

## Draft Minutes of Ventura Social Services Task Force, July 6, 2016

**Present:** Judy Alexandre, Neal Andrews, Karyn Bates, Jerry Breiner, Brian Brennan, Sue Brinkmeyer, Kent Brinkmeyer, Peter Brown, Harold Cartlidge, Kevin Clerici, Lynn Geller, Mary Haffner, Tim Hockett, Marty Jenkins, John Jones, Steven Karnazes, Erin Locklear, Miguel Marquez, Pam Marshall, Pat McLean, Jason Meek, Kate Mills, Ron Mulvihill, Al Myers, Melissa Ramirez, John Saltee, Jan Schmutte, Debora Schreiber, Suzanne West

1. Agenda was approved with addition of a report on the Harbor Church settlement
2. Minutes of June 1, 2016 were approved as presented
3. Rev. Doug Miller and Marty Jenkins reported on Showers of Blessing, portable showers currently operating at 4 locations ( a total of 12 miles apart) in Isla Vista, Goleta, and Santa Barbara .
  - a. Original grant for Showers 1.5 years ago from Christ Lutheran Church
  - b. As part of a program called “Empower” founders began meeting with homeless in Goleta once a month to devise strategies with them to help end homelessness. In surveys, their priorities were #1 housing and #2 hot showers
  - c. Showers have proven to be a powerful incentive to change lives
  - d. Shower guests come early to help set up and stay late to help clean up
  - e. Clothing is recycled as part of operations; dirty clothes are turned in and clean clothing is provided
  - f. Group has hired formerly homeless individuals to do laundry, watch desk, and act as operations manager
  - g. It has been so successful that they are looking to buy a second unit
  - h. A minister and a nurse are present at most shower opportunities; sometimes Doctors without Walls as well.
  - i. With 2 shower stalls, they provide 10 showers each hour of 8 minutes each; then they knock on the door; 30 showers in each 3-hour session; 4 sessions per week; hot water is not a limiting factor, as it is available upon demand
  - j. Health department says the showers must be cleaned/disinfected between each shower.
  - k. Black tank holds 180 gallons; grey water is disbursed onto mulched landscaping at each of the 4 locations
  - l. Initial capital expense about \$50,000 for shower unit and van to pull it
  - m. Annual operating budget of \$60,000, with 50% of that going to the 3 staff members
  - n. Temple in Santa Barbara raised \$25,000 in one event
  - o. Coming together around Showers of Blessing has unified congregations in the area
  - p. Showers like this would be allowed to operate on private property in Ventura -- not on public property like streets or parks; it may be that no water can be released onto ground in coastal zone
  - q. Showers are not handicap accessible; would cost an additional \$4,000 to add accessibility
  - r. Brian Brennan will follow up with Dan Wall of Public Health, asking also if there would be willingness to help with costs or transportation

- s. Harold Cartlidge, Jan Schmutte, Pam Marshall, and John Sanders Jones volunteered to become an ad hoc committee to see about moving forward with portable showers in Ventura/Oxnard. They will follow up with Environmental health.
  - t. MSC to support bringing portable showers to Ventura area (3 abstentions: Andrews, Brennan, Brown)
4. John Saltee and Suzanne West reported on the Rescue Mission in Oxnard
- a. Goal is to take someone from the street to an independent person
  - b. Provide 700-800 meals per day, with 400 volunteers per month; all paid for through donations -- most of those served are not homeless
  - c. Emergency shelter for men allows 10 days in and then 5 days out; check in is each evening; case managers from St. Vincent de Paul or Community Action are present - goal for Rescue Mission is to build relationships with those coming into emergency shelter or those who are homeless and come in for lunch and encourage them to enter program to change their lives
  - d. Fresh Start Program for those with no addiction issues. It is open to 10 men at a time. It provides a place to live, food, work force training, help with resumes, and jobs out into the workforce, perhaps first through the thrift store or work at the Mission. 96% find a job
  - e. Recovery Program is a 10-month program that takes men from the street or jail or hospital through to graduation, transitional housing for two years and eventually employment and permanent housing. The program consists of 6-hours/day, 6-days/week work therapy in culinary arts, janitorial work, or landscaping and classes. Participants have a place to live and food from detox on. They begin with detox in rooms with several men in bunks and move on to very comfortable rooms for 4. 71% move from street to permanent housing.
  - f. Lighthouse for women and children serves a maximum of 30 women and their children. It is a 30-day program, day and night, with case management immediately. Children are helped by Schools on Wheels. Women learn money management, vocational training, and, for those who have lost their children, are helped to get their children back. They move on to transitional housing for two years at \$200/mo, and save for a car or apartment.
  - g. Every other month, homeless court comes to the Rescue Mission so that individuals exiting the program can do so without the burden of fines and court costs.
  - h. Mission is trying to convert Angel Hotel across the street from the Lighthouse to an additional shelter for women and children.
  - i. The Rescue Mission would like to open a service center at which they can begin, in partnership with local agencies like Salvation Army and Project Understanding and Turning Point, to build relationships with individuals who are homeless in Ventura. Mission would rent a building of 3,500-4,000 square feet and provide security there. They would provide showers, washers and dryers for those willing to speak with a case manager from the local agency at the site that day. Rescue Mission would provide office space for the case managers at the Center. They would provide something like an energy bar and water so that individuals could focus on the work they need to do with the case manager. The plan would be for the Center to operate normal business hours -- something like 8-6. People would come in, get a service, talk with someone, and go back out, until willing to enter a program. The goal would be to give individuals the opportunity to grow to trust the

