

Monthly Meeting Minutes 5/2/18

3:15 pm, 300 N. Ventura Ave, Ventura, CA 93001

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Attendees: Judy Alexandre, Jerry Breiner, Gane Brooking, Tara Carruth, Sonja Flores, Jennifer Harkey, John Harrison, John Jones, Craig Kelly, Erin Locklear, Robert March, Miguel Marquez, Kate Mills, Rick Raine, Melissa Ramirez, Clyde Reynolds, Meredith Rose, Karol Schulkin, Dana Worsnop

- I. Call to order - Judy Alexandre offered special thanks to the Ventura Police Department (VPD) for attending.
- II. Introductions (Name, Organization, Reaction to current events in Ventura)
 - A. In general, people are feeling overwhelmed and saddened, but have some hope that positive change may come from the recent tragedy.
 - B. Next Door app appears to be a focal point for much of the fear, anger & hate that many in the community are feeling.
- III. Approval of or changes to the agenda for 5/2/18 as emailed
 - A. Judy Alexandre proposed changes regarding 2 requests from the faith subcommittee. - MSC
- IV. Approval of or changes to the minutes for 4/4/18 as emailed - MSC
- V. Treasurer's Report - Balance is \$3,721.46 (no change)
- VI. Discussion of recent events re: homelessness in Ventura
 - A. The murder at Aloha Steakhouse - Judy Alexandre asked the VPD to give their perspective.
 1. Corporal Craig Kelly (duties focus on the homeless population and vagrancy issues)
 - a) Provided broad overview of events at Aloha Steakhouse, plus police response.
 - (1) Including immediate changes to procedures.
 - b) Recently went to Portland, OR to study their housing models.
 - (1) Some aspects looked good, others did not (non-profit models seemed to work better)
 - (2) Envisions a 3 step approach to helping people:
 - (a) 3-4 months in low-barrier entry housing
 - (b) Clean & sober living
 - (c) Permanent housing with case management
 - c) Interested in seeing changes (expansion?) to River Haven
 - d) Currently seeing increased police focus on Ventura Promenade
 - (1) But not taking police from other areas.
 - e) VPD made video clarifying how they interact with homeless people
<https://www.facebook.com/venturapd/videos/10156096142133819/>
 - f) So far, no attacks on local homeless population

- (1) But advising homeless people to be cautious and discrete to avoid trouble.
 - g) VPD feels that we need to give homeless people a place to go.
 - h) Noted that homeless people are not arrested until they accumulate 5 citations in a 12 month period (and 1 in the last 6 months)
 - B. Planned rally in Ventura on 5/3/18 against the homeless population
 - 1. Judy Alexandre asked about counter demonstrations
 - a) Tara Carruth - thinks that not counter-protesting often caused hateful demonstrations to backfire (e.g. Fred Phelps of Westboro Baptist Church)
 - 2. Dana Worsnop suggests holding a positive-focus event (not as a counter protest or on the same day)
 - a) Kate Mills - could combine an event to help Mele family and our homeless population.
 - b) Karol Schulkin - we could coordinate with VPD to advocate on behalf of any measures that the VPD proposes that will help homeless people.
 - c) Judy Alexandre asked for 3 volunteers to help organize this event soon.
 - (1) Dana Worsnop, Kate Mills & Miguel Marquez volunteered.
 - (a) Will make sure to consult with victim's family.
 - C. Meeting at city council on 5/7/18
 - 1. More protesters are expected at the next city council meeting.
 - a) Protesters at 4/23/18 council meeting were loud and angry.
 - (1) Heavily outnumbered people from advocacy community.
 - 2. VSSTF voted down making a coordinated effort to appear at the meeting.
 - a) Secretary's note: On 5/4, CAUSE & other social action groups pushed for a coordinated peaceful counter-protest at May's Ventura city council meeting.

VII. Reports

- A. Measure O Budget Meeting - Judy Alexandre presenting.
 - 1. Most of oversight committee wants specifics
 - a) Still concluded that we need more money for housing
 - (1) Told city staff to have money set aside for housing.
- B. Inclusionary housing steps taken by council - No update at this time.

