

Adopted Minutes of June 3, 2015 Meeting of Ventura Social Service Task Force

Present: ,Judy Alexandre, Neal Andrews, Brian Brennan, Sue Brinkmeyer, Peter Brown, Kevin Clerici, Joe Dawson, Jim Duran, Jill Forman, Mark, Tim Hawkins, Amanda Herrera, Tim Hockett, John Jones, Steven Karnazes, Camilla Lee, Kate Mills, Kathy Powell, Jan Schmutte, Dave Schmutte, Debora Schreiber, Karol Schulkin, Doug Stanton, Ben Unseth, Holly Whitmore

1. Meeting was called to order by Chair Judy Alexandre at 3:17 pm
  - 1.1. All present introduced themselves and commented on their commitment to the Housing First model. Among ideas shared were
    - Research says it works
    - State after state has found that it works
    - Not everyone can go right into housing; need bridge first
    - Not all will fit in one model -- need variability in housing types
    - We need appropriate permanent supportive housing
    - 80% of those who are homeless will never qualify for permanent supportive housing, so we need more extremely affordable permanent housing
    - There are a variety of ways people can be helped into housing
    - We need rapid rehousing too
    - Housing First works as long as there are enough units committed to it, as originally postulated
    - Models says house people without preconditions, don't judge; house those who want housing and are ready for it
    - It can work with intensive support
    - As practiced in one program in L. A., it was effective because there was a huge housing stock and adequate housing
    - Housing is of first importance to people who are homeless
    - We need to make sure SROs are clean and safe
    - Need to help those who are housed retain housing
    - We need an "Affordable Housing Charette" for the City of Ventura
    - The least expensive 1 BR currently available is \$950 and is in Oxnard; least expensive 2 BR is \$1,200, and there is a line waiting for each of them
  2. The agenda was approved with the addition of an announcement about the grants process added after the Treasurer's report
  3. The minutes of May 6, 2015 were approved with the following changes:
    - 3.1. In grant awards, 2nd bullet #7, change "El Patio case management" to "El Patio Supportive Services"
    - 3.2. On page 2, #7, 2nd bullet, Change last line: "Distribution pending outcome of 'management meeting' to 'pending outcome of joint agency management meeting'"

- 3.3. On page 5, in final paragraph of “Reports,” change “Karol Schulkin is working on a flow chart of services and government programs . . . to be presented in ‘June or July’ to ‘August’”
- 3.4. Under Winter Warming Shelter (p6), Change “If no shelter is opened, then county emergency services will step in” to “If no shelter is opened and conditions arise that occasion a weather emergency, then county emergency services will step in.”
- 3.5. On page 7, at #10, first bullet, Correct name of group to “The Dependent Adults & Seniors Homeless or At risk of Homelessness Working Group”
- 3.6. On page 7, at #10, last bullet, the new phone number 805-754-2089 is for “the Society of St. Vincent de Paul Social Services countywide” (not for Salvation Army).
4. Treasurer’s Report:
  - 4.1. Task Force funds totaling \$5,243 have been transferred to VSSTF, Inc., our 501(c)(3) dba Ventura Homeless Prevention and will henceforth be managed for the Task Force by this nonprofit. Quarterly fees for web page maintenance will be deducted from that amount.
  - 4.2. Checks as recommended by the grants committee have been written from the \$70,000 awarded by the City. Each check was accompanied by a letter specifying reporting and application concerns that should be addressed by each agency in the next grant cycle.
5. Discussion and vote on Mission Statement
  - 5.1. (MSC, 2 absentions) The mission statement of the VSSTF was amended to read:

***The mission of the Ventura Social Services Task force (VSSTF) is to create and implement an integrated community strategy to end homelessness in the City of Ventura.***

***The goals of the VSSTF include***

    1. ***involving a broad cross section of the community, including representatives from elected officials, governmental agencies and departments, law enforcement, businesses, social service agencies, charitable foundations, faith-based organizations, community groups, public and private housing developers, homeless individuals and concerned citizens;***
    2. ***developing a common understanding of the root causes and circumstances of homelessness, how persons are affected, and the impact of homelessness on the community;***
    3. ***identifying current best practices to end homelessness;***

