

Ventura Social Service Task Force
ADOPTED MINUTES
February 4, 2015

Attended 2/4/15

Judy Alexandre, Neal Andrews, Brian Brennan, Sue Brinkmeyer, Peter Brown, Kevin Clerici, Jim Duran, Elizabeth Egelko, Jill Forman, Jessica Gallardo, Marisol Gastelum, Mary Haffner, Cheryl Heitman, Amanda Herrera, John Jones, Camilla Lee, Kate Mills, Alicia Morales, Kathy Powell, Priscilla Quiroz, Jan Schmutte, Debora Schreiber, Karol Schulkin, Ben Unseth, Daniel Zapata Huerta

Meeting was called to order at 3:20 PM

- I. Those present introduced themselves.
- II. The minutes of January 7, 2014 meeting were adopted with the following changes: a) in item IV.E. fix spelling of “vulnerability index” and indicate that St. Vincent de Paul, Turning Point Foundation, and Salvation Army received an ESG grant. (Alexandre/Powell)
- III. There were no changes to the agenda. Individuals volunteered to print copies of materials for future VSSTF meetings, as follows: Kate Mills for March, Alicia Herrera for April, Brian Brennan for May, Camilla Lee for June, Ben Unseth for July, Peter Brown for August, Karol Schulkin for September, and Kevin Clerici for October.

IV. Business

- A. Goal Setting: The seven potential goals for the year that had been proposed at the January meeting were posted on the wall. An additional (conflated) goal, opening an Overnight Shelter with co-located Day Services was added. Interfacing with agencies was removed as a goal with the understanding that it would be part of standard operating procedures for the Task Force. Pros and Cons were elicited for each goal.
 - Shelter with day services:
 - Pros - we do not have enough housing and overnight shelter and services are both needed if we are people are to succeed in getting out of homelessness (Kate Mills); the chance of individuals remaining successfully housed increases by 70% if in some sort of shelter prior to being housed (Peter Brown); some funding (perhaps \$600 K or so) is available still from the \$1 million originally set aside for this purpose by the County Board of Supervisors (Sue Brinkmeyer).
 - Cons - current ordinances do not allow this alignment (Kathy Powell/Peter Brown)
 - Access to extremely affordable housing
 - Pros- having more affordable housing is Step #1 in H2H success; if we could lower the cost of housing, we could house a lot more people (Ben Unseth)
 - Con - it’s important to acknowledge as we seek more housing that much as been built (Peter Brown); our new Homeless Prevention Partnership is a new tool that can help here (Debora Schreiber/Sue Brinkmeyer)
 - Center for Services during the day
 - Pro - It would be better than nothing; it would get people out of the parks and tourist and business areas and into some place where they could work on getting out of homelessness

(Kathy Powell)

Con - it is hard to get neighborhoods to accept day services (Kevin Clerici)

- Access to employment

Pros - besides housing this is the single most important thing we can do for those who are homeless; it creates an avenue to a place in the community, self-sufficiency, belonging, and meaning (Karol Schulkin)

Cons - supervision cannot be passed on to the employers; someone has to coach or mentor employees coming out of homelessness (Peter Brown); it is not necessary to vote for this, as helping individuals achieve employment should be part of Day Services

- Foul weather shelter

Pro - Can be opened in M1 or M2 by right, without a CUP

Con - Shelter alone does nothing to end homelessness; working to open such a shelter could divert attention from actions that would work to end homelessness, and it is not even a poor stop gap (Karol Schulkin)

- Homeless Prevention

Pro - least expensive and most humane way to end homelessness is to keep people housed; in a crisis moment a one-time infusion of a small amount of cash and some case management keeps people housed

Con - it works for those who are housed and at risk of falling into homelessness, but have high enough incomes to sustain housing long term and this is a select group; while homeless prevention must be maintained, our priorities should be for solutions that will work for the broadest group; we have systems in place already to provide homeless prevention and to work on raising additional funds for it (Jill Forman)

- Education and Advocacy

Pros - this Task Force is meant to serve, in part, as a voice for those who are homeless; in that role, it is important to help everyone better understand homelessness and the steps necessary to end/reduce it; all levels of government, as well as all areas of the community, need to be part of the solution; that will take increased understanding and changing priorities.

