



WESTSIDE CITIES

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

Homeless Issues Committee Meeting
February 15, 2007
12:30 – 2:30p.m.
Santa Monica Main Library
Staff Meeting Room, 2nd Floor
601 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica, CA

MEETING NOTES *REVISED*

The meeting was called to order at 12:40 by COG Chair, Santa Monica Council Member and Homeless Issues Committee Members Richard Bloom; and Culver City Council and Homeless Issues Committee Member Carol Gross.

Mr. Bloom announces that due to the length of the agenda and presence of a number of members of the public desirous of addressing the Committee public participation would be limited to a total of five minutes.

I. Report on Launch - Urgent Care Facility for the Westside

Robin Kay announced the 12/18 opening of the Westside Urgent Care facility She noted that the program was not fully operational, pending resolution of a remaining technical issue with the state. Nonetheless, they have seen 127 clients to date. Luana Murphy, program Executive Director commented that the program has been well received with 51% of clientele coming from hospital emergency rooms – they're a sicker clientele that might otherwise be the case. As a result, stabilizing these clients to avoid further hospitalization is critical. The program is operational 24-hours a day.

II. United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) 2nd Annual Summit on Innovations for Jurisdictional Leaders. National Press Club, Washington D.C. March 7-8, 2007

Julie Rusk, Cit of Santa Monica advised that several representatives would be attending this summit and would report on results at a future Committee meeting.

III. Update on CARES West Los Angeles VA Proposal for Homeless Vets Therapeutic Housing

No word – no progress out of Washington. Ms. Krisiloff

IV. Year-round Emergency Shelter for the Westside

Safiya Jones reported that an inventory of LA city-owned property has been prepared and is being analyzed. She said the city will be working with residential groups, philanthropic and faith based groups and the business community as project partners. Ms. Jones was asked if other cities would be contacted in the outreach/collaboration process, she said, "Yes".

V. Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) Report on January Homeless Count

Rebecca Isaacs advised that the three night event involved 1300 volunteers and numerous sites. She briefly discussed the methodology established, the demographic and telephone surveys used. She advised that all data will be compiled and ready by July.

VI. Culver City Update on St Joseph's Center Project and Community-Based Subcommittee

Committee Member Carol Gross introduced Andrew Parker from Upward Bound House, who commented on his organizations expanding family shelter project into Culver City. He said the reception from Culver City had been wonderful and they are looking to others willing and interested in financially supporting the new project on which will completely renovate/reuse an old motel on West Washington Blvd. He commented on the generosity of Supervisors Burke and Yaroslavsky, and noted the hope is to close escrow in the fall of 2007 and to open the facility in Jan. 2008.

Armando Abrego, Culver City advised that as the Committee becomes more knowledgeable, they are more comfortable asking questions and that they are reaching out to the Coalition to address homelessness on the Westside.

Rhonda Meister, St Joseph's Center thanked Culver City for extending the hours of operation of the Armory.

Rebecca Isaacs, LAHSA asked Ms. Meister if St. Joseph's had collected data to determine where the increased number of clients is coming from. Ms. Meister responded that they are asked, and that clients are moving west and into CC, but they are not seeing a significant number of clients/families from Skid Row. Ms. Isaacs noted how important reliable statistics/data is and the need to gather information in a uniform way using uniform questions. Flora Gil Krisioff noted that a recent conversation with Jim Howitt, Volunteers of America, WLA Armory revealed they have seen a real spike in the number of families served (90), and Tim Davis in Sylmar has advised they used more housing vouchers for families than ever before. Julie Rusk offered to work with other cities and providers to develop a "script" that all could use to gather consistent information and to share any information collected by the City of Santa Monica.

VII. Update on Santa Monica's Evaluation of the Homeless Continuum of Care

Julie Rusk reported on implementation priorities as directed by the Santa Monica City Council upon accepting the Evaluation report in January 2007. These include: :

- Convening a community stakeholder committee
- Developing options for increasing the permanent supported housing
- Developing a public info campaign regarding panhandling
- Increasing the supply of services to the homeless beyond the city of SM
- Developing a new data management system
- Advocacy efforts on fair share housing legislation with real incentives for other cities.

The City of Santa Monica recently released an RFP for the next three year funding cycle for social services.

