

Monthly Meeting Minutes 3/6/19

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

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Attendees: Judy Alexandre, Gane Brooking, Ninna Castellano, Ana Castro, Kevin Clerici, David Deutsch, Betsy Erickson, Sonja Flores, Jennifer Harkey, John Harrison, Meredith Hart, Veronica James, Brad Lawson, Patti Long, Gail Major, Roger Mann, Robert March, Miguel Marquez, Pam Marshall, Alexa Martin, Sandra Meyer, Kate Mills, Marianne Norton, Cappi Patterson, Kappy Paulson, Melissa Ramirez, David Rose, John Saltee, Kat Selm, Heather Skogerson, Jane Van Note, Suzanne West, Dana Worsnop

- I. Call to order - Kevin Clerici
- II. Approval of the minutes for 2/6/19 - MSC
- III. Approval of the agenda for 2/6/19 as emailed. - MSC.
- IV. Introductions
- V. Treasurer's Report
 - A. Current balance - \$3,076.46 (No change)
- VI. Report on Safe & Clean, Affordable Housing and Homelessness Subcommittee - Judy Alexandre
 - A. The committee name was changed due to strong attendance by our advocates.
 - B. Veronica James - 2 homeless speakers walked out of meeting angry/upset
 1. Please remember to be mindful of the feelings of those we are working to help.
- VII. Request for potential housing sites - Judy Alexandre
 - A. Homes For All - compiling a master list of sites for housing
 1. Any sort of housing - infill, commercial conversion, etc.
 2. Want to give list to the City to add to the housing element of the General Plan
 3. Send information to Judy Alexandre (judyalexandre@gmail.com) or Sonja Flores (sflores@hacityventura.org) .
 4. Sonja Flores - Interested primarily in sites >2 acres
 - a) Doesn't need to be open or vacant.
- VIII. Information regarding the Temporary Emergency Shelter (TES) in Oxnard
 - A. Meredith Hart - TES opened in January.
 1. 4137 stays; 17% are Ventura residents
 2. Currently at capacity
 - a) Working with 2-1-1 (comprehensive information and referral service for Ventura County) and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to create a waitlist system.
 - (1) Only need to get referred once.
 - B. Ana Castro (TES manager) - Thanks community for their support.
 - C. Meredith Hart - through county partnership:
 1. Behavioral Health at TES on Mondays & Fridays.
 2. Homeless Services at TES on Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays.
 - D. Cappi Patterson - Ana Castro & Ninna Castellano have been great.
 - E. Donations needed for TES?
 1. Ninna Castellano - Getting lots from community.
 2. Judy Alexandre - What are ongoing needs?

- a) Shampoo, conditioner, soap, socks, underwear.
 - b) Sweatpants
 - 3. Meals are catered.
 - F. Ninna Castellano - blankets are laundered every Monday
 - G. Kappy Paulson - How many no-shows does TES observe?
 - 1. Ninna Castellano - Averaging 10 people/night missing lights out
 - a) But no-shows usually show up for showers and breakfast.
 - b) Regular no-shows will get bounced, because TES is at capacity, so it is easy to fill every bed.
 - H. Volunteer coordination - **call Monique Simental at 805-247-0335**
 - I. Pam Marshall - What is Ventura doing for a Foul Weather Shelter (FWS)?
 - 1. Meredith Hart - the city considers the TES to be the FWS.
 - a) Constantly working on finding other FWS locations, but haven't been successful (not an easy task).
 - 2. Pam Marshall - the referral system is keeping people out of shelter.
 - a) Meredith Hart - If a person is sick/near-death, there are other ways to provide immediate assistance.
 - 3. Judy Alexandre - we were told that even when the Permanent Year-Round Shelter opens, there would still be a FWS
 - a) We are leaving people outside in the rain and the cold
 - b) Feels misled by the cities and the county.
 - c) Meredith Hart - the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) says that the FWS was to be a stopgap solution until the TES opened.
 - J. John Harrison - Is it possible to rehabilitate an existing structure as a FWS?
 - K. Current TES population is 30 women / 80 men.
- IX. Information regarding the Permanent Shelter on Knoll Drive - Patti Long of Mercy House
- A. Patti Long - 34 years in this industry, with 19 years at Mercy House.
 - 1. Mercy House works on creating housing.
 - a) But realized the need to develop low-barrier entry shelters as well.
 - b) Currently operating in 5 different counties.
 - B. Meredith Hart - Sheltering process
 - 1. Ventura concurrently working on:
 - a) Operational contract with Mercy House
 - b) Agreement with Oxnard.
 - c) Agreement with Ventura County
 - C. Approach to shelter - Patti Long
 - 1. Shelter is part of process to end homelessness
 - a) Should be as low-barrier as possible.
 - 2. Shelter provided is housing-focused, to help people move forward.
 - D. Meredith Hart
 - 1. Plan is for 55 beds - 37 men / 18 women. Plus pets are allowed.
 - 2. What is best referral process?
 - a) Need to partner with county, local organizations
 - 3. Construction starts in June 2019, with plan to open by 12/31/19.
 - 4. Veronica James - What is a sober room? A respite room?
 - a) Meredith Hart
 - (1) Sober room is a place that the Ventura Police Dept (VPD) can bring impaired people instead of to jail.

