



## Metropolitan Homelessness Commission Meeting

November 2, 2012  
Sonny West Conference Center  
Howard Office Building  
700 Second Ave. South

### Minutes

Commissioners Present: Diane Kuhn, interim chair; Renee Pratt, Glenn Cranfield, Steven Samra, Tom Turner, Erik Cole, Hershell Warren, Charles Strobel, Suzie Tolmie for Phil Ryan, Dayna Lovelady, Megan Barry, Angie Thompson, Ellen Zinkiewicz, Howard Gentry, Phil Duke.

Staff Present: Judith Tackett, Tojuana Jordan, John Hite.

#### **Welcome**

Diane Kuhn welcomed every one and announced that Renee Pratt is taking on the day-to-day activities of the Commission until a new director is hired.

#### **Recognition of Carolyn Grossley**

Diane Kuhn recognized Carolyn Grossley who recently resigned as the interim director to become the director of the Family Life Center at the Nashville Rescue Mission. Ms. Kuhn highlighted some of the achievements that Ms. Grossley reached during her tenure with the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission:

- Created a Mentoring Program that links mentors with Housing First participants;
- Created the Adopt A Unit Program that provides household items for Housing First participants;
- Created a Landlord Program by approaching landlord asking them to offer a unit at a discount to a Housing First participant;
- Created the Outreach Initiative and brought together outreach workers who now meet on a monthly basis.

She gave Ms. Grossley an inscribed watch, thanking her for her dedicated service to the city's homeless.

## **Minutes**

The minutes of Sept. 7, 2012, were approved. Motion made by Erik Cole, seconded by Phil Duke, all approved.

## **Financials**

Pam McEwen reported that year-to-date the Commission was pretty much on target with everything. She projects that salaries may be under budget by about \$20,000 because of current vacancies.

Commissioner Turner raised a question about the contracts, to which Ms. McEwen responded that she anticipated that all contract dollars will be spent by the end of the year.

## **Reports**

### **Director search update:**

Diane Kuhn reported that the search committee established a timetable.

Erik Cole, who chairs the search committee, said the committee was made up of nine people including MSS representatives and HR, the Mayor's Office, and a representative from the Nashville Homeless Coalition.

He said a large number of resumes were submitted. The committee put together a questionnaire with 10 tough questions and sent it out to 20 qualified candidates.

Interviews are scheduled for 5-7 people on Nov. 12 and 13. Renee Pratt, as the executive director of Metro Social Services, will be asking the questions. The new executive director will be a Metro Social Services employee.

Erik Cole also gave a brief update on the Gaps Governance Committee, which is looking at this year's process for Continuum of Care fund applications. He said the committee was an independent panel of service providers, business representatives and people from the philanthropic community.

An initial recommendation for the allocation of funds places a strong focus on permanent housing projects. He said agencies can talk to Suzie Tolmie or himself for more information.

Diane Kuhn thanked him for all his work and said the Commission appreciated these updates.

### **Project Homeless Connect:**

Diane Kuhn said the Commission wasn't even sure whether it could go forward with PHC this year. Josh Lee from Metro Legal clarified a question regarding the possibility of fundraising. He said MHC staff is permitted to fundraise with certain constraints. Staff has secured enough funds to move forward with PHC.

Tojuana Jordan and John Hite gave the following update on PHC (inserted Ms. Jordan's notes):

#### Ms. Jordan:

I am pleased to report to you that we have successfully secured enough in pledges to move forward with Project Homeless Connect 2013. With only 5 days to raise the funds, we were able to meet our goal thanks to all of you who made individual donations, made phone calls on our behalf, emailed your friends and supporters, and made direct asks.

For those of you who haven't committed or are still working your lists, it's not too late. We still need your support.

Over the next few weeks I will be diligently working to secure those commitments. I am asking donors to make their financial contribution on or before December 31<sup>st</sup> for this fiscal year or on or before February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 for the next fiscal year.

Please know that any money raised beyond our goal will be put into the PHC fund for next year. So please continue to ask for pledges.

Again thank you for your continued support and commitment to help our homeless neighbors. Also, we are reaching out into the community for volunteers. Last year we had right around 700 volunteers to assist us with our efforts to provide services to our homeless neighbors and this year we will need about the same number of hands to assist us.

If you would like to volunteer or know someone who is interested we are asking that you email me at [Tojuana.jordan@nashville.gov](mailto:Tojuana.jordan@nashville.gov) or in my office at 880-2773.

Thank you in advance for your support.