Con - in making proposals to government agencies that require additional expenditures, it is important to come forward with sources of funding or recommendations of places where expenditures can be reduced.

Each person present was asked to place 3 colored stickers with each color indicating priority 1, 2, or 3, on the potential goal sheets. The result of the vote was as follows:

Goal	Priority 1 (3 pts)	Priority 2 (2 pts)	Priority 3 (1 pt)	Total	Priority
Shelter w/services	12 (36)	4 (8)	1 (1)	45	#2
Extremely affordable housing	11(33)	6 (12)	2 (2)	47	#1
Center for Day Services	0	5 (10)	2 (2)	7	
Employment	0	6 (12)	4 (4)	16	

Goal	Priority 1 (3 pts)	Priority 2 (2 pts)	Priority 3 (1 pt)	Total	Priority
Foul weather shelter	1(3)	1(2)	0	5	
Homeless prevention	0	2(4)	2(2)	6	
Education & Advocacy	1(3)	1(2)	13(13)	18	#3

- Task groups were formed to address each of the top three priorities and report back at each VSSTF meeting throughout the year. The following individuals volunteered:
 - **Extremely affordable housing:** Judy Alexandre, Sue Brinkmeyer, Elizabeth Egelko, John Sanders Jones, Camilla Lee, Kate Mills, Ron Mulvihill, Debora Schreiber, Karol Schulkin, Doug Stanton
 - **Shelter with day services:** Judy Alexandre, Jerry Breiner, Sue Brinkmeyer, Jill Forman, Amanda Herrera, Kate Mills, Kathy Powell, Doug Stanton
 - **Advocacy and education:** Sue Brinkmeyer, Mary Haffner, Rabbi Lisa Hochberg-Miller, John Sanders Jones, Kate Mills, Debora Schreiber

A. Guiding Principles - At the January meeting, 3 sets of principles were brought forward for consideration: 1) those from the Recalibrated 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness, 2) those prepared by Peter Brown and passed at the January meeting of the Council Committee on Homelessness, and 3) those that had been drafted but not approved by the Faith Subcommittee. At the February meeting, a recommendation from the Faith Subcommittee that the Task Force endorse the principles from the Recalibrated 10-Year Strategy was brought forward for discussion and a vote. Several people responded to Ben Unseth's concern that the principles in the 10-Year Strategy might be read to indicate that the type of street outreach currently being done by the H2H program was not endorsed. The consensus was that, a reading of the full language about street outreach indicated that the type of street outreach currently being done by H2H, engagement and rapidly moving people into housing was endorsed, and that the document suggested moving away from the focus in past years on building relationships. The recommendation of the Faith Subcommittee was approved with 4 abstentions: Neal Andrews, Peter Brown, Brian Brennan, and Jan Schmutte.

V. Reports

A. City of Ventura Report (Peter Brown)

- The City Council Homelessness Committee meets Thursday, 2/5/15. On the agenda are a pilot project Jim Duran is presenting, the VSSTF grants program, a report from Cheryl Heitmann on the Mayors' Conference. Hiring consultant Dr. Marbutt has been taken off the agenda until more research can be done.
- The Point In Time Homeless Count on January 27th went well for both cities. More sectors of the City of Oxnard were included than in past years and feedback is that people are comfortable that the results will be accurate. McDonald's gift cards were provided as thank you gifts for those who participated, with mixed results.