4. *developing and/or adopting strategic initiatives that identify measurable objectives, timelines, responsibilities, budgets and sources of resources, including funds.*
- 5.2. (Moved, no second, motion failed) Add as Goal #5: The VSSTF will support homeless task forces and initiatives and strategies approved by the Task Force.
- 5.3. (MSC) Eliminate Goals 5 and 6 of Mission Statement
- 5.4. Tabled until July meeting discussion of the final paragraph of the old mission statement: “Recognizing the need to address emerging issues, the VSSTF will include opportunities for networking, advocacy, public education, and action in the community.”
- 5.5. Question still to be addressed: How do we want to include programs and specifics like the Ventura Homeless Prevention Fund and the Ventura Homeless Prevention Partnership as we develop our strategic plan?
6. Reports:
  - 6.1. Peter Brown for the City -
    - 6.1.1. The Council Committee on Homelessness will **not** meet Thursday, June 4.
    - 6.1.2. The Oxnard Commission on Homelessness will meet Monday, June 8 at 4:30 in Council Chambers
    - 6.1.3. State parks folks do sweeps of the river bottoms on Thursdays
    - 6.1.4. The Subcommittee of the Mental Health Advisory group voted to support Laura’s Law. It goes for Mental Health Advisory Board on July 3.
    - 6.1.5. Homeless camps at 5th street in Oxnard are scheduled for clean up some time this summer.
  - 6.2. Housing People Can Afford - The group is having a special meeting Monday, June 8, at 9 a.m. at the Salvation Army Board Room to review a webinar on the Supportive Housing Opportunities Planner (SHOP Tool) attended by Camilla. The regular meeting is the 3rd Mondays at 3 at the Salvation Army Board Room, 155 Oak Street. The next meeting is 3 p.m. June 17, when we hope to discuss mobile home parks as potential solutions to housing people can afford. Special guests have been invited to inform the discussion.
  - 6.3. Education/Advocacy - The group is reviewing documentaries and discussing the possibility of hosting films and discussions at a number of local houses of worship, with all screenings open and advertised to the public. Work is progressing on talking points and associated research citations. Next meeting is Tuesday, June 16 at 3:30 p.m. at Judy’s home, 914 Utica Ave. The group has yet to settle on a consistent meeting time.
  - 6.4. Housing Engagement Center/Bridge Housing- The group is studying potential locations, partners and relationship with groups working on this year’s replacement for winter warming shelter.

- 6.5. Faith Committee - The committee continues to follow up on March 12 “Partners for Change” event. Letter from clergy inviting other clergy to participate themselves or send a representative from their congregation has been signed.. VSSTF brochure, Faith Committee brochure and Ventura Homeless Prevention rack cards will be enclosed. Members are calling individually those who attended the March 12 event. The next meeting is June 24 at Ventura Church of Christ, 5401 Bryn Mawr.
- 6.6. Homeless Prevention - In May a total of \$3,878.63 in donations came in from four individuals and four houses of worship ( Individuals: Judy Alexandre, Jill Forman, John Jones, and Joyce Faber) (Houses of worship: Sacred Heart, Ventura Missionary Church, Ventura Church of Christ, and the Unitarian Universalist Church. We provided rental assistance in the amount of \$1,696 to 2 households consisting of 3 adults and 2 children and \$600 more went out on June 1 to keep one additional family of two housed. The current balance is \$1,757.09. So far this year the Fund has kept 22 families, consisting of 37 adults and 23 children in housing. Since 2007, a total of 353 families consisting of 934 people have been kept out of homelessness by the Fund.
- 6.7. Winter Warming Shelter/Shelter options
  - 6.7.1. Steven Karnazes reports that his group cannot move forward without zoning change from city. The group is waiting to hear whether Ben Unseth’s single site plan is able to move forward. Steve’s group can meet and be ready to go whenever there is clarity.
  - 6.7.2. A weather-triggered shelter was tried many years ago and was difficult to operate. Karol Schulkin has reported that the operators had to check with three weather services to confirm prediction of rain or extremely cold weather and then scramble to get the site opened and alert people regarding its availability.
  - 6.7.3. Whenever a decision is made to move forward on a shelter model, the Faith and Advocacy committees will support its work.
  - 6.7.4. Peter commented that plans for this year should occur with the understanding that no zoning change will happen for this winter. Other events may occur in August, however, that will result in sheltering happening this winter.
- 6.8. Single-use phone line (Coordinated entry): There were 54 calls from individuals and 4 from hospitals this month .
- 6.9. Reports of people housed this month:
  - 6.9.1. H2H: 8 Permanent Housing; 8 transitional; 3 institutional; 3 emergency; 2 other
  - 6.9.2. County Human Services: 29 Households with 100 people housed countywide; of these, 5 households with 16 people were from Ventura. Those from Ventura were not all housed in Ventura.

