

Monthly Meeting Minutes 5/1/19
3:15 pm, 300 N. Ventura Ave, Ventura, CA 93001

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Attendees: Denise Adams, Judy Alexandre, James Boyd, Jerry Breiner, Brian Brennan, Gane Brooking, Kevin Clerici, Betsy Erickson, Jennifer Harkey, Meredith Hart, Veronica James, Robert March, Pam Marshall, Alexa Martin, Sandra Meyer, Cappi Patterson, Kappy Paulson, Melissa Ramirez, Clyde Reynolds, Jan Schmutte, Kat Selm, Jane Van Note, Dana Worsnop

- I. Call to order - Judy Alexandre
- II. Introductions
- III. Approval of the minutes for 4/3/19 - MSC
- IV. Approval of the agenda for 5/1/19 as emailed.
 - A. Judy Alexandre - added new item
 1. Noted that the Safe & Clean, Housing & Homelessness Subcommittee will meet on the first Tuesday of every month going forward.
- V. Treasurer's Report
 - A. Current balance - \$3,076.46 (No change)
- VI. Ventura Watersheds & Homelessness - Kat Selm (Stewardship Coordinator, [Nature Conservancy](#)).
 - A. TNC is international non-profit active in 72 countries
 1. To protect land & water
 2. To work for sustainable food & water supplies
 - a) Groundwater sustainability in Ventura County
 3. TNC owns:
 - a) half of Santa Cruz Island
 - b) Parts of Santa Clara River bottom
 - c) Ormond Beach - working on public access & restoration
 - (1) Part of the 5% of CA's coastal wetlands left intact
 - B. Santa Clara River
 1. Good place to live if you have nowhere else to go.
 2. One of last wild dynamic rivers in SoCal - wide, has endangered species
 3. Impacts of people living in river bottom
 - a) Streambed alteration - trash, waste, shelters
 - b) Trash - kerosene, car batteries, needles, etc.
 - (1) Can attract
 - (a) predators that affect river life
 - (b) pests that result in increased pesticide use
 4. 35 endangered species - affected by pets, pollution, wildfires
 5. Wildfires - Need to perform restoration immediately to prevent invasive species
 6. Issues with safety for local contractors and school children

- C. TNC needs to become partner in addressing homelessness
 - 1. Looking to hire homeless liaison individual to help with:
 - a) Family reconnections
 - b) Clean camp initiative
 - c) Understanding needs of homeless population
 - 2. RFP for liaison opening back up
 - a) Kappy Paulson - for how long?
 - (1) Kat Selm - another month
 - b) Judy Alexandre - What is pay? Length of contract?
 - (1) Kat Selm - Budget allows for \$35k for 1 year
 - (a) If this position turns out to be effective, will help extend program.
 - c) Judy Alexandre - What about hiring someone living in river bottom?
 - (1) Kat Selm - TNC is willing, but there are liability issues to consider.
 - d) Jenn Harkey - Has TNC connected w/ One Stop and Continuum Of Care?
 - 3. Dana Worsnop - Appreciates that TNC is eager to learn & acknowledge their limitations on this issue
 - a) There are lots of opportunities for partnerships with the homeless community, some of whom are already helping clean up river bottoms.

VII. Housing Strategies - Kevin Clerici

- A. Inclusionary Housing - Kevin Clerici
 - 1. Ventura created task force to review policy and develop recommendations
 - a) Published report with fee study & draft ordinance
 - (1) Out for review now
 - b) Clyde Reynolds - Anything that we can do right now?
 - (1) Kevin Clerici - still looking at recommendations
 - (2) Judy Alexandre - can't take a stand yet
 - (3) Meredith Hart - will pass along information once it's available.
- B. Vulnerable Population Housing Advocacy - Clyde Reynolds
 - 1. Trying to develop countywide advocacy network
 - 2. Having workshop on 5/16 (by invitation only)
 - 3. Opportunity to impact development of housing elements
 - a) To help hold cities more accountable.
 - 4. Targeting extremely low-income housing
- C. Salvation Army Housing Plan - Sandra Meyer
 - 1. Trying to expand scope of services.
 - a) Develop more permanent supportive housing.
 - 2. Properties in Ventura are candidates for housing
 - a) Closest to use is on Bell Way
 - (1) Want 16 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units
 - (2) Looking for partners, funding sources
 - (a) Ventura County Behavioral Health, No Place Like Home