#### John Hite:

A Service Vendor Meeting is scheduled for Nov. 16 at 2 p.m. in the large conference room at MSS. The deadline for service vendors to submit their paper work is set for December 3. Pre-registration for homeless neighbors begins on Dec. 3 and runs through Jan. 18 at various locations. VIP and media invitations will be sent out on Dec. 12.

Project Homeless Connect is scheduled for February 13, 2013.

Diane Kuhn said that two weeks ago, the Commission wasn't sure whether we could do this. "Our staff stepped up. This is a time where we don't have a lot of leadership going on. And our staff did a great job of pulling something together." She also thanked Howard Gentry, pointing out that she was aware how instrumental he has been in the fundraising process.

Ms. Kuhn asked John Hite to put PHC dates on the MHC Website.

Commissioner Lovelady asked whether the donations were tax deductible.

Diane Kuhn responded that "we cannot answer that." Josh Lee with Metro Legal explained that a response would be too close to legal or tax advice, which was why staff was advised not to answer that question.

Diane Kuhn encouraged anybody to ask their lawyer or financial advisor to get a response to that question and then donate their money.

#### **Art for Change**

Judy Tackett reported that more than 25,000 people were reached through online outreach with the help of partner agencies like Nossi College of Art, the Downtown Partnership, Metro Nashville Arts Commission, Tennessee Arts Commission, and the Nashville Chamber. Thousands more were reached during the event. She said this was an awareness campaign for the blue donation meters. Voting occurred by people putting change in the meters next to the painting they wanted to vote for. \$626 was raised through the voting process, which is about 12 times more than the same meters collect over a three-month period. Overall about \$1,000 was raised for The Key Alliance. She pointed out that at this time, this we set up as an awareness campaign rather than a fundraiser.

#### **Appointment of new commissioner**

Diane Kuhn introduced Glenn Cranfield, the President/CEO of the Nashville Rescue Mission, as a new member of the Metropolitan Homelessness Commission. He is originally from Oklahoma City where he also served as the CEO/President of their Rescue Mission for 10 years.

Glenn Cranfield gave a brief presentation about the Nashville Rescue Mission. He said the Rescue Mission wants to be involved. "We want to be a partner. We want to know what we can do to make a real, real difference."

He said the Mission serves about 1,800 meals a day and is open 365 days a year. There were two main facets of the Mission: Emergency Shelter and a program of recovery, designed to move people along from homelessness into the community.

### **Moment of Silence**

Diane Kuhn read names of people who had passed away since the previous meeting. Then the Commission held a moment of silence in their honor.

Several people briefly talked about the memory of particular persons who died and whose lives had touched them.

### **Announcements**

Diane Kuhn asked Steve Reiter for an update on the Homeless Memorial. He said he was not prepared to make an announcement today. But he said he was going to stay in touch with Judy Tackett to keep the Homelessness Commission informed. He also said that this year had been really a tough year in terms of the number of people who passed away.

### **Public Hearing**

**Barry Keith Hobbs** presented a brief overview of his plan to solve homelessness within the next seven years. According to him, it would cost a combined \$10 million. Funders would be governmental, business and religious institutions. He said that between 2013 and 2019, “you find all structures that are still empty, yet still livable,” and then turn these places into temporary and permanent housing units. He said his plan took into consideration “booze, drugs, gambling, and sex.” He said there was once a plan by the previous administration and the first seven years have been shot. There were several successful individuals, including him, he said. Nonetheless, he said, he was sick and tired of seeing his friends argue with each other. He said money was there.

**Steve Reiter** said he believed there was an ongoing crisis that’s going to come soon. He said the federal government was moving toward permanent housing away from transitional housing. “I’m concerned about that.” His concern was about cutting funds for day shelters. He said this was not just happening here in Nashville, but also in other cities. “The problem is the money that’s been allocated is totally insufficient, and it’s going to lead to more people being homeless.” He said we were going to move away from shelters. “We have to have some places for people to go.” He said he didn’t think the federal government was looking at the consequences. But they were taking money away from the shelter systems, which right now was overwhelmed.

He said advocates in various cities are talking about the impact of this policy shift. “We want to approach government and tell them of the consequences.”

Mr. Reiter also talked frankly about the impact of the Commission. He said when the Commission comes up among Council members, they laugh about it. He also said that people didn’t know about the Ten Year Plan. He said that “we have to go out and say that this is a Commission. It is a recognized Commission of the city.”

After all public comments were heard, Diane Kuhn said the next Commission meeting was scheduled for Jan. 4, at 9.30 a.m. The next executive committee was on Nov. 20 at Metro Social Services.

The meeting was adjourned.