

Ventura Social Services Task Force - Meeting Minutes from 12/1/10

I. Introductions and Announcements

A. attending – 18 (Paul Bramson, Jerry Breiner, Peter Brenda Byers, Cindy Cantle, Harold Carlidge, David Deutsch, Bill Finley, John Jones, John Luttrull, Jill Martinez, Donna Mason, Loretta McCarty, Eileen McCarthy, Ken Porter, Clyde Reynolds, Karol Schulkin, Mary Stewart)

B. The Pledge of Allegiance

C. Brief Self-Introductions

II. Subcommittee and Other Reports

A. Peter Brown

1) Teens for Jeans is starting – their goal is to distribute 1,500 pairs of jeans this holiday season (Teen Voice is the oversight organization - this is a High School Leadership Community Service Project). Jeans will be distributed in early January to various agencies (see flyer).

2) Kingdom Center is about to “occupy” 6 more rooms soon – they will not fill as many rooms as originally planned because more children have moved in than were originally expected.

3) The Winter Warming Shelter opens Monday December 6th in Oxnard (see flyer). Ventura residents will get 2 Gold Coast bus passes in the mornings – 1 to go out for the day and 1 to get back at night. Oxnard residents will not get bus passes. The shelter is being readied right now and laundry issues are being worked out.

Question: How to get there for the first night? Can passes be provided through various agencies i.e., Turning Point, Project Understanding, The Harbor, etc.

Answer: This will be looked into immediately.

4) There will be no Homeless Subcommittee meeting in December - it will be rescheduled for January.

5) Trash receptacles for the Santa Clara and Ventura River areas are being considered – possible placement in December or January. A clothing exchange may be facilitated through Catholic Charities and The Harbor to reduce levels of trash.

6) The City Council Meeting on SB2 resulted in a decision to approve only industrial zones for a homeless shelter being built in Ventura. However, the Gateway Project received a high level of support from the Council members.

Comment: Clyde Reynolds – The Council recognizes the need for the shelter and they may see the Gateway as the solution to the issue.

Comment: Eileen McCarthy – The Ordinance related to SB2 may be brought back to the City Council. They must provide adequate sites in M1 and M2 zones to address the issue of homelessness.

7) There will be a River Bottom Relocation Project in coordination with the opening of the Warming Shelter. Notices will be posted the week of 12/6 and the “relocation” will begin the week of 12/13. This will take place in both the Santa Clara and Ventura River areas.

Concerns: Areas must be cleared by residents 1st, then, belongings deemed to be usable/important will be saved by persons clearing the areas. Trash will be completely cleared out. The purpose of this project is to try to reduce the “building out” of the river bottoms into “units” – it is understood that persons will still pitch tents for temporary shelter. Peter Brown has met with various officials to try to facilitate an understanding of how to best coordinate the relocation effort.

B. Faith Community Subcommittee (Captain Bill Finley, Salvation Army)

1) The subcommittee meeting will be on Tuesday 12/7.

2) The Thanksgiving Day event (One City One Meal) served approximately 600 people. There was more conversation amongst all who attended than in the past which was a positive experience for people. There were more volunteers than was needed and great support from City Staff. There was also excellent media coverage – the VC Star was on site and a multimedia package will be posted on the VSSTF website. There was great church participation with lots of children.

Comment: Paul Bramson – The Audrey Johnson Show “805 Live” featured interviews with several people at the One City event.

Comment: Donna Mason – There were interviews with homeless people who stated that it was a “10” all the way around.

Comment: Peter Brown – The Tuesday before Thanksgiving the City of Oxnard held a Thanksgiving meal at Casa Lopez put together by the Oxnard Task Force – they served approximately 500 people.

3) There will be a meeting in January to “debrief” and plan for next year’s event.

4) The churches involved in Homeless Awareness Month were very involved with the Thanksgiving events.

5) There was \$1,400 raised for the Homeless Prevention Fund.

