

Ventura Social Service Task Force Minutes

September 4, 2013

Present: Debra Adams, Neal Andrews, Kent Brinkmeyer, Sue Brinkmeyer, Peter Brown, Miguel Cardenas, Elizabeth Crews, Joe Dawson, David Deutsch, Jim Duran, Susan Everett, Ken Finning, Jill Forman, David Garcia, Mary Haffner, John Jones, Sharon Lanning, Amy Luoma, Donna Luttrull, John Luttrull, Arlene Martinez, Eileen McCarthy, Kate Mills, Jennifer Mokos, Rob Orth, Kathy Powell, Amanda Pyper, Laura Roberts, Margritte Rothchild, Debora Schreiber, Karol schulkin

I. Introductions and Announcements

Meeting was called to order at 3:17PM. Introductions were done.

Copies of VSSTF Candidate Forum draft flyer, possible questions for the forum submitted by VSSTF members, and a flyer asking for volunteers for the Winter Warming Shelter were distributed.

II. Changes or Additions to the Agenda

- A. With Peter Brown unable to arrive until later and there being no objections, it was agreed we would start with II and III, Changes to the agenda and Business.
- B. There being no objections, the discussion regarding a possible VSSTF recommendation to City Council to form a Blue Ribbon Panel to End Homelessness was tabled.
- C. It was agreed that Margarete Rothchild would be added to the agenda as the last item under I. Reports to bring issues related to the early release of women psychiatric patients from Hillmont to our attention and ask for assistance.

IV. Business

- A. Questions and format for October 1 Candidate Forum:

Rob Orth has agreed to be the forum moderator.

Several changes were proposed in the format of the 2011 Candidate Forum which had divided candidates into groups of three and asked two questions to each group with each candidate having 2 ½ minutes to answer a question and others having 45 seconds for rebuttal.

Kate M. suggested that a general question go to every candidate in advance.

Rob O. suggested that we might want to focus only on housing.

Karol S. agreed with the idea of focusing on housing /economic development including the inclusionary housing aspect and housing options that are viable. She asked if the candidates would be familiar with the "housing first" phrase?

Eileen M. suggested that the economic issue should include jobs that allow people to have housing, the inclusionary include very low and extremely low, and that we ask candidates if they think the inclusionary policy should be changed and how.

Another suggested that we ask how the city could support providing the supportive services that are necessary to accomplish the housing first and provide those components that are essential to its success.

Peter B. suggested we pose the following question in advance to the candidates – What is the community's responsibility to provide housing and jobs to disenfranchised populations including people who are homeless? What are the strategies? Where would you see the responsibility lying? If it is with the faith based community – how can that be facilitated? Where should funding come from?

It was suggested that the candidates answer the question and then we have time for follow up questions after their answers.

Donna Luttrull suggested we ask the candidates about what they have said and positions/actions they have taken in the past.

Other suggestions for questions included: What is your plan to end homelessness? What are the goals, the problems, the funding sources, the results you want to see? What strategies would you use to achieve this strategy.

Rob O. commented that there is an evolving housing strategy for the past. Following the best practices established nationally – the new strategy is housing first.

Karol S. said we should open housing first wider and create very affordable permanent housing.

Kate M. commented that the goal stated in the Housing Element (HE) is 430 new housing units for extremely low income households including the supportive services necessary to keep them in the units.

The group settled on the format including a one-minute opening statement including a self-introduction and statement of credentials. Then each candidate would have three minutes to respond to the question posed in advance. A sub-group to work with Rob was formed including Kate M., Eileen M., Cathy B. Eileen will ask David Marin to join the planning meeting. The order in which candidates will speak will be determined by random drawing. It was commented that for follow up questions to be most effective, we will have to do our homework to find out how the candidates have addressed the issues in the past.

Kathy P. commented that she believes there is an unspoken different agenda – to get rid of the homeless and wants to see that addressed in the question. It is agreed that the question Peter proposed did address that.

It was further agreed that we would not co-sponsor the Westside forum but rather hold a forum focused exclusively on housing and homelessness. It was agreed that we would accept the generous offer from Ventura Church of Christ to host the forum and provide sound equipment and childcare. We would provide light refreshments after the forum.

It was agreed to accept the Star's offer to live stream the forum on its website. Arlene from the Ventura County Star passed out cards with the Star's Twitter account. She invited folks to join the Twitter account.

III. Subcommittees and Other Reports

A. Updates from the City – Peter Brown

The Winter Warming Shelter is scheduled to open December 1st.

The Harbor Church CUP hearing has been continued to September 11, 2013.

Last week a person was noticed scaling City Hall and it was discovered that there were some homeless persons camped on the roof.