Committee Member Carol Gross commented on funding issues facing providers. Andrew Parker commented on the funding penalty currently faced by providers as a result of linking “poverty” statistics to money for shelters. The homeless count tie in was briefly discussed.

VIII. Regional Coordination and Advocacy. Identification of Additional Strategies.

Kate Vernez advised that a new subcommittee of the League is being formed to address funding and policy mechanisms to provide incentives for homelessness services and housing development. The goal is a non-combative approach. The new subcommittee will meet on March 1 to develop guiding principles on the homeless housing issue so that the League can better respond to legislative and regulatory proposals as they arise. Related policy resources are being developed to increase capacity for local agencies, provide a compendium of zoning tools, development incentives and best practices for siting, and prioritize the allocation of available resources. Housing element reforms are also underway to better ensure compliance. The overarching goal is to form consensus on the issue of fair-share homeless housing through incentives rather than mandates in order to avoid a legislative veto. The League invited elected and appointed officials from around the state to participate in development of these policy parameters, to be voted on March 30 at the League Policy Committee. Committee Member Carol Gross reminded that we are the League and urged the League’s involvement to balance out the issues. Committee Member Richard Bloom observed that the efforts appear to be pulling together nicely.

It was noted that Leslie Wise, Rebecca Isaacs and Flora Gil Krisiloff will be part of a delegation heading to Washington D.C. in early March. Ms. Krisiloff said the intent is to advise of needed legislation and she encouraged those present to email priorities to her. She noted the intent to discuss funding for support services is difficult due to the lack of legislative sources; she referenced the Homeless Count unfunded federal mandate – the count is costing the County and City of Los Angeles a million dollars; and that there has been no cost of living adjustment for grants, some of which are 10 years old. She also noted the possible federal push to increase funding matches which would negatively impact service providers.

Committee member Richard Bloom noted he will be joining Mayor Villaraigosa, with representatives from the LA and Santa Monica Chambers in early March to address Homeless Issues. Committee Member Gross noted her intent to be present.

IX. Next Steps:

Future Agenda and Action Items Identification

- A. Report back on USICH Annual Summit
- B. Flora Gil Krisiloff will work with Kate Vernez and staff to initiate discussions with the Administrators at the West LA VA regarding the enhancement of programs and services for homeless veterans region wide and on the West LA VA campus.

X. Public Comment

Mr. Bloom advised that each speaker would be afforded two minutes to speak.

Kristin Flannery representing SONIC Venice, Andre de Montesquiou representing SONIC Venice and Arthur Kessler a Venice citizen addressed the Committee. They noted their concerns regarding the new Saint Joseph's Center facility being relocated into their community. They stated that there is an unacceptable concentration of homeless services/service agencies in their neighborhood; there has not been appropriate neighborhood coordination and advance planning regarding this project; and the "flexible" hours of operation of the proposed program will be confusing and lead to more loitering/neighborhood problems.

Meeting Adjourned at 1:45 p.m. Next meeting scheduled for April 19, 2007.

Meeting Attendance:

Santa Monica: COG Chair and Homeless Issues Committee Member. Richard Bloom. Staff: Ed Edelman, Kate Vernz, Stacy Rowe, Julie Rusk

Culver City: COG Board Member and Homeless Issues and Committee Member Carol Gross. Staff: Armando Abrego

Beverly Hills: Staff: Julie Kahn

Los Angeles: Staff: Safiya Jones,

West Hollywood: Daphne Dennis

Other: Jody Hall Esser (WSCCOG), Flora Gil Krisiloff (Supervisor Yaroslavsky), Robin Kay (LA County Dept. of Mental Health), Rebecca Isaacs (LAHSA), Olga Mohan. M.D. (Harbor UCLA), Bruce Rankin (Westside Food Bank), Tni Reinis (New Directions), Luana Murphy (Exodus Recovery), Debby Modell (OPCC), Samantha O'Neil (SM Chamber), Rhonda Meister (St. Joseph's Center), Andrew Parker (Upward Bound House), Anna Scott (Wave Newspapers), Carol Bodlander (Venice Citizen), Kristin Flannery (Sonic Venice), Andre de Montesquiou (Sonic Venice), Arthur Kessler (Venice citizen).