C. Homeless Prevention Subcommittee (Cindy Cattle)

1) Project Understanding had the fund for November and 3 households (6 people) were helped. Catholic Charities will have the fund for December. The Ventura County Star article helped with donations as did various groups and churches.

2) The subcommittee is working with Beth Sutherland to raise funds through sales of cards, etc. to promote donations to fund VHPF.net (the subcommittee website). You can also call 654-7701 to leave a message if needed.

D. Housing Options Subcommittee (Loretta McCarty)

1) The subcommittee met on 11/10 (food was very much appreciated) and will meet again on 12/8.

2) There have been 7 matches for “Homeshare” so far; there are 9 providers and 20 seekers right now. Funding is needed to be able to provide a paid position for Homeshare.

3) River Haven was discussed as was Veterans Assistance Vouchers for emancipated youth.

4) There will be a groundbreaking ceremony for Encanto Del Mar (on 12/7 at 10 AM) which will be a 37 unit housing project providing family apartments. It is targeted for downtown employees and is a tax credit project (no voucher assistance). Renters will be qualified based on a percentage of median income – 30% of income will be charged for rent. Section 8 will be accepted but with so many vacancies in Ventura it is questionable how it might be utilized.

E. Gateway Group Subcommittee (Clyde Reynolds)

1) The subcommittee has met with 6 out of 7 City Council members so far and the meetings have been largely positive.

2) Strategies are being explored for finding an appropriate site for the Gateway to provide needed services.

3) Currently, it seems like it is in the hands of the City of Ventura and it appears as though they will work with other partners to acquire a site.

4) The site on Petit owned by the Salvation Army would probably be considered as a possible location.

5) There are concerns that persons who will not be served by the Gateway may have trouble getting needed services.

6) The Gateway will not be designed to serve families; it will serve singles and couples only.

7) Next subcommittee meeting date to be decided.

F. Community Education Subcommittee (John Jones)

1) There was not a meeting in November.

2) There was a showing of 2 movies at the Unitarian Universalist Church in November – “Humble Beauty” which is about L.A. Skid row artists and an updated documentary on River Haven. One former River Haven resident and two current residents (including the camp manager) participated in a panel discussion after the showing of the film.

3) There will be a meeting on 12/14 at the Unitarian Universalist Church.

4) Reports will be generated regarding the degree to which goals have been met in relation to the 10 year plan to end homelessness.

G. VSSTF Steering Committee (John Jones)

1) The committee will meet in January to review progress and goals for 2011.

III. Business

A. “One Stop” Status (Ken Porter)

1) Ventura County Behavioral Health is now doing assessments after clients have been assessed for medical and other needs. The mental health assessments are conducted in private room settings.

IV. Networking

1) There will be a Homeless Persons’ Memorial Service on Sunday 12/19 at 3:00 PM in Plaza Park – downtown Ventura. This is sponsored by Lift Up Your Voice which is a project of the Unitarian Universalist Church (see flyer).

2) Paul Bramson – There will be a fundraiser for Homeless Veterans at Smoky’s BBQ in Oxnard at 9:00 PM tonight (12/4/10).

3) Encanto Del Mar will have a groundbreaking ceremony on Tuesday 12/7/10 at 10:00 AM at 351 E. Thompson in Ventura – refreshments will be served.

4) David Deutsch – There is a group of 12 students from De Anza Middle School who are gathering donations and doing a fundraiser for River Haven. They will go to River Haven for a field trip on 12/17.

5) Clyde Reynolds – The River Haven film and panel discussion at the Unitarian Universalist Church was exceptional and people who attended commented on how inspired they felt afterward.

6) Paul Bramson – Audrey Johnson will interview people for her “Live 805” show.

7) Captain Bill Finley – Salvation Army is still taking applications for gifts, call 648-4977 TLC. You must have proof of income, proof of residency, and birth certificates for your children in order to receive children’s gifts.