- (b) Ventura Housing Authority has contact Salv. Army about property.
 - (3) Moving quickly to try to develop.
 - (a) Likely need to rezone.
 - (b) Parking could become an issue.
 - (4) Looking at properties adjacent to Bell Way to possibly combine with existing property for a larger project.
 - (5) Dana Worsnop - as a Westside resident, frustrated with community council; hopes to be a part of the solution
 - b) 3-½ acres on Petit Ave
 - (1) Undeveloped, so would probably encounter greater opposition
 - (2) Potential for 45-50 units.
 - (3) Jerry Breiner - Is Salvation Army only looking for partnerships?
 - (a) Sandra Meyer - Yes, no interest in selling property
 - (i) Would like to be landlord and service provider
 - c) Judy Alexandre - What can VSSTF do to help?
 - (1) Sandra Meyer - Write letters of support once things start to move forward.
 - (a) Will keep VSSTF informed on how to help.
 - (b) Want transparency and to be a good partner
 - d) Jennifer Harkey - Pushing for state funding could be a good approach.
 - e) Kappy Paulson - Does the Salvation Army have plans to talk to the neighborhood council about Petit property?
 - (1) Sandra Meyer - already seeing opposition forming, but haven't talked to community much yet.
 - f) Brian Brennan - Could Petit property could be traded for a more politically feasible location?
 - (1) Sandra Meyer - Salvation Army would consider this.
3. For permanent supportive housing , the emphasis is on services.
 - a) Want to help residents succeed.
- D. Housing above permanent year-round shelter? - Kevin Clerici
1. Trying to open shelter by 12/31/19
 2. Should we be trying to convert upper floors into housing?
 - a) Challenging - it is an office building
 - b) Meredith Hart - would like to use 2nd floor for Foul Weather Shelter
 - (1) Increasing number of beds requires council action
 - (2) To make 2nd floor fire safe would require lots of money
 - (3) Best simplest use of 2nd floor is for social service providers
 3. Pam Marshall - What about the basement?
 - a) Meredith Hart - it is unsuitable for beds.
 4. Meredith Hart - Kennels will be built outside.
 5. Judy Alexandre - Is there any way to build housing units on the 2nd floor?
 - a) Meredith Hart - it's not impossible, but may not be feasible

- b) James Boyd - What about donations of time and materials?
 - (1) Would that make it easier?
 - (2) Meredith Hart - Adding permanent supportive housing just isn't a quick process.
6. Judy Alexandre - Transition House in Santa Barbara has shelter on bottom floor and 2 floors of different size apartments of various sorts
 - a) Meredith Hart - Great project, but it was built from ground up
- E. Ventura City Council Meeting on 6/3 - Meredith Hart
 - 1. 3 major topics of concern:
 - a) Lease agreement with county
 - b) Contract with Mercy House
 - c) Bilateral governance and oversight contract with county for permanent year-round shelter
 - 2. This is a good meeting to show up to be supportive of shelter progress
 - a) Kevin Clerici - recommends that we have a limited number of speakers.
 - b) Judy Alexandre - motions for VSSTF & affiliates to support the 3 major topics on 6/3 - MSC
- F. Other - Judy Alexandre
 - 1. Site proposals for housing
 - a) Have assembled a list of 50 sites
 - (1) People's Self Help Housing analyzing list to figure out details so we can prioritize.
 - (2) Homes For All drafting a letter to give to city with recommendations.
 - 2. Homes For All & VSSTF met on 4/26
 - a) Realized the need to address congestion and the needs of the residents.
 - 3. Sandra Meyer - Any type of permanent supportive housing project is massive undertaking requiring:
 - a) Permits, Development Costs, Supportive Services, etc.

VIII. Reports and Updates

- A. VSSTF Faith Subcommittee - Judy Alexandre
 - 1. Workshop on 9/12 at Poinsettia Pavilion - 630pm-830pm
 - a) Dana Worsnop will be MC
 - b) Meredith Hart asked to present
 - c) Mayor (Matt LaVere) asked to present
 - d) Inviting agencies to set up tables
 - e) 2 homeless people are set to speak
 - (1) One who talks about what the shelter means to them
 - (2) Other who has been through Mercy House & will explain how it helped them.
 - f) Open to faith groups, community groups, etc.

B. City of Ventura - Meredith Hart

1. Permanent year-round shelter

- a) 2 meetings planned before 6/3 city council meeting
 - (1) With Knoll Drive business community - to alleviate fears
 - (2) With social service providers - to talk about processes & partnerships with Mercy House

2. River Bottom

- a) 2nd & 4th Wednesday of month - Safe & Clean will collect full bags of trash that have been gathered by community in river bottom
- b) Currently not enforcing river bottom camping ordinances, but working to keep the areas clean
 - (1) Working with Irene & Mikey in partnership
 - (a) James Boyd - gives them gloves, bags
 - (i) Working to set up sharps containers
- c) Kappy Paulson - how does city decide if camps are abandoned?
 - (1) Meredith Hart - if a camp is abandoned because someone gets incarcerated, the sites usually get picked over & they aren't livable anymore.
- d) Veronica James - likes how Meredith Hart has been a good listener to Irene & Mikey, and is giving them a place at the table.