Rescue Mission and be willing to enter one of the 3 programs available in Oxnard (Fresh Start, Recovery, or Lighthouse). Mission would transport those interested to the Mission in Oxnard and keep them there throughout the program; they do not exit to the city during the program. This is in the exploratory stages, but the hope would be to open the Center by June 2017, i.e., this fiscal year.

- j. If zoning were changed in Ventura to allow it, they would be open to exploring the possibility of using the space for overnight sheltering as well.
  - k. Eventually, the Rescue Mission would like to have a ranch outside town where people could be with their animals. They would raise food and go through the programs for men there.
  - l. MSC (3 abstentions - Brown, Andrews, Brennan): the Ventura Social Service Task Force supports the Rescue Mission coming to Ventura
5. Steven Karnazes shared his reflections on his experience as 2015-2016 Winter Shelter Manager
- a. His view of people experiencing homelessness changed after running the shelter -- if you expose yourself long enough and keep an open mind and heart, you begin to see other people's side of things.
  - b. Has found most helpful things to say are, "me too" and "help me understand that."
  - c. During 34 years as an EMT and in law enforcement, he was always frustrated during his interactions with individuals who were homeless
  - d. Learned from this year's shelter operation:
    - i. structure and rules are essential
    - ii. who we surround ourselves with really matters - lucky he had Peter Brown, Karl Lawson, and Kevin Clerici
    - iii. shelter must provide a positive environment and input for guests, who have so much that is negative in their lives
    - iv. operators must understand the trauma-activated mind, in which, he said, emotions overtake the conscious, rational mind
    - v. volunteers would benefit greatly from additional education about what people can do to assist those who are homeless
    - vi. with the exception of a few, faith-based organizations did nothing to support the effort
6. Winter shelter for 2016-2017 - City has set aside \$34,000; staff has been directed to approach partners from last year, and, if appropriate, to approach operator from last year and fiscal agent. The thought at the moment is to once again use the Armory. Ron Mulvihill indicated that he had been hired by the City of Oxnard to present a report by November on shelter options for the City (for this or future years)
7. Harbor Church settlement with the City of Ventura - The property was appraised at \$1.6 million. The City paid \$2.3 million (\$700,000 to assist with move). The church will lease the property back from the City for one year for activities not related to homeless services. Peter Brown pointed out that the City worked hard to help Harbor Church move operations to another location early in negotiations, prior to the denial of the CUP and the lawsuit. The City opted in the end to cut its losses rather than spending extreme amounts of money on a

very complicated case and to get an asset that either could be flipped and value returned or used for something of value of the City.

8. City Council meeting July 11, 6 pm -- The Council will receive a summary of the April 18 Workshop on Homelessness, receive a report from staff on recommendations to address service gaps, coordinated-entry partnership with County and COC, zoning changes, subsidized fees, housing production, and winter warming shelter. The 30 ministers who signed original letter to City requesting action on homelessness have sent a letter urging Council to accept staff recommendations.
9. MSC to thank staff for strong and affirmative recommendations coming before Council
10. MSC (2 abstentions) to urge Council to adopt broader area for zoning changes, similar to those presented at April 18 meeting
11. Housing reports received by email:
  - a. Project Understanding - permanent housing 2, sober living 1, homeless prevention 1, reunited with family 4, Salvation Army TLC 1
  - b. Turning Point - Placed into housing June 2016 - 12; Housed for 6 months or less - 17; Housed for up to 12 months - 43
12. Items not covered on the agenda will be tabled until August meeting. Items likely to be on the agenda are Stronghold Ministries, follow-up on Showers of Blessing, July 11 meeting and next steps, Laura's Law, and report from Linda Rossi on ways VSSTF might collaborate more effectively with the business community.
13. On the agenda for September will likely be issues related to family homelessness.
14. Brian Brennan will bring a few copies of materials for guests at August meeting; Kate will bring guest copies for September meeting.
15. Reminder to begin thinking about the need for new officers for VSSTF at voting in December.

Meeting was adjourned at 5 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Brinkmeyer