

Ventura Social Service Task Force

MINUTES January 2, 2012

Present: Neal Andrews, Jerry Breiner, Sue Brinkmeyer, Peter Brown, Cathy Brudnicki, Cindy Cante, Kevin Clerici, Al Davis, David Deutsch, Susan Everett, Jill Forman, Sal Gonzalez, Mary Haffner, John Jones, Shelli Locklear, Amy Luoma, John Luttrull, Arlene Martinez, Donna Mason-Luttrell, Kevin McCaroy, Kate Mills, Rob Orth, Kathy Powell, Amanda Pyper, Debora Schreiber, Karol Schulkin, Mark Stadler, Daniel Zapata

Introductions and Announcements

Introductions were done.

Neal Andrews presides over nominations and elections.

Chair – Sue Brinkmeyer - Nominated and seated by acclamation

Vice Chair – John Jones – Nominated and seated by acclamation

Secretary - Susan Everett – Nominated and seated by acclamation

I. Subcommittee and Other Reports

A. City Report – Peter Brown

1. The Winter Warming Shelter is open. 109 persons were served last evening. The challenge for the shelter is the “dark” nights. Next dark nights are January 12-13. The current discussion is to move across the street at Oxnard PAL 350 S. K Street. Volunteers will be needed Jan 12 to move mattresses across the street. The next dark nights are February 9-10 and March 8, 9, and 10. On these dates, the preference would be to use the Oxnard PAL; the Ventura Armory is the backup location. The next City Council Homeless Subcommittee meeting is Thursday February 7 at 4:00PM in City Council Chambers.
2. 2013 Homeless Count is scheduled for January 29, 2013. Count times are from 9:00AM – 12:00PM and from 1:00PM – 4:00PM. Thirty people in groups of two will be needed per time period. To volunteer visit volunteerventuracounty.org. Ventura Volunteers will need to attend one of two training sessions scheduled either January 17, 2013 at 5:30PM or January 22, 2013 at 12:00PM.
3. Safe and Clean Public Places – Camps have been removed on the lower reaches of the Ventura River. Remaining camps can be found adjacent to the petrochemical plant and at Crooked Palms. Subcommittee briefing will be held on January 3, 2013 at 3:00PM and will address the impact on other parts of town including Riverhaven.
4. There has been a public records request for records pertaining to Operation Embrace at the Harbor Community Church at 3100 Preble Avenue. Several neighbors contend that the activities at the church are not consistent with the conditional use permit issued in the early 1990’s given the proximity to a preschool, Ann Roundy Blanch Elementary School, and the Blanch Reynolds Park. The church property is zoned R-1.

A postponement of the public records request has been agreed to in exchange for a committee review of the conditional use permit. Committee members include Dave Ward – Planning, Andrew Stuffer – Code Enforcement, Ariel Calonne – City Attorney,

and Peter Brown - Community Services. The committee has met with the pastor of the Harbor Community Church, who has been very open about the activities at the church. There are three scenarios as to the status with the conditional use permit: 1) No inconsistencies - In that case activities can continue as usual, 2) Some inconsistencies – In that case activities that are not consistent would need to be eliminated, e.g., ingress and egress would need to be adjusted, 3) Inconsistent – the church will need to apply for a new conditional use permit, which would involve a long process of public meetings and presentations to the planning commission. During this process the church would likely be allowed to continue providing services.

A discussion ensued regarding the situation. Police indicated that they get calls from some neighbors regarding ingress and egress. A woman called after being hit in the face after answering her door. She claims the assailant was a vagrant. School district employees say they get complaints.

Cathy from Operation Embrace indicates that many of the neighbors are very supportive. Only some neighbors complain, and there are one or two abusive neighbors. She also states that the clients are not allowed to come and go. They stay for the entire 5-hour period while they eat, shower and get clothes at the church. She commented that it is very difficult for the volunteers right now. Several members commented that the church provides services that are not provided anywhere else and have been eliminated at other sites. In addition, several participants could get these services at no other location because of behavioral issues. It was suggested that the church use bridge-building tactics similar to those used with the neighbors of Riverhaven: ask neighbors to join in a meal and to learn what Operation Embrace does.

A motion was made that the VSSTF give recognition, support and appreciation to the staff and volunteers of Operation Embrace.

A discussion followed regarding several topics including the perception by the neighbors of our support, the fact that Operation Embrace encourages participants to seek assistance at the One Stop, and concerns as to how will these services would be replaced should it be determined that the services offered to the participants are inconsistent with the conditional use permit. A question was asked if the City was going to try to define church activities. Peter Brown answered – No, but that the ministers at Harbor Church were taking that direction. He suggested that we google RLUIPA.

A vote was held on the motion: Ayes have it. There were 3 abstentions.

5. Community Intervention Court Report – Commander Mark Stadler
Mark introduced Al Davis who will be taking over his responsibilities with the VSSTF. Chronic offenders and folks with behavioral problems are diverted from court pre-plea and agree to an alternative to traditional sentencing. The process involves the Public Defender meeting with the offender. Currently six cases are before the court. The intention is to expand the active cases.
- B. Faith Subcommittee – Sue Brinkmeyer
- There was no meeting in December. At the November meeting the discussion was about coordinating the work of Food Banks. The issue was raised about the increased demand on the Food Banks this year with the USDA cutting the allocation and the increased need in the community. The intention is to reach out to more of the faith groups to get more participation. There is an opportunity to participate with Temple Beth Torah in purchasing a propane refrigerator for Riverhaven. The Temple offered \$500 which was matched by a

congregant for a total of \$1,000. The refrigerator costs about \$2,000. The next meeting is the 4th Wednesday, January 23, 2013 at 3:00PM at the conference room of the Unitarian Universalist Church.

C. Homeless Prevention Subcommittee – Cindy Cantle

The subcommittee met with limited attendance on December 16th. The Salvation Army had the fund in the month of December. Three households were assisted, one for \$690. A total of 262 households have been assisted, which is 668 people. In 2012, 53 households were assisted in comparison with 50 households in 2011. The wristband promotion has brought in \$9,950 in the months of November and December. The Rotary donated \$936 in the month of December. With individual donations for amounts between \$5 and \$1,000 the total for the month is over \$10,000. The next meeting is the 3rd Wednesday, January 16, 2013 at 1:00PM at the Catholic Charities.

D. Housing Options Subcommittee – Susan Everett

Limited attendance at the December meeting. Please note the meeting location and time have changed. The next meeting is the 2nd Wednesday, January 9, 2013 at 4:00PM – 6:00 PM at the Housing Authority office located at 995 Riverside Street.

II. Business

A. One Stop – Kate Mills

During 2012, 5,000 sack lunches were provided by Lady of Assumption Church. Throughout the County of Ventura there were 8,885 unique participants and 46,000 visits last year at FQHC clinics. There were 1,800 unique visits to the One Stop. Volunteers have been joined by Sue Brinkmeyer, who will assist participants in signing up for disability benefits.

B. Family to Family – Donna Mason-Luttrull

Over 50,000 meals were served last year. Several Task Force members joined participants for lunch in the month of December. Donna continues to distribute books. She has been surprised to find out how much glasses are appreciated. Any donations of reading glasses would be gladly accepted.

III. Networking

The Homeless Count is January 29, 2013. Please volunteer.

The next VSSTF meeting is Wednesday February 6, 2013 at 3:00PM-5:00PM at 303 N. Ventura Ave. # E, Ventura, CA 93001.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Everett