

Ventura Social Service Task Force
Draft MINUTES
November 5, 2014

Present: Jack Broms, Cheryl Heitman, Priscilla Quiroz, Chris Rutter, Molly Skidmore, Nicholas Starkey, Kent Brinkmeyer, Jerry Foreman, Bill Griffin, Amanda Herrera, Alicia Morales, Melissa Ramirez, Judy Alexandre, Neal Andrews, Michael Anselmo, Brian Brennan, Sue Brinkmeyer, Peter Brown, Susan Everett, Mary Haffner, Tim Hawkins, Tim Hockett, Kate Mills, Ron Mulvihill, Kathy Powell, Dave Schmutte, Jan Schmutte, Karol Schulkin, Ben Unseth, Daniel Zapata Huerta

Meeting was called to order at 3:16PM

I. Introductions and Welcome

II. Revisions to/Approval of Minutes

Minutes are approved as presented

III. Changes or Additions of the Agenda

No additions mentioned

IV. Committees and Other Reports

A. Updates from City – Peter Brown

Point In Time Homeless Count will be January 27th. The sign up email will be sent out soon. Need 50 or so volunteers in Ventura and 80 or so volunteers in Oxnard for both the morning and afternoon shifts.

The Winter Warming Shelter WWS had the walk-through last Friday, which was ahead of schedule. The shelter is ready to go. The future of sheltering is up in the air.

Ventura has a problem with the reduction in the homeless count, yet there is an increase in calls for vagrancies involving folks with severe mental illness.

HA has offered ¼ of a duplex for homeless clients. The apartment will be donated as transitional housing in perpetuity. The SRO problems continue. Too much required for deposit and the landlords are too quick to kick someone out.

Santa Clara River near the nature conservancy property was targeted for attention lately. They are working with Social Service folks trying to get clients to get help. There was lots of trash.

Ben Unseth – In recognition of National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week, there will be a Circle of Caring event, celebrating successes of Homeless 2 Home, on Thursday November 20th at 11:30 AM at Plaza Park. There will be music.

November 18th is Take a Hungry Person to Lunch Day, also in recognition of National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week. – An opportunity to meet our homeless and establish a relationship. There is a pre-meeting scheduled at the UU Church at 9:30 that morning.

B. Announcement Regarding the Free Clinic – Dr. Broms

There has been declining attendance at the clinic since VCMC started providing care so the clinic will be closing. They have provided free care for 21 years by volunteers at the Clinica El Camino Real. They have provided care for 7,000 in Oxnard and 7,600 in Simi. Simi is seeing more affluent groups. They still see a lot of illegal immigrants. They want to continue to operate but cannot. The Dental Clinic will stay open

C. Working Together – Mayor Heitmann

The Mayor starts off by saying how sorry she is about the clinic closing. She goes on to say that there was a misunderstanding about the event that occurred in the park last month. She indicates that she just happened to be on a ride along with the police on the day. She states that it is standard procedure for the police to drive in the park. She says that she and the people in the park have a different philosophy but at no time did she say it was illegal to feed people in the park. She does not believe that she was heavy handed. She wonders if the group could bring food to Family to Family.

Kathy P. asks “So it is not illegal for people to provide food?” The Mayor answers that she does not know if it is illegal – she does not need to know if it is illegal, however, being a LCS she understands the issues.

Tim H. asks what is the best way for the community to work with the city council – there is no manual on what a hand-up is and what a hand-out is. The Mayor agrees that it is a complex issue and that the community is very lucky to have the breadth of agencies and Peter as resources.

Kathy P. feels that feeding the hungry is an important step in homeless beginning to accept social services. Other people may feel differently but people are still hungry.

Dr. Brom says that 75 box lunches were being delivered every week on Tues/Thurs. for five years. They were working with Project Understanding but couldn’t find a way to give food away charitably.

Jan S states that Family to Family would be happy to have food available Tuesday & Thursday, but new groups would be needed to make food in the commercial kitchen and serve people on site. Peter B states the City gave a variance to Catholic Charities in

1989 for Family to Family. The Westside Community Council is not happy about Catholic Charities and Family to Family feeding people on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, so they would not likely be pleased about additional days being added.

