues Committee Meeting
August 16, 2007 12:30 PM
Santa Monica Main Library
Staff Meeting Room, 2nd Floor
601 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica, CA

Approved Meeting Notes

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:31 by Co-Chairs Richard Bloom and Carol Gross.

Self-introductions followed.

Voting Committee Members were identified as Mayor and Committee Co-Chair Bloom and Vice Mayor and Committee Co-Chair Gross.

II. Follow up to Board Meeting of 7/19/07

Jody Hall Esser advised that the Board was considering sponsoring an annual issues conference and that one of the two conference topics under consideration was a "Summit on Homeless Issues". Mrs. Esser and Kate Vernez noted that the conference would likely take place in spring 2008 and that interested parties would be advised as soon as the topic/dates are determined.

Jody Hall Esser also noted that Sgt. Rex McEvoy's rank would be added to the June meeting noted for file and as posted.

III. Follow-up to Homeless Issues Committee Meeting Agenda Item of 6/21/07: Data Collection for Consistent and Accurate Information Regarding Where Homeless Clients are Coming From: Input from First Providers. Input from City of Los Angeles and General Discussion Follow-up

Jody Hall Esser provided a background on the June agenda item and discussion.

LAPD representatives asked about the purpose of gathering information from homeless individuals; Council Member McKeown responded that over time Santa Monica had learned that not all cities are asking the homeless the same/any questions and that resulting information could assist in better understanding the situation on the street and in assigning resources. Kate Vernez added that the goal is to get the homeless to services versus enabling life on the street. Stacy Rowe added that understanding where social networks are could link the homeless to friends/family willing to take them in; linking the chronic homeless with social services and getting a real/statistical handle on inter-regional migration.

LAPD representatives commented on their contact with the homeless noting many are chronic homeless not desirous of shelter, housing or other services that might ease/end their homelessness. LAPD representatives stated that some homeless people were not inclined to stay in shelters because some shelter environments are

not suitable or perceived safe by those experiencing homelessness. It was noted that “Senior Lead Officers” would be the best to provide a summary of their contacts and needs of the homeless with whom they come in contact.

Stacy Row was asked to comment on success with housing the “chronic homeless”. She noted that 150 individuals had been targeted for a SM program underway for two years. And that about half of that number are now in permanent housing. The program focuses intense resources; and one key to success is putting housing (not shelter) first versus making the individual jump several other hurdles before housing is made available. Also following up with these individuals to help them become good neighbors is crucial.

Senator Daryl Steinberg’s legislative efforts to provide mentally ill homeless individuals with social services and housing were referenced.

Rick Stoffr commented that all should be careful when classifying individuals as “chronically homeless” noting that half of the 150 individuals in the SM program had taken advantage of exactly what they said they didn’t want – housing!

Upward Bound House Board Chair Booker Pearson commented that of the reported 90,000 homeless individuals in the County, some 14,000 are children and that they should not be counted among those homeless who are “service resistant”.

LAPD representatives noted that statewide legislation to broaden the scope for those who cannot qualify as 5150’s is needed; so are more options for safety service to refer to service providers. BHPD suggested creation of an on-line tool to secure service provider location, services available and related information.

It was noted that Santa Monica and LA have been working together to assure a better understanding of services available.

It was suggested all need to be asked, “Are you willing to go to a shelter?” and if “Yes”, the cities should be focusing on those individuals first.

Co-Chair Gross inquired as to the mechanism for all safety service on the Westside to talk – an “All Blue Brainstorming Group”. She suggested perhaps the Committee could facilitate such meetings but that fire and police representatives should meet “alone”.

Daphne Dennis from the City of West Hollywood noted that West Hollywood police and fire and service providers meet monthly.

Co-Chair Bloom noted he was a bit chagrined that the Committee had been meeting for so long without having met with safety services to hear from them. He suggested this kind of subregional thinking was critical to respond, fund and advocate -- to solve homeless issues. Co-Chair Gross added that safety service members are great advocates.

Co-Chair Bloom suggested the following short-term strategies: 1) meeting and coordination of all Westside cities public safety providers; and 2) expand such meeting(s) to include service providers. He suggested others be invited to meet with this group quarterly and committed that Santa Monica will try to make this happen.

IV. Update: CARES Process

Kate Vernez noted that efforts were underway between Supervisor Yaroslavsky's office/staff and the VA to identify the kinds of programs and services available to and needed for homeless veterans. She said that all are committed to a transparent process with close coordination and input from a neighborhood advisory committee.

