

Metropolitan Homelessness Commission Meeting

Friday, November 7, 2014
at the Sonny West Conference Center
700 2nd Avenue South

Present: Diane Kuhn, Megan Barry, Brady Banks, Kirby Davis, Burkley Allen, Dayna Lovelady, Steven Samra, Wendell Segroves, Glenn Cranfield, J.C. Smith, Charles Strobel, Erik Cole, Tom Turner, Marvin Cox, Angie Thompson, Renee Pratt, Suzie Tolmie, Lt. Melzoni

Staff: Will Connelly, Deon Trotter, Judy, Tackett, Karri Simpson, Pam McEwen (MSS Finance Rep)

The meeting began at 9:32 a.m.

Minutes

The minutes of the September 5, 2014 Metro Homelessness Commission meeting were approved.

Financial Report and Budget

Pam McEwen reported that the current budget presented numbers through September and so funds spent for PHC are not accounted for. However, approximately \$6,000 was spent from the PHC budget for the Starting Point event held in October.

How's Nashville has received \$66,300 and spent \$19,000 year to date. The large majority of the donations received were through the Gail Kerr Fund.

Year to date, \$12,000 has been spent from the CDBG fund.

Cold Weather Report

Judy Tackett presented on the Cold Weather Community Response Plan. There are four levels within the plan, with cold weather season officially running November 1 through March 31. Room in the Inn, the Nashville Rescue Mission, and Oasis Center will all provide day shelter as well as expand their night shelter options.

During level two through four, which is determined by the weather forecast on weather.com, additional beds are added at all locations to meet the demand. Outreach, led by Open Table Nashville, has already begun canvassing to inform individuals experiencing homelessness of the plan options, as well as canvassing to locate people on the nights that level two through four are activated.

Erik Cole added that there is a fourth level that didn't exist last year when extreme cold weather plus significant other circumstances, i.e. ice storm, massive power outage, etc., where the responses are really based on emergency services.

Director's Report

- **How's Nashville outcomes report:** Will Connelly reported that 733 people, who meet the definition of chronic homelessness or are vulnerable, have obtained housing since June of last year, averaging about 46 people moving into housing per month. Housing retention has been looked at for 30% of the 733 people (over 200 individuals), with a success rate of 78%.

- **How's Nashville:** How's Nashville was selected to participate in Zero: 2016, the next iteration of the 100,000 Homes Campaign. This campaign is focused on the federal goals of ending veteran and chronic homelessness over the next 2 years.
- **CABHI:** The Commission applied and has received a federal grant, of \$1.5 million over a 3-year period, for CTI case management. The grant is awarded from the federal government to the state and then down to Metro. There will be a competitive process over the next few months to contract out these services, which the Commission will then oversee. CTI case management will be provided to either veterans or people that meet the chronic definition of homelessness and are moving into permanent housing. Approximately 120 people per year will be served through this grant.
- **CES:** This subcommittee will hold a half day planning session next week and hopes to launch the CES next year.

Commissioner Discussion

- **Strategic Plan:**
 Suzie Tolmie, with MDHA presented on the history of the Continuum of Care (CoC) and discussed the current structure. There are currently 28 funded projects in Nashville and funds awarded provide for a range of services including rehousing and rental assistance. MDHA serves as the lead facilitator but they do not contract directly for the funds; MDHA is also the hub for HMIS. MDHA is, however, responsible for contracting out ESG funds. All of these funds come from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which has a policy priority of housing first.

Discussion among the Commissioners regarding funding fluidity and data ensued. Will Connelly stated that the data currently collected can be used to find out the needs and wants for people who are living on the streets and in shelters. This data can help create systems changes and goals for such were discussed and included:

- o Increase exits to permanent housing.
- o Reduce lengths of stay in emergency shelter and transitional housing.
- o Reduce returns to homelessness.
- o Shift investments to most cost effective solutions.
- o Target individual who are experiencing literal homelessness, divert others.

Will Connelly said that the focus of the Homelessness Commission is to help individuals in crisis, living on streets, in shelter, and campsites, and that we can't be an affordable housing solution for all, which is often something the Commission has been asked to be. He added that for the strategic planning session, because it is a big deal and will involve some sensitive conversations, they need to hire someone who really knows HUD regulations and has helped other communities transform their system. Further things that need to be addressed for the session are:

- o Identify what is currently being done and what needs to be improved.
- o Review goals of the Commission and CoC and assess how those goals align with the federal initiatives.
- o Make Nashville more competitive:
 - Determine if funding reallocation is needed to align with priorities of funding sources;
 - Reevaluate the current structure of the Commission and CoC; and
 - Explore system-wide performance targets by program type and practices that improve data quality.