- Oxnard has appointed 7 members to its Commission on Homelessness: Peggy Rivera, Francine Castanon, Darlene Miller, Felipe Flores, Francisco Jaena, Susan Brinkmeyer, and Lucy Martinez.
- B. Winter Warming Shelter (Amanda Herrera) - In January, the Shelter served 375 unduplicated clients (women, men and children). There were 171 new clients in January, with 3,857 total shelter stays. There were 18 new families with 39 children total (14 single-parent households and 4 two-parent households). In December there were 19 families with 35 children in total (11 single-parent households and 8 two-parent households). To date 37 families have utilized the Diversion program at area motels. This is the highest number of families served in the 13 years of shelter operations. Some have left the Lighthouse to come to the shelter, presumably because of the Diversion program. Karol Schulkin's and Amanda Herrera's teams are sharing case management for the families. Since opening in December, the shelter has provided 7,067 shelter stays and served 546 unduplicated individuals: 325 men, 140 women, 1 transgender, 74 children. Of the 546, 153 have identified as chronically homeless individuals, 40 as veterans, and 145 as disabled. The total number of stays is 2,000 more than totals in previous years.
- C. Faith Subcommittee - Invitations to the March 12, 6-9:30 p.m. "Partners for Change" interactive workshop at Poinsettia Pavilion have been mailed to all faith communities and to agencies that provide services to those who are homeless. It is hoped that 5 people from each house of worship will attend and that social service agencies will staff information tables and participate in table discussions. There will be dinner, a summary of what services are being provided and what gaps exist and then faith groups will meet to prepare action plans. Dr. Arriaga will MC.
- D. Homelessness Prevention Subcommittee – Brian Brennan
The current balance in the Fund is \$781. In January, the Fund kept 8 households in their homes, 15 adults and 12 children. Since 2007, the Fund has prevented homelessness for 339 households, 901 children and adults.
- E. H2H Community Solutions – Alicia Morales and Camilla Lee
- The coordinated assessment line had 40 calls in January; 5 were duplicates; several came from outside the county or state, and those individuals were counseled to seek resources within their current communities. Four people who reached H2H using the single phone number were housed in the month using the Housing First model.
 - Case managers continue to work with clients who have been housed to help them be successful; of those housed since August using Housing First model, 8 have fallen out of housing, but are still engaged with case managers.
 - A group is meeting weekly to make the vulnerability index and coordinated assessment a county-wide effort. Karol Schulkin pointed out that the goal is to identify the most vulnerable on a rating scale that is research based, and in a system that is coordinated, impartial, and information-based.
 - In January, a total of 13 people were housed in Ventura. Camilla Lee reported that she knows of 54 people who were housed in January county-wide, but numbers are still coming in.
 - Karol Schulkin reported that the County Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing system receives 600-700 calls per months. If callers are from out of the area, they are told that Ventura County is now one of the top 3 most expensive places to live and counseled to seek

services in their local area unless they have family here that cause relocation to make sense. The County case workers follow clients and provide services to those who have been housed for 6 months; if they are stable in their housing at the end of the 6 months, case managers back out. There is an 84% stability rate at the 6-month period for those helped by the County Homeless Services.

F. One Stop (Kate Mills) saw 153 individuals, 102 returning, and 51 new who had never been seen in the 7 years that One Stop has operated. They provided 350 service contacts. 22 were veterans; 8 of these got VASH vouchers and 5 DD 214s.

G. Other updates:

- City Center has partnered with Turning Point to open 10 rooms to veterans; all are invited to information meeting Feb. 10 at River Church on Santa Clara
- Project Understanding has taken on a new program to make sure those in Western Ventura County who can't get to a pantry (perhaps due to a disability, age, or lack of transportation) can still get food; drivers are needed. Volunteer at <http://projectunderstanding.org/want-volunteer/> (Salvation Army is providing this service in East Ventura County.)
- Project Understanding has opened a post-medical-care housing needs fund to benefit John Frazier; donate at "I want to help" "Donate now" link on Project Understanding website
- There is now a payee program run by the VC Area Agency on Aging to prevent homelessness by assisting seniors or disabled individuals with bill payment
- John Woods is in Toppers motel; donors from the UU Church are paying for his room while he heals. Alicia indicated that Sandra is working with him.

V. Networking

- Thursday, March 5 is Stop Human Trafficking & Sexual Slavery Annual Event at First Presbyterian Church of Oxnard, 850 Ivywood Drive, Oxnard. Walk and networking 5:30; Program 6:30 pm.
- Friday, March 20 is From Harvest to Home. House Farm Workers! 20th Anniversary Summit, 5100 Adolfo Road, Camarillo
- Thursday, April 30 is the Project Understanding Hope Worth Giving breakfast at the Crowne Plaza at 7:30 a.m.

Our next meeting will be March 4, 3:15 pm. The materials provided by Mary Haffner on Laura's Law will be on the agenda as will the City Council's efforts related to Growth. Please send other agenda items to Judy Alexandre at judyalexandre@gmail.com

Meeting Adjourned at 4:50 PM

Respectfully submitted, Sue Brinkmeyer