V. Update: West Los Angeles VA Proposal for Homeless Vets Therapeutic Housing; Status of Efforts to Provide Year Round Emergency Shelter for Families to be located in Culver City

Jennifer Ma-Pham reported on City of LA efforts to create a year-round emergency shelter on the Westside. She noted that Council Member Rosendahl has been working closely with Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky on this project; that a site had been identified for an approximate 100-bed facility but that the provider had withdrawn. She noted that she/LA representatives met with the Westside Hunger Coalition earlier in the day to seek/identify a replacement provider. She also noted LA City's support for the proposed Upward Bound House project in Culver City.

David Snow, Executive Director, Upward Bound House distributed brochures about his organization and described the proposed project in Culver City which will convert an old motel to housing for children/families. He noted and thanked representatives for support received to date from Culver City, the County and City of Los Angeles.

VI. Update: Homeless Services and Housing Development Subcommittee of the League

Kate Vernez gave a brief history of this new League Committee and noted that future meeting dates are being planned with a focus on broad participation/maximum interested party attendance.

VII. Prop 63 LA County Allocation and Westside Allocation

Jennifer Ma-Pham reported on follow up regarding Prop 63. Of concern is that LA County receive its fair share of funds from the ballot measure. She noted a conference scheduled for Thursday Aug. 23rd at which a better understanding of funding/distribution is anticipated. Jennifer said she would report back in future as information is available. The Co-Chairs suggested this agenda item not be carried over but welcomed status reports at future meetings.

VIII. Discussions with Administrators at the West LA VA Regarding Enhancement of Programs and Services for Homeless Veterans Region Wide and on the West LA VA Campus

This item was continued to the Committee's October meeting.

IX. Update: Psychiatric Urgent Care Facility at Brotman Hospital, Culver City

Kathy Shoemaker explained the operation and services provided by Exodus Recovery at Brotman Hospital in Culver City. She responded to questions about the operation/clientele and provided a spreadsheet detailing service statistics through for the first six months of operation June, 2007.

X. Update: Homeless Community Court

Stacy Row provided a background report on the purpose of the Homeless Community Court pilot project in Santa Monica. She explained how the program operates, service statistics to date and how the program is linked to service providers in the community as well as next steps to enhance services to program participants.

Julie Kahn said that Beverly Hills is pursuing starting a Homeless Community Court in Beverly Hills and thanked Santa Monica for its assistance and guidance in this regard. She also noted that contrary to popular misconception, Beverly Hills is a family oriented community committed to work towards eliminating homelessness because it is not OK to have/accept discarded individuals in the community.

XI. Pending Legislation Including Cedillo’s Package of Homeless Measures

Kate Vernez provided a brief background on legislation and follow-on discussions taking place this year regarding fair share zoning. She noted there had been good preliminary dialogue to focus on encouraging/rewarding local action.

XII. Public Comment RE Items Not On the Agenda

David Snow, Executive Director, Upward Bound House, requested formal support from the Committee/WSCCOG for Upward Bound House projects and related funding. Co-Chair Gross requested this request be put in writing.

Carol Gross noted an incident that had taken place in a park area overnight, which involved a shooting. A seven year old homeless child was a primary observer and contact for police follow up.

Chair Bloom noted that one out of every five homeless individuals in the country can be found in Los Angeles County and that the needs are dynamic and different here from elsewhere in the country. He requested that Corey Jackson, Senator Boxer’s representative, continue to keep the Senator abreast of the significant need for funding to address homeless issues on the Westside. Mr. Jackson said he would do so.

XIII. Adjournment

Co-Chair Bloom adjourned the meeting at 2:00 PM

In Attendance:

Beverly Hills: Staff: Julie Kahn; Rex McEvoy (BHPD), Tyler Larson (BHPD), Jim Ply (BHPD).

Culver City: Carol Gross Vice Mayor and Committee Co-Chair. Staff: Shelly Wolfberg.

Los Angeles: Staff: Jennifer Ma-Pham CD11; Thomas Wicks (LAPD), Theresa Skinner (LAPD-PAC), Heidi Llanes (LAPD-PAC), Robin Richard (LAPD-PAC).

Santa Monica: Richard Bloom, Mayor and Committee Co-Chair; Kevin McKeown, Council Member. Staff: Kate Vernez, Stacy Rowe.

West Hollywood: Staff: Daphne Dennis.

Other Attendees: Jody Hall Esser (COG Facilitator), Corey Jackson (US Senator Barbara Boxer), Kristina Andreesen (SM Architect/UBH Bd. Member), Samantha O'Neil (SM Chamber), Jim Farrell (NAMI Los Angeles), Kathy Shoemaker (Exodus Recovery), Rick Stoffr (Chrysalis), Booker Pearson (Upward Bound House), David Snow (Upward Bound House).