C. Continuum Of Care - Jennifer Harkey

1. Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) – The CoC applied for YHDP grant funding through HUD. Award announcements are expected to be made in August 2019.

- a) Minor youths & transitional age (18-24)
- b) For preventing homelessness
- c) Interface is lead agency for a new minor youth shelter
- d) Opening minor youth shelter in Camarillo in June (6 beds)
 - (1) Can help with juvenile probation kids, or calls from schools
 - (2) Funded from Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP)
- e) Youth Focus Group w/Interface
 - (1) Want more youth voices on addressing homelessness
 - (a) Homeless experience preferred but not necessary to participate.

2. California Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH) Program

- a) Issuing \$700K contract soon
- b) At CoC board meeting next week, 2nd round of funding under consideration - \$400K
- c) Trying to be flexible with funding
 - (1) Not matched, which actually helps keep flexibility
- d) Flexible housing subsidies, rental assistance, street outreach, homeless prevention.

D. Measure O Meeting - Judy Alexandre

1. Meredith Hart - Funding breakdown:

- a) \$856,250 – Knoll Dr. Shelter Contribution
 - (1) \$500,000 towards one-time structural improvements.
 - (2) \$356, 250 towards Mercy House Operations Contract. In the future Measure O budgets, Mercy House operations will be \$712,500. Half of that is allocated this year due to the shelter being slated to open on December 31, 2019.
- b) \$124,000 – Shelter Improvements and Services
 - (1) \$84,000 for furnishing and fixtures (beds, tables, computers, etc.) in the year-round Knoll Dr. shelter.
 - (2) \$32,500 for Turning Point Foundation to manage River Haven.
 - (3) \$7,500 for other expenses including: Portastor containers for use of storage of homeless belongings, pilot sharp container program, educational collateral (print), and employee development.
- c) *** \$30,000 for Salvation Army Safe Sleep will be included in next Measure O working budget
 - (1) Judy Alexandre - Noted that Meredith Hart made a strong push to help Safe Sleep get funded again.
 - (a) Meredith Hart wants full-time case-worker
 - (i) Looking at private partnerships
- d) \$165, 118 – Safe & Clean Staff/Equipment
 - (1) \$140,118 for (2) Safe & Clean Groundskeepers to clean up and maintain safe and clean public spaces.
 - (2) \$25,000 for small tools and equipment.
- e) \$250,000 – City Facilities Deferred Maintenance
 - (1) \$250,000 for deferred maintenance of city-owned property, primarily in the downtown area and the promenade.
- f) \$225,000 – Ambassador Extension Program
 - (1) \$225,000 for the Downtown Ventura Partners Park Ambassadors to continue expansion to Kellogg park and Westpark, and to continue 7-day-a-week coverage.

E. Agency Updates

- 1. Buddy Nation - Cappi Patterson
 - a) Met with Mercy House
 - b) Very involved in housing & legal aspects w/homeless community & their animals.
 - c) Visits encampments regularly.
 - d) Wants to help people be prepared for housing.
- 2. Homeless Prevention Fund - Brian Brennan
 - a) About \$2900 in account
 - b) Spending funds quickly

- c) Have sent out fundraising letters.
 - 3. Backpack Medicine - James Boyd
 - a) Originated at residency program at Ventura County Medical Center
 - b) Go to encampments to provide health services in the field
 - (1) Every Monday, time varies.
 - 4. Step Up Ventura - Judy Alexandre
 - a) Program is expanding
 - b) MOU with Many Mansions
 - c) Looking at 2nd school in Oxnard
 - d) Trying to become countywide program
- IX. Other
 - A. Dana Worsnop - Expressed gratitude for the people of good heart working on this issue.
- X. Adjourn: Next meeting is **June 5, 2019, 3:15 pm, Catholic Charities Building.**
- XI. Meetings:
 - A. City Council Subcommittee on Homelessness, Housing and Safe & Clean Initiative - 1st Tuesday of every month,
 - B. Faith Sub Committee 6/26/19 3pm, Church of the Foothills, Ventura, Marianne Norton ma4mail@aol.com .
 - C. Homeless Prevention Fund will meet in 6/19/19 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. Continuum Of Care Alliance - 7/18/19 10am, Location TBD (tara.carruth@ventura.org) or Jennifer Harkey (Jennifer.Harkey@ventura.org)
 - F. Ventura City Council, 1st Monday of the month, open mic.