(2) Respite Room is where sick residents can be comfortably kept separate (with own bathroom) from the rest of the residents while they recover from illness.

- E. Melissa Ramirez - How will the shelter work for families?
 - 1. Meredith Hart - If a family shows up, will immediately be connected with county services. Families are not intended to be staying at the permanent shelter.
- F. John Saltee - Rescue Mission has numerous programs that they could use to help Mercy House (detox, mental health, financial counseling, etc.)
- G. Pam Marshall - Will the shelter have any life skill programs? Mentoring?
 - 1. How can faith community get involved?
 - a) Patti Long - volunteers are always needed.
 - b) What about an advisory committee to help coordinate the various agencies/non-profits?
 - (1) Patti Long - loves the idea.
- H. Miguel Marquez - What is Mercy House's mission?
 - 1. Patti Long - to end homelessness
 - 2. What happens to those who don't get referred to the shelter?
 - a) Patti Long - The shelter is just one part of the approach to helping people
- I. Are there any plans to expand River Haven?
 - 1. Meredith Hart - Ventura is considering it.
 - a) Currently in discussions with Jason Meek.
- J. Patti Long - Main focus is to reduce barriers to housing.
 - 1. What services do clients need?
 - a) County resources? Community partners?
 - b) Would try to create services based on client needs/wants.
 - c) Try not to duplicate already existing services.
 - 2. Permanent shelter will use townhall meetings to help engage residents (& get feedback)
 - 3. Intent is that client stays will be generally short.
 - a) No strict cutoff date for cycling through shelter.
 - (1) Will deal with clients on a case-by-case basis.
- K. Veronica James - How do other Mercy House communities compare with Ventura with respect to housing?
 - 1. Patti Long - every community doesn't have enough affordable housing
 - a) Try to work with leasing permanent supportive housing.
 - b) Look for any housing opportunities.
- L. Kappy Paulson - How does Mercy House deal with NIMBYs?
 - 1. Patti Long - Successes in other communities have provided references to boost their cases in new communities
 - a) Always strive to have best looking properties in the neighborhood, and to be responsive to any issues that arise.
 - 2. Pam Marshall - Kingdom Center clients would go around local neighborhoods offering to do chores, which made a big difference.
- M. Kevin Clerici - thanks Patti Long and Meredith Hart for presenting today.
 - 1. We have never been closer to having a shelter!
 - 2. Our success will take everyone rallying around this.
 - a) Please think about how you can help.
- X. Other Reports

- A. Continuum of Care - Jennifer Harkey
 - 1. Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and California Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH) awards came in
 - a) Contracts now going out to community partners (awards on venturacoc.org)
 - (1) Flexible subsidies
 - (2) Rapid rehousing
 - (3) Street outreach
 - (4) Shelter support (most of HEAP)
 - 2. COC board meeting at 1300 on 3/13 in Camarillo.
 - a) Point In Time Count numbers to be provided
 - (1) Did see an increase from 2018.
 - (a) Shelter was closed.
 - (b) Volunteers visited encampments.
 - B. VSSTF Faith Subcommittee - Marianne Norton
 - 1. Still working on Blue Book update.
 - 2. Preliminary work started on Miguel Marquez's mentorship program.
 - C. Inclusionary Housing - Kate Mills
 - 1. No recommendations ready to go to city yet.
 - 2. Considering all types of housing
 - a) Mixed use - not popular in the county
 - b) Space is limited
 - c) Need verbal support from city council for any changes (like building up)
 - D. Ventura Land Trust - John Harrison (not official rep)
 - 1. Huge problem with trash in the river bottom.
 - 2. Keeping up with bike trail side of river, but folks are moving to Emma Wood.
 - E. Salvation Army - Sandra Meyer
 - 1. Actively pursuing permanent supporting housing units.
 - a) Petit and Ventura Ave locations
 - b) Willing to partner with anyone to get this in place.
 - c) Issues: Funding, permits, etc.
 - F. Nature Conservancy - Kat Selm
 - 1. Own 18 non-consecutive Santa Clara River miles
 - 2. Not as much cleanup as happens on Ventura River
 - 3. Don't know how to reach out to people living along Santa Clara River
 - a) Planning to hire homeless outreach coordinator
- XI. Adjourn: Next meeting is **April 3, 2019, 3:15 pm, Catholic Charities Building.**
- XII. Meetings:
- A. City Council Subcommittee on Homelessness, Housing and Safe & Clean Initiative - 2nd Wednesday of every month,
 - B. Faith Sub Committee 3/27/19 Church of the Foothills, Ventura, Marianne Norton ma4mail@aol.com .
 - C. Homeless Prevention Fund will meet in 3/20/19 4pm at Unitarian Universalist Church Of Ventura on Ralston Ave, Ventura. Sue Brinkmeyer (sbrink@glendale.edu)
 - D. Homes For All, contact John Jones (johnsandersjones@gmail.com)
 - E. Ventura City Council, 1st Monday of the month, open mic.