VIII. Presentations

- A. Point In Time Count - Tara Carruth presenting.
 - 1. Count went up in 2018.
 - a) ~65% of county's homeless population in Ventura & Oxnard
 - b) Biggest increase in Ventura.
 - (1) But first time counting in river bottom.
 - c) First increase since 2012
 - (1) Largest increase in unsheltered population.

- (a) Had specific questions about where people had slept the previous night.
- 2. # of unsheltered children with families continues to decline.
- 3. # of homeless vets continues to decline.
- 4. Participants are self-reporting.
 - a) ~25% report having mental illness.
 - b) ~25% report chronic health issues.
- 5. 228 reported that it was their first time homeless.
- 6. 15 unsheltered due to Thomas Fire.
- 7. Overwhelmingly **homegrown** population (905).
- 8. Used HUD definition of homelessness.
- 9. Info on housing inventory:
 - a) 508 in supportive housing.
 - b) 617 in rapid rehousing programs.
- 10. All COC-funded programs are required to be Housing First (low barrier)
 - a) But they still have rules, just not draconian about kicking people out for infractions.
- 11. Report presented to the County Board of Supervisors.
 - a) BoS authorized RFQ (Request for Quotation) for Oxnard & Ventura to find operators for year-round shelters.
 - b) Supervisor Bennett asked for help establishing foul weather shelter programs.
 - (1) Possibly as way to pressure Ventura & Oxnard to not keep setting up Winter Warming Shelters.
- 12. The app-based approach to collecting information worked well, but
 - a) Homeless people seemed wary of getting interviewed by someone without some sort of ID and/or clipboard.

IX. Other Items

- A. Faith Subcommittee Items - Judy Alexandre presenting.
 - 1. Faith Subcommittee notes that it has been 2.5 - 3 years since a major effort was made to educate the faith community on homelessness.
 - a) This is good outreach to faith community.
 - 2. Faith Subcommittee has typically helped spearhead the city council candidates forum.
 - 3. Met with Claudia Armin of the McEwan Foundation
 - a) Proposed having a trainer from San Francisco come to work with local homeless population about how to tell their stories
 - (1) No cost figures available yet.
 - (a) Need to canvass local homeless population for interest in participation.
 - (b) McEwan Foundation would likely provide a grant.

- (2) Miguel Marquez - Coaching homeless people to speak is a waste of money, and would make stories feel less authentic.
 - (3) Judy Alexandre - will bring more information to next meeting.
 - b) Another proposal for a grant for someone to attend training in LA on being a community organizer for the homeless community.
 - (1) Kate Mills - We don't have an articulated goal for spending money.
 - B. Miguel Marquez notes that any event that we might set up should consider including help for Aloha Steakhouse; the owner feels fearful.
 - C. John Harrison - has seen lots of discarded clothing during river cleanup.
 - 1. Tara Carruth & Judy Alexandre - there is a desire to help people clean their existing clothes rather than just throwing them away when too dirty.
 - 2. Karol Schulkin - When the year-round shelter opens, we could follow Anaheim model where new clothes are given to clients on arrival so that the old ones could be laundered.
- X. Adjourn: Next meeting is June 6, 2018, 3:15, 300 N Ventura Ave. we need a volunteer to bring a few copies of the agenda and minutes
- XI. Meetings:
 - A. Shelter and Housing VSSTF Sub-Committee 6/19, 3pm Orchard Community Church library (Ron Mulvilhill ron@housinginnovationsandsolutions.com)
 - B. Faith VSSTF subcommittee 6/27, 3pm Seventh Day Adventist Church conference room Pam Marshall pam@pojcat@verizon.net
 - C. Homeless Prevention fund, VSSTF Inc. 6/20, 4pm.; Unitarian Universalist Church conference room (Roland Barrio rbarrio100@msn.com)
 - D. City of Ventura housing and Shelter subcommittee, probably 6/13, 3:30 pm city hall Mayor Andrews is chair.
 - E. Homes For All, by invitation John Jones johnsandersjones@gmail.com
 - F. Continuum of Care 6/21 10-12noon Tara Carruth (tara.carruth@ventura.org). location to be decided
 - G. Open mic, city hall 1st Monday of the Month 6/4/18