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Homeless Issues Committee Meeting Notes
 April 19, 2007 12:30 p.m.
 Santa Monica Main Library
 Staff Meeting Room, 2nd Floor
 601 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica, CA

Meeting Notes

The Meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Carol Gross at 12:45 PM

I. Report on USCIH Annual Summit March 7-8, 2007 (City of Santa Monica)

Julie Rusk reported that Mayor Bloom, Council Member McKeown and Julie Rusk attended the USCIH Annual Summit March 7-8, 2007. Los Angeles City and County representatives were also in attendance. There were informative sessions on homeless issues around the country as well as a presentation on the UK Rough Sleep Initiative that deals with chronic homelessness due to chronic mental health problems and other factors.

II. Update on CARES ; West Los Angeles VA Proposal for Homeless Vets Therapeutic Housing (County of Los Angeles; City of Los Angeles and City of Santa Monica)

Kate Vernez advised that the CARES project is not concluded, and that Councilman Rosendahl's office is taking the next step by assessing surrounding community reaction and the best process to communicate the project to the community and will continue to work with LA County and congressional supporters. It was noted that although there is a great deal of congressional support to assist homeless veterans, crossing party lines can be a problem in supporting a specific proposal.

Co-Chair Bloom commented this is an example of the lack of ability to regionally coordinate at the federal level.

There was consensus to continue to work with Congressman Waxman, Supervisor Yaroslavsky and all other stakeholders on Homeless Veterans Therapeutic Housing.

Tony Reinis (New Directions, Inc.) commented on a related and off-agenda item: a project proposing to serve mostly veterans on the Sepulveda Veterans Administration campus. Toni Reinis asked for a support letter from the COG for this project which is experiencing opposition from local homeowners and the area's U.S. Representative – Brad Sherman. Co-Chair Gross noted such a letter would have to go through each member city's approval process. Co-Chair Gross asked that the Committee be kept informed of the progress of the project.

III. Status of Efforts to Provide Year Round Emergency Shelter for the Westside (City of Los Angeles)

Due to schedule conflicts of the presenters, this item was continued to the Committee meeting in June at the advance request of Flora Gil Krisiloff and others.

IV. Follow up to Discussion On 2/15 Meeting: Data Collection and Compilation For Consistent and Accurate Information Regarding Where Homeless Clients Are Coming From (City of Santa Monica)

Stacy Rowe discussed possible efforts to coordinate data collection and compilation by service providers and first responders in Westside cities to better ascertain the migration patterns of homeless individuals. She noted that data collection is a complex process, and this is especially true for first responders since this isn't the primary focus of their interaction with homeless individuals. Stacy asked for input from other jurisdictions' first responders concerning what data is being collected in order to pursue the possibility of standardizing data collection across jurisdictions. She suggested that in social service context, as many as 10 questions are needed to assess truly assess the geographic history of each homeless client, but first responders/service providers don't have the time or inclination to ask that many questions, so data collection needs to be streamlined.

In addition to migration patterns, the data collected from first responders could also be used for local cities (or the COG) to do a study of the time first responders spend responding to calls involving homeless individuals, and derive the cost of those services.

Councilman McKeown commented on the need for consensus on what the information will be used for in order to determine the best questions to ask. Co-Chair Gross noted the need for collection of consistent information.

Julie Rusk commented that how jurisdictions use limited resources is another overlay to the data collection issue.

Co-Chair Bloom asked whether, in the interest of uniformity, a sampling of the homeless could be identified and interviewed in order to obtain more detailed information; could the COG coordinate this effort for each member City?.

Co-Chair Gross suggested hospital emergency rooms could be asked to gather similar data on homeless individuals.

By consensus it was decided to invite first responders to the next meeting. Input from member cities first responders about what data they are currently collecting is to be agendaized for the Committee meeting in June.

Mrs. Vernez advised that she was making a note to request the Deputy Chiefs to participate with the Committee again.

V. Report on Results of County, City and LAHSA Delegation Trip to Washington D.C. in March (County of Los Angeles)

Rebecca Isaacs, LAHSA) reported on the results of the County, City and LAHSA delegations trip to Washington, D.C. in March. She noted that she, Flora Gil Krisiloff and Leslie Wise were among those on this trip. She advised that the delegation briefed Los Angeles County congressional representatives on homelessness in the County. She said it was a good timing for lobbying and that the new congressional committee members and their staff were interested in the information presented. The briefing resulted in an agreement on a set of legislative goals and talking points. Ms. Owe offered to send out documents to the Committee members and interested parties.