- Draft an action plan with local leadership that includes a recommended focus for the next three years by March or April 2015 so that it can be used once the HUD NOFA comes out (usually in May or June)
- **Program Evaluation Subcommittee:**
Wendell Segroves reported that the group met for the first time last Tuesday. This is a contract evaluation committee that will look at the current four contracts with Room in the Inn, Park Center, and Centerstone. At the previous meeting there was discussion of the goals around the current contracts and currently members of this group are reading the contracts in further detail. This group meets again next Tuesday, November 11.
- **SOAR and Attorneys Working Group:**
Burkley Allen reported that the committee is working to expand the current work that Park Center does. They previously met with the Vanderbilt law student volunteer coordinator to see if there could be a partnership; however, there is a limitation based on how their community service program works. They have reached out to Belmont law school and will pursue further, if needed, once they hear back from the coordinator at Vanderbilt.

Announcements

Diane Kuhn asked that the list of meeting dates for 2015 be sent out to Commissioners.

The Homeless Memorial will be on December 13, 2014.

Public Hearing

- David “Cowboy” Luttrell: He stated that providers and commissioners need to enhance people’s ability to take care of themselves; this should be end goal. He hopes that this continues because you can’t keep giving away everything, people need to take responsibility for their own actions. Case management is most important and section 8 vouchers should only provide rental assistance for one year.
- Barry Hobbs: He has been working on the issue of homelessness for 12 years and during this time a previous Nashville mayor came up with a plan but didn’t put funding into it; the Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County had created the Homelessness Commission but they didn’t do anything either. Things are going to get worse now that elephants have taken over the country. He would like everyone to read the October 20th edition of *Sports Illustrated* because it discussed young folks who are smart and athletic, and they are homeless. He hopes the story breaks hearts and will motivate people to help them. He feels there are not enough meetings of the Homelessness Commission over the course of the year. He also feels 29 degrees should be good enough for him to get into anyone’s church and no one listened and he is tired of politics and personalities. From today until Dec. 23rd he is bowing out. He has had enough. If there is a god he needs to do his job because Jesus already did his. He wants Obama to get out his pen because there are 2 more years of grid lock to go. He said get Hillary in office because the girl can box.
- Steve Lindstrom: The goal of Goodnightnashville.org is to raise enough money to buy backpack beds for every person sleeping on the streets, so they don’t die on the streets. The objective is to provide a tool to save lives and keep them from suffering, not to take place of shelters but adjunct to that. He stated 68 people died last year and that is ridiculous. He has flyers and they need

donations. Frist has already donated to help get started. He is currently working with Open Table Nashville.

- Steve Reiter: He likes what Steve Lindstrom said because that is innovative and it is what we need. Help is needed in camps with propane and other supplies to keep people alive. He thinks the cold weather plan is deficient because the city doesn't have skin in the game. Rather, they handed it off to community organizations and aren't taking any initiative. He wants to thank Megan Barry and anyone else who played a role in helping out on the issue at the library that he previously brought to the attention of the Homelessness Commission. He takes exception to what Will Connelly said about affordable housing because it brings people on the brink of homelessness. Housing is much more expensive here and it is getting harder and harder ; people with section 8 are having to go further and further out. Affordable housing is important and vouchers won't do any good if you have to go far out where there is no transportation. He concludes by wishing everyone a happy holidays.
- Howard Allen: He slept outside last night. It snowed in Atlanta yesterday and paralyzed the city. Three important things: Steve, Barry, and he are trying to form relationships with this commission to tell them things they don't know. He stated he doesn't get emails about meetings even though he signs in and feels the commission is going in the wrong direction. Addressing Charlie Strobel, Wendell Segroves, Dayna Lovelady, and JC Smith- he asks them to step down from this Commission and start a private sector commission. The current Commission can't get the money they need. Our government is set up that the president, governor, and mayor are term limited and stated that Charlie Strobel has served more than two consecutive four year terms and it's time for him to step down. Addressing Commissioner Megan Barry- he know she can box and asks if she is the next mayor that the Homelessness Commission receive part of the 108 billion dollar budget this city is worth; think about what could be done if this group had the 18 million dollar being spent to build a bridge. We need a mayor that can change policy. Churches need to do more.
- Evan McGuire: He stated that we need to be open-minded and seek alternatives. People need to be allowed to sleep in their car on different properties. When people see him in his car and call police and then police interrogate him- why can't police tell the caller that he has a right to be there and sleep in his car? He wants to be able to take a shower and is grateful that Park Center will let him do that and use their laundry center for a discounted price. With all due respect to Commissioner Reinbold, the motto is to serve and protect. If someone approaches you for help or you see them on the street, instead of kicking them with a steel toed boot – help. Be kind, say hello and be professional when you see those experiencing homelessness.
- Samuel Lester: He is thankful for the backpack beds but has been getting word that there is pressure from police higher ups to disturb the established camps. These established camps are better equipped to handle and survive cold weather than just putting out a sleeping bag somewhere. It is clear that funding from MDHA for a big new building could be used for other opportunities. There are 100,000 households in Nashville alone that are making less than \$25,000. If you want to prevent homelessness you have to not only deal with the current problem but the problem coming your way. Why is more MDHA funding not coming to deal with low income housing when the CoC gives half its budget, \$2 million, to MDHA?

The next and last full Commission meeting is on Friday, January 9, 2015, at the Sonny West Conference room.

The next Executive Committee meeting is on Tuesday, November 18 at 8:30 a.m., at Metro Social Services.

With no other comments, all approved and the meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m.