

Metropolitan Homelessness Commission

November 3, 2017, 9:30am

Present: Freddie O'Connell, Mina Johnson, Tanaka Vercher, Theresa Skiles, Tim Leeth, Wendell Segroves, John Krenson, Liz Allen Fey, Bob Freeman, Charles Strobel, Tom Turner, a representative for Adriane Harris, a representative for Marvin Cox, Renee Pratt, a representative for Angie Thompson, Josh Lee, Jim Shulman

Staff: Judith Tackett, Jessica Ivey, Deon Trotter, Sunni Brimsy, Lisa Ricketts, MSS Finance Director, Sally Besuden, Joseph Parker, Troy Jenkins, Abigail Dowell, Nicole Williams

Minutes

Welcome & Roll Call

Liz Allen Fey welcomed everyone and conducted roll call.

Approval of Minutes

Wendell Segroves made a motion to approve the minutes of September 1, 2017, motion was seconded. All approved.

Financial Report

Lisa Ricketts provided the financial report and said the Homelessness Commission was on track with its budget.

MHC/CoC Governance Workgroup Report

- Liz Allen Fey and Sean Muldoon presented the recommendation from the MHC/CoC governance workgroup.
- Liz Allen Fey reported on the background of the MHC/CoC workgroup.
- Sean Muldoon reported on recommendations.
- "It's one role is to be that one structure that brings that together, develop strategies for the community. The planning councils are going to make recommendations; are we getting where we need to be?"
- "The CoC and its membership remains the same, and the homelessness commission becomes part of that."
- Sean Muldoon reported that membership of the CoC would include **4 parts**:

1. Approve the charter and its by-laws.
2. Elect planning and council members.
3. Elect collaborative applicant and HMIS lead.

4. Participate in CoC committees.

- Liz Allen Fey reported on timeline for MHC/CoC.
 - November: Present to MHC and CoC.
 - December: Draft ordinance, identify potential CoC charter amendments, ongoing conversations with key stakeholders.
 - January: Both MHC and CoC vote to support intent, charter amendments finalized if approved to move forward.
 - February: Commission vote on draft ordinance.
 - March: Presentation to metro council, ordinance filed, transition plan created.
 - April: New board named.
 - May: Transition begins.

Comments:

- Freddie O'Connell: Mayors office and MDHA need to be involved and collaborating on this because they will be affected most significantly.
- Charles Strobel: Are we taking the authority of the commission from the mayor to the council?
- "Does the metro council confirm the mayor appointments?"

Response:

- Consider thinking of this as representing the community, not the council.
- There will be an interdepartmental council represented on the council
- Positive for resources in that there isn't as much duplication. Be sure we don't lose sight of operational details. Where the work lives.
- Concern because we don't know if our future mayors will be as sympathetic to homeless needs.
- Reminder that the balance in power is actually in the CoC, not in government.
- Two members are non-voting.
- The belief is that the community needs to own the council.
- From CoC and HUD's standpoint there needs to be a wide representation and will likely be considered by the mayor when making appointments.
- Metro council does not confirm the mayor appointments. Current review of this plan takes the council further from oversight of the city as opposed to the community members.
- Funnel concerns, questions, challenges to Judith Tackett, Liz Allen Fey, and/or Sean Muldoon.

Vote is in January to move ahead.

Cold Weather Bill:

- Judith Tackett presented on the background of the cold weather bill.
 - In 2013, Open Table Nashville has run emergency shelters, metro has stepped in to help.
 - A response plan was created, Room in the Inn agreed to open additional beds at 27 degrees, and additional shelters run by Open Table would open at 25 degrees.

-Last year in January, met with Councilman Shulman, who asked that we open at 25 degrees, that's what metro did/adjusted.

- Council Shulman provided a basic overview of the Cold Weather Bill. Stating that at 32 degrees, which freezing, metro would open a backup shelter. He stated that he attempted to provide funding to Metro Social Services for cold weather shelters this past summer but it was not approved.

Discussion:

- Liz Allen Fey opened up discussion by asking for potential challenges with this bill as is.
- Freddie O'Connell asked to know how many people are being left in the cold if metro does not open a shelter at 32 degrees and what are the barriers to them coming in to existing resources. He expressed concern that the bill was too light on specifics
- Councilman Shulman did not have exact number for those who would be left out if metro didn't open a shelter but expressed that the number should not matter and the city shouldn't take the risk of people freezing.
- Ms. Fey redirected with a question about how this can be done in a way that's meeting the needs of the people we serve.
- Mr. Shulman continued to respond with his desire for a simple, straightforward plan that is clearly communicated in order to take care of the people in Nashville experiencing homelessness.
- Ms. Fey asked for a point of clarification that Mr. Shulman is interested in a city supported plan.
- Mr. Shulman expressed appreciation for all of the organizations working with individuals experiencing homelessness and providing shelter but feels that there is still not enough being done and wants a plan to meet the unmet needs as soon as possible because of the impending cold weather.
- Charles Strobel expressed that RITI will be happy to open at 32 or 25.
- Bob Freeman asked for clarification about why the 25 degree mark was put into place and why now 32 when someone can still die at 38 degrees.
- Commissioners O'Connell and Mina Johnson expressed concern that this bill would not truly address the need of our city, acting more as a band-aid, which is to create more low-barrier, low-cost housing for individuals currently experiencing homelessness. That this bill would tie up funding that could potentially be used to help coordinate how to get people housed more quickly.
- Mr. Strobel pointed out the importance of focusing on creating as much a barrier free system as possible.
- Further discussion among the commissioners was in regards to determine the best temperature to implement an overflow shelter and all in agreement that a system needs to be created that meets the needs of the greatest number of people possible.

Due to time, Freddie O'Connell motioned to extend the meeting to 11:15, motion approved.

The commission temporarily suspended the conversation due to time at 10:50am to discuss the issue of stipends for individuals with lived experience serving on the commission.

- Recommends that the commission provide a stipend for individuals with lived experience. They receive \$100 per meeting and those on the executive committee receive \$200 for the month.
- Motion to adopt amendment of \$100 per meeting, approved.
- Motion to adopt the plan to compensate individuals with lived experience at \$100 per meeting for those meetings which attendance is required, motion passed.
- Will be put in place in November, 2017.

Discussion of cold weather resumed at 11:05am.

Public Comment was taken at this time:

- Howard stated that the bill would help him and others experiencing homelessness, especially those who have been barred from the mission. "It's all about money is what I see here. It's a common sense thing when you hear your weather man tell you to bring your plants and animals inside, but you want to leave us outside when your plants and animals might freeze."
- Samuel Lester and Haley Spigner from Open Table Nashville spoke:
 - "I think we look at it wrong when we say we should have shelters or housing first- we need both. I think this city allocates a certain responsibility to people. We regularly find 80-100 people out after all those other shelters are closed."
 - "There are folks who will not go in to Room in the Inn or the mission, but when I canvas at night when the overflow are open, they will go in. We need affordable housing for our folks, but we can't house people if they freeze to death."
- The issue of women having to be in line all day to get tickets for shelter was mentioned. Comment stated that women should be able to either get tickets early in the day like the men or that metro should have a van or a bus that takes women to the shelters.

The final conclusion was for Judy Tackett to reconvene the leaders of the cold weather planning group to continue the work they are doing and determine the implications of this bill and consider community perspective when determining the implications of the plan.

There will be no meeting in December.

The Annual Homeless Memorial will be December 16th at 8:30am in Riverfront Park.

Meeting adjourned at 11:18am.