- 6.9.3. City Center - Graduated 3 single moms with autos, savings accounts, jobs and permanent housing. Took in three new families with a total of 3 adults and 3 children. -
- 6.9.4. Mission Church - Housed three people and found jobs of those three; total calls or walk ins was 20-22.
- 6.10. Family to Family has done its annual survey of participants and will report results next month.
- 6.11. Publications - Two very interesting articles published recently:
  - 6.11.1. “Home Not Found - The Cost of Homelessness in Silicon Valley [http://economicrt.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Home\\_Not\\_Found\\_2015.pdf](http://economicrt.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Home_Not_Found_2015.pdf) found “Homeless costs are heavily skewed toward a comparatively small number of frequent users of public and medical services. . . . The highest cumulative public costs across all services are associated with individuals experiencing persistent homelessness. . . . In a given year, there are approximately 2,800 persistently homeless residents of the county with average public costs of \$83,000 per year. . . . The typical persistently homeless individual has costs averaging \$13,661 a year. By prioritizing housing opportunities for the group of 2,800 persistently homeless individuals with the highest costs, it is possible to obtain savings that more than offset the cost of housing.
  - 6.11.2. “California’s New Vagrancy Laws” from UC Berkeley School of Law [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2558944](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2558944) found “Enforcement Harms Homeless People and Perpetuates Poverty;” “Enforcement Can Be Illegal;” “Enforcement is Expensive;” and “More Humane and Less Expensive Alternatives to Criminalization Exist”. The report concluded “Unfortunately, California municipal leaders have responded to growing homelessness by criminalizing people for engaging in necessary, life-sustaining activities. Cities have enacted laws to punish people who have no choice but to be present, that is, to sleep, stand, and eat, in public. Criminalizing these activities does not provide people with an alternative space to survive; it only wastes precious resources and deepens the cycle of poverty. Legislators, law enforcement agencies, and other community stakeholders must develop new approaches to help those who have nowhere to live but outside. Given the high number of homeless people and the extent of criminalization in California compared to other states, the Golden State is uniquely positioned to lead the way. California’s state leaders must pursue solutions that are more effective, economical, and humane.”
- 7. Networking/Upcoming events
  - 7.1. City Council Homeless Committee for June 4, 2015 has been cancelled.
  - 7.2. The Dependent Adults & Seniors Homeless or At risk of Homelessness Working Group, July 13, 2015 9:30 am VCAA, County Square Drive
  - 7.3. Continuum of Care June 18, 2015 10:00-12:00 am VCCF, Camarillo

- 7.4. Thanks to Kevin Clerici and the DVO, VSSTF will have a booth at the July 4 street fair
- 7.5. KNBC visited Community Action of Ventura County and filmed a story on the kayak business that is providing jobs for formerly homeless individuals. See story at [http://www.nbclosangeles.com/on-air/as-seen-on/Kayak-Building-Business-Helps-Rebuild-Lives\\_Los-Angeles-304077721.html](http://www.nbclosangeles.com/on-air/as-seen-on/Kayak-Building-Business-Helps-Rebuild-Lives_Los-Angeles-304077721.html)

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 pm.

The next meeting of the VSSTF will be July 1 at 3:15. at the Family to Family building, 303 N Ventura Ave #E. Ben Unseth will bring extra copies of the agenda and minutes for guests.

Submitted by

Sue Brinkmeyer