Mary H. asks if the VSSTF is recognized by the City. The response was that the VSSTF has existed since the 1980's. City Council takes the recommendations that come out of a group like VSSTF to heart, and that can be powerful. The City also gives the VSSTF \$70K a year for grants to social organizations to be used to assist with homelessness. Only one other commission in the City is given funding. The Mayor asks if the VSSTF addresses any other issues. No, the VSSTF is dedicated to ending homelessness in Ventura. The Mayor also asks if the school district is involved. That is what Mary H. is involved with – the number of students who are homeless or double and tripled up. Jane A. states that not everyone who attends the VSSTF shares the same philosophy. Danny Z. makes a comment about Mr. Abbot in Fort Lauderdale Beach who was arrested for feeding the homeless in Fort Lauderdale. He was arrested once before and held for a jail sentence during a protest; that time he sued the City of Fort Lauderdale and won.

Ron from SVDP mentions that in order to be effective there must be organization to change people's lives. SVDP has hired three full-time social workers/case managers. He introduces his new team of social service providers who will serve the entire Ventura County. The SVDP is moving away from the shelter model. There is some concern though about moving away from that model without some plan for weather triggered shelter to be in place. Brian comments that Public Health is examining the weather triggered shelters and hopes to have weather service protocols in place soon. He is hopeful they will present the protocols to the group in January. Kate M. asks if the City has been invited to these planning meetings on weather-triggered emergency shelter guidelines. If a medical emergency is declared, an Emergency Operating Shelter with the Fire Department is opened. However, the Red Cross does not provide shelter to people that do not have shelters already. The Faith Based organizations including South Coast Fellowship are talking about the issue to see if they are able to fill the need for weather-triggered sheltering in the future.

Peter B. mentions he is meeting with the Ventura Interfaith Ministerial Association and will discuss sheltering. Peter B. mentions that where and when a weather triggered shelters opens in City a conditional use permit is required and it costs \$7,500 to apply. Karol S. mentions that emergency sheltering can be done in areas zoned M1 or M2 with restrooms.

D. Faith Based Community Subcommittee –

Judy is chairing a group planning event on March 12 that will bring all the Faith community members together to find out what all are doing and what gaps in service

might call to various faith groups. Following the event, the Faith Subcommittee will follow up with those expressing interest to facilitate congregational involvement in their areas of interest. The next event planning meeting is November 13th from 3:30 to 5:00.

The Faith Subcommittee is also working to bring CIRCLES to Ventura. The program requires \$100K for two staff members and 15 to 20 community members to act as advocates. The idea is for 2 to 3 allies to surround the family in poverty to provide support to the family members as they move themselves permanently out of poverty. There is training for all the families involved. The program is nationwide and seems to be working. Leslie Orth of LSSS heads up the CIRCLES program in Conejo Valley.

Tim Hockett says CIRCLES is an outgrowth of Bridges Out of Poverty. It is sophisticated mentoring using befriending/coaching and best practices and community action. He has a friend in Idaho who seems to be having remarkable outcomes.

Judy A. states that mentoring is more than case management and gives a person a sense of dignity to move from poverty to middle class. In Conejo, they work with residents of Many Mansions.

Karol S. says that the people that share in their capital become an advocate for the person in poverty. Ron M. says SVDP has been successful with a similar program.

E. Outreach Committee – John Jones

John is still trying to collect information about organizations that need volunteers and the kind of volunteers that are needed, who should the volunteers be sent to, and any other information about volunteering for your organization. The brochure is still at the City waiting to be revised and then printed. Susan E. volunteered to work with John on the revisions.

F. Homelessness Prevention Subcommittee – Brian Brennan

There is \$984 in the fund. The United Way has \$1,500 that has been donated for the fund; it will be sent to the VSSTF 501(c)(3) to manage.

G. H2H Community Solutions – Alicia

The coordinated assessment phone line has had 44 phone calls with 9 duplications. Ten clients are with H2H. They housed two of the clients. The response time is 15 to 45 minutes depending on whether the response is a phone call or an actual visit. There is a meeting with the County to take the phone number County wide. All County partners will use the coordinated assessment form. H2H for October housed 24 adults, 8 kids. Since the beginning of the year 238 persons in Ventura and 554 total persons have been housed.