VI. Report on LA and Santa Monica Chambers of Commerce Meetings in March (City of Santa Monica and City of Los Angeles)

Samantha O'Neil (Santa Monica Chamber) reported on the Los Angeles and Santa Monica Chambers of Commerce meetings in March. Both cities were represented and much coordination took place.

Co-Chair Bloom advised that he agreed to attend on the condition that homelessness was added to the agenda. This subject was discussed in a focused way only by elected officials. He added that we need to work on refocusing public attention on homelessness.

Mrs. Vernez added that perhaps public interest can be built on concern for the needs of homeless veterans.

It was noted that a similar meeting will be held in Sacramento.

VII. Report on March 1 Meeting of New Homeless Services and Housing Development Subcommittee of the League (Santa Monica)

Kate Vernez reported on the March 1 meeting of the new Homeless Services and Housing Development Subcommittee of the League. The City of Santa Monica and the League came together to discuss the goal of alternatives to SB2 (Cedillo), to change the tone of the debate from mandates to incentives.

Council Member McKeown asked whether the COG member cities would take such a position? Co-Chair Bloom advised that the League has not made recommendations to cities on this matter. The League is reaching out to find the best approach.

It was noted that Santa Monica has three objectives:

1. A 2-1 credit to rehab homeless shelters as the current Regional Housing Needs Assessment gives credit only for new construction;
2. A 0-25% financing tool via redevelopment; and
3. A Pilot project: direct housing vouchers to landlords to house the homeless.

These policies are expected to be addressed at the April 24, 2007 Santa Monica City Council meeting. Santa Monica staff is recommending a work-with-the-author position on alternatives to SB2.

The League's selection process for the new Subcommittee was the subject of additional discussion. This Subcommittee to advise policy makers was constituted by invitation of Bill Higgins (League). Co-Chair Gross and Council Member McKeown asked questions about the selection process: if the Subcommittee is purporting to represent the cities of the League, opportunities to serve should follow the usual League practice of an open application process.

Co-Chair Bloom commented that the Subcommittee is brainstorming to come up with suggestions.

There was consensus to advise the WSCCOG Governing Board of the COG Homeless Issues Committee interest in advising the League of the COG's interest in policy discussions concerning the new Homeless Services and Housing Development

Subcommittee of the League, especially concerning needed clarity on membership selection processes.

VIII. Regional Coordination and Advocacy: Discussion of strategies, action steps on program coordination and advocacy efforts; report on Prop 63 LA County Allocation and Westside Allocation; Initiation of 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.

Subjects under this agenda heading were addressed as part of the discussion of other agenda items.

IX. Identification of Additional Strategies: Homeless Community Court, State/Federal legislative/advocacy efforts including Senator Cedillo's Package of Homeless Measures.

Julie Rusk reported on the Homeless Community Court which has had three sessions, beginning with 8 and increasing to 23 homeless individuals before the judge at the third session. She noted that the court is off to a good start and momentum is building.

X. Next Steps: Future Agenda and Action Items Identification

No additional agenda or action items were identified; however, Co-Chair Gross commented that the Committee needs to hear from all WSCCOG member cities and encouraged attendance and participation in all future meetings.

XI. Public Comment RE Items Not On the Agenda

Co-Chair Bloom recognized Rocco Anderson, self-described homeless individual in Santa Monica since January 2007. Mr. Anderson opined "there were some blind spots in assessing causes." Some homeless have rejected societal values; veterans have been changed by their experiences; some don't want some of the housing if it means they have to compromise their values. He also added that housing the homeless won't be solved from current infrastructure which is too expensive for the members needing housing.

XII. Adjournment

Co-Chair Bloom adjourned the meeting at 2:05 P. The next meeting is scheduled for June 21, 2007.

Meeting Attendance:

Richard Bloom Co-Chair, Mayor City of Santa Monica
Carol Gross Co Chair, Council Member, City of Santa Monica
Joan Kassan Assistant to the Executive Director
Beverly Hills: Maria Rychlicki
Culver City: Shelly Wolfberg, Armando Abrego
Santa Monica: Council Member Kevin McKeown, Kate Vernez, Stacy Rowe, Julie Rusk
West Hollywood: Daphne Dennis

Other Attendees: Rebecca Isaacs, LAHSA; Samantha O'Neil, SM Chamber; Toni Reinis, New Directions; Rocco Anderson, Humanity