There was a meeting last week with the Oxnard Chief of Police to discuss how the municipalities can interact with social services and supportive services for the populations needing those services.

Four tons of trash was removed from the river on August 19th and 20th and an additional 12 to 15 tons by the students from Cal Lutheran University on Sept. 3.

Picsweet mushroom farm closed unexpectedly last Friday. There are some reports of people drifting onto the property. 425 persons lost their jobs there. 75 employees were laid off the previous Friday, August 23rd and 50 employees were laid off Friday August 30.

B. Report from the Faith Community Subcommittee

Project Understanding will offer Bridges Out of Poverty event on October 3, 2013. They are inviting ministers and faith providers.

Food Share has lost funding for food for seniors. The loss is eating into budget for pantries and other services.

C. Homeless Prevention Subcommittee – No report

D. Housing Options Subcommittee – Susan Everett

The goal is to continue planning for a Renters' Pre-Qualification and Guarantee program for landlords so it is important to continue to achieve 501(c)(3) status for donations for this fund. At the next meeting we will be working on the duties of the Board of Directors and developing the guarantee program guidelines.

F. Coordinated Assessment/ Intake Committee – Karol Schulkin

Close to having the service provider assessment form ready to go. It will be a screening form that can be used by anyone in the community. It is a very short form with common questions that determine need and to direct them to services that they may need. It interfaces with HMIS which tracks the information.

E. Report from H2H Community Solutions – Amy Luoma

The group interfaced with 19 individuals in the river clean up. Three were assisted to return to families out of state. Nine individuals were temporarily housed and 7 are still being case managed.

Debora S. asked if there are some individuals who were obtaining a repeat of services when they moved from the Ventura River to the Santa Clara River. Peter explained that some had been housed temporarily a second time so that clean up efforts could go forward without delay.

G. VSSTF Steering Committee –Sue Brinkmeyer

We need to determine what we want the Board of Directors to do and develop job descriptions in writing so that individuals can accept positions on the board knowing what they are agreeing to do. Once we have that together, Ron Harrington will convene the first meeting of the first meeting of the Board of Directors of a newly formed corporation and the board will take forward the process of having that corporation recognized by the state as a tax-free entity, i.e., a 501(c)(3).

H. One Stop – No report

They continue to have very high numbers of clients coming to the One Stop.

I. Family to Family – Donna Mason–Lutrull

Donna extends a request for furniture for a bedroom for an older woman. The St. Vincent De Paul has closed their facility in Oxnard; however, representatives of St. Vincent de Paul who were present quickly indicated they could meet the woman's needs.

J. Homeshare – Ken Finning

A successful month of August – three matches were made in August. They are very short of providers. Muriel said she would be available to come speak to any organizations to make a presentation.

K. Margaritte Rothchild reported that Hillmont Psychiatric hospital no longer has emergency beds for women in the County. People with grave disabilities are being discharged without ample time to find them a place to stay. Does anyone know of any services out there that she is not aware of?

Kathy P. mentioned that the Kingdom Center in Oxnard is reopening next month. David D. indicated that people with a diagnosis can find that a sober living program can serve as housing if they can get connected to a program and work closely with

Amanda. But also he just heard that another board and care facility went out of business.

Karol S. indicated that the changes are due to HUD's funding changes - to the # 1 priority of housing first. HUD does not want to fund transitional housing - they want to fund permanent housing. Only public dollars from ESG are left and this is drying up. Those funding sources are also opting to use the money for permanent housing. There is a growing unmet need.

Eileen M. stated that the City has an obligation to address the need for services for people who are not housed.

Margritte mentioned that the Lighthouse has changed its service focus to permanent housing and emergency beds were now only for people waiting to get into a case managed program.

IV. Business

A. November is Homelessness Awareness month. Sue suggested a letter writing campaign to local newspapers. Letters to the editors. Write to letters@vcstar.com

Neal A. mentioned that service organizations will be looking for speakers in November and suggested that Task Force members offer to speak to the service organizations regarding homelessness.

B. Sue reminded Task Force members that several of them had pledged support for tables at the Black & White Dinner November 9 and asked representatives of St. Vincent de Paul how the Task Force should get that funding to them and what other help the Task Force could provide. Laura Roberts indicated that checks could be sent to her or she would send further information to Sue. Debora suggested that funds be sent in early to provide the group with working capital.

V. Networking

A. Harbor Church CUP returns to the planning commission on September 11.

B. The United Way Day of Giving September 25th. Those interested should go to the United Way website, where there is a list of volunteer opportunities for the Day of Giving.

VI. **The items under Moving our Mission Forward** on the agenda were carried over to a future agenda due to a lack of time.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Everett