H. CoC – Alicia

The COC application is was submitted on October 30th; we are awaiting a response.

I. VSSTF Steering Committee – Sue Brinkmeyer

RISE report will be given next month. The Black & White Dinner has been cancelled, with the primary fundraiser for the Winter Warming Shelter now being the No Room at the Inn display of nativity scenes. Sue continues to meet with a group discussing food instability for those seniors and disabled who cannot get to the food pantries. Sue is also attending the Homes for All meetings and asks that all interested in affordable housing plan to attend the planning Commission meeting on Nov. 12th to discuss the Ashkar Development and the applicability of the Inclusionary requirement there. (Note: meeting since moved to Dec. 10)

Note here – the City Council meeting Homeless Subcommittee was posted incorrectly so the meeting has to be cancelled under the Brown Act rules.

J. One Stop – Kate Mills

There were 1,500 contacts in the month of October and over 1,000 meals were served. Medical case management has been introduced at the Ventura One Stop. Supportive case management with SVDP MSW and MSW interns is now available at all four locations, working with individuals towards goals so they can be housed.

K. Family to Family – Jan Schmutte

They lost a group who was providing meals but the slack in meal preparation is being made up.

L. Other Updates

Tenderlife Maternity Home currently has openings. Project Understanding is also in need of a car – their vehicle broke down. Someone suggests that they call Cars For Causes.

Community Christmas Shoppe will again be providing toys for children in need; organizations may want a booth; contact Judy.

Clyde Reynolds is retiring as the Executive Director of Turning Point Foundation at the end of November. The board has selected Jason Meeks as his replacement. Jason is

from Bakersfield. Much gratitude and accolades for Clyde's many years of providing outstanding service to the community.

V. Networking

- A. Wednesday, November 12, 6 pm, City Hall, Planning Commission hearing on Ashkar development and the applicability of the Inclusionary Housing ordinances
- B. Beginning Nov. 12 - Write congress re McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants receive the Administration's proposed \$301 million increase to \$2.406 billion. Sample letters and Facebook posts etc. at <http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/final-fy-2015-push-mckinney-letter-writing-campaign>
- C. November 12, 6 p.m. Opening Gala for No Room At the Inn. Tickets \$40 in advance, \$45 at door. Flyer at www.nrati.com or <https://www.facebook.com/nrative>
- D. Nov. 13, 10 am - 7 pm and Nov. 15, 10 am - 5:30 pm No Room At Inn Exhibit at **St. Paschal Baylon Catholic Church 155 E. Janss Rd. Thousand Oaks, CA 91360** \$5 Adults, \$1 Children Children's Corner (Saturday and Sunday)
- E. November 18, Take a Hungry Person to Lunch Day, 11 a.m. participating downtown restaurants; pre-event at UU Church 9:30-10:30; Reflection event at UU Church, Nov. 25, 9:30-10:30 am
- F. November 24, Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, First Christian Church, 38 Teloma Dr., Ventura 93003
- G. Friday, Nov. 21, 4:30-6:30 VCCF Non-Profit Center, 4001 Mission Oaks, Camarillo, Interface, film The Homestretch, followed by panel about Runaway
- H. December 21, 3 pm, Homeless Persons' Memorial Service, Plaza Park

Meeting Adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Everett

The following 27 people are eligible to vote at December 3, 2014 meeting

Judy Alexandre, Neal Andrews, Michael Anselmo, Brian Brennan, Sue Brinkmeyer, Peter Brown, Joe Dawson, David Deutsch, Susan Everett, Mary Haffner, Tim Hawkins, Tim Hockett, John Jones, Sharon Lanning, Amy Luoma, Kate Mills, Jennifer Mokos, Ron Mulvihill, Kathy Powell, Clyde Reynolds, Laura Roberts, Dave Schmutte, Jan Schmutte, Debora Schreiber, Karol Schulkin, Ben Unseth, Daniel Zapata Huerta