

Monthly Meeting Minutes 10/7/20

3:15 pm, via Zoom video chat

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Attendees: Judy Alexandre, Claudia Armann, Jerry Breiner, Brian Brennan, Gane Brooking, Tara Carruth, Kevin Clerici, Amy Duganne, Jaydon Gaines, Doug Halter, Meredith Hart, Jacob Lesner-Buxton, Robert March, Miguel Marquez, Staci Mallett, Sandra Meyer, Carl Morehouse, Cathi Nye, Kappy Paulson, Kathy Powell, Clyde Reynolds, Summer Ward, Susan White Wood

- I. Call to order - Kevin Clerici
 - A. Sandra Meyer - announced new Salvation Army captains in Ventura
 1. Patricia & Juan Torres
- II. Logistical Concerns - Kevin Clerici
- III. Request re: chat feature - Judy Alexandre
- IV. Approval of the agenda for 10/7/20 - MSC
- V. Approval of the minutes for 9/2/20 - MSC
- VI. Treasurer's Report - Judy Alexandre
 - A. Current balance - \$2,356.46. - no change
- VII. Feedback from Candidate Forum on 10/1/20 - Judy Alexandre
 - A. Thanks to Kevin Clerici for his Zoom work on the forum
 - B. Thanks to Jim Duran for moderating the forum.
 - C. Carl Morehouse - most candidates seemed somewhat supportive of VSSTF's mission
 1. Got good answers, but actions are key.
 - D. Only got through 9 of the 20 prepared questions.
- VIII. Update on Inclusionary Housing - Claudia Arman
 - A. Homes For All - advocates for affordable housing in Ventura.
 1. Group stood up in 2012.
 - B. Inclusionary Housing Definition - New housing developments need to include set-aside units sold below market rate.
 1. 2004 - Added to inclusionary housing to downtown rental projects.
 2. 2009 - a lawsuit blocked this policy in CA
 3. 2017 - CA state law allows for inclusionary housing again (local decision)
 4. Ventura has not updated their policy to include rental development citywide.
 - C. Working with City Council and Safe & Clean, Affordable Housing and Homelessness Subcommittee on a new inclusionary housing plan.
 1. Judy Alexandre - the plan will be discussed at the next S&C, AH&H meeting
 - a) Hopefully to be put in place this year.
 2. Carl Morehouse - the city planning commission will be discussing the plan soon

- IX. Landlord Engagement - Amy Duganne - <https://youtu.be/NcKcTECutsc>
 - A. Program launched in November (Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) grant recipient).
 - 1. Pilot effort to bring more vacancies to homeless people & voucher holders (e.g. Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH)).
 - B. 2 part-time housing locators started on 10/12.
 - C. Holding fees to secure units.
 - D. Have funds for minor repairs during move-in.
 - E. Program aims to help landlords realize that vouchers are guaranteed payments.
 - F. Signing bonuses.
 - G. Have housed 33 households (63 people)
 - 1. Mostly mainstream Oxnard housing and VASH vouchers.
 - 2. A few through Rapid Rehousing.
- X. Detailed Report from the ARCH - Staci Mallet
 - A. What is working well:
 - 1. Shelter reduces stress & allows for good case management
 - a) Most clients are on waiting lists for vouchers or other support
 - 2. Good neighbor policy
 - 3. Garden and Arts & Crafts are set up for clients.
 - B. Struggles:
 - 1. Clients who need more mental health services.
 - a) Can make case management more challenging
 - b) The ARCH is not a mental health facility.
 - (1) Need more support from the city on this front.
 - C. Client population: 32
 - D. Have housed 3 people, including 1 via family reunification.
 - E. Served 78 clients so far.
 - F. Waitlist is >300 people.
 - G. Volunteer opportunities:
 - 1. Masks & gloves are required for all volunteers
 - a) Note that clients are not required to wear masks (the ARCH is their home)
 - 2. Need legal support.
 - 3. Looking for workshops to present:
 - a) Technology seminars.
 - b) Communications skills.
 - c) Interview skills.
 - H. Gane Brooking - Is the ARCH talking to VCBH?
 - 1. Staci Mallet - yes.
 - I. Miguel Marquez - asked about COVID testing
 - 1. Staci Mallet - performing constant screenings, but no regular testing.
 - 2. Tara Carruth - 13 people experiencing homelessness in Ventura County have tested positive for COVID (this is a really low figure!)

- J. Tara Carruth - We aren't seeing people transitioning out of the shelters as quickly as we'd like.
 - 1. Need more transitional housing options locally.
- XI. Update on the Move In Project - Kathy Powell
 - A. Started by helping a person in Project Roomkey, furnishing their new home when they found housing.
 - B. In 7 months, have helped:
 - 1. 42 people (including 6 children) / 28 households.
 - C. Needs:
 - 1. Decent usable furniture.
 - a) Beds, couches, dressers, coffee tables, end tables.
 - 2. Kitchen & bath supplies.
 - D. Getting help from across the faith community.
 - E. Renting storage units to support the project.
 - F. Have been working with case managers closely.
 - G. Judy Alexandre - people love helping those who are getting into housing.
 - H. Tara Carruth - loves what Kathy Powell has done.
 - 1. It creates a home for people.
 - a) Makes a huge difference in how well the transition to housing goes.
- XII. Reports
 - A. Safe and Clean Homeless and Housing/City of Ventura - Meredith Hart
 - 1. Foul Weather Shelter update
 - a) Requirement for shelter is < 45°F or significant overnight rain.
 - b) Budget is only \$15K (need \$45K to cover 4 nights/month during winter)
 - (1) With more money, will distribute warm packs.
 - (2) Judy Alexandre - asks for city to communicate with faith community about how they can help.
 - c) Congregant shelters are frightening due to COVID-19.
 - d) It is cheaper to put people into motel rooms.
 - (1) It's a locally-run Project Roomkey clone.
 - (2) Still looking for a motel partner.
 - (3) Limited to 30 rooms.
 - (a) Priority to vulnerable populations.
 - 2. Outreach
 - a) Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) grant is in
 - b) City is hiring outreach worker
 - 3. Fires in River Bottom increasing
 - a) 14 in last 3 weeks - frustrating situation
 - b) Working to educate people on fire safety.
 - c) Emergency Services Meeting Points being established.
 - (1) To help emergency services get to any incidents faster.
 - 4. City is printing out social service cards for residents to hand out instead of cash.

5. Safe Sleep
 - a) Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura is stepping back from the program on 11/1
 - b) Working with Salvation Army on finding new spots.
 - c) Note: program use is very low of late.
- B. Continuum Of Care - Tara Carruth
 1. Project Roomkey
 - a) Transitioned to providing motel vouchers.
 - (1) Sheltering 150 of our most vulnerable population.
 - (2) Have funds through the end of the calendar year.
 - b) Helped 80 people transition to housing.
 2. Project Homekey
 - a) Ventura Housing Authority awarded funds for the El Portal project.
 - b) Working to facilitate Onxard's purchase of the Vagabond Motel.
 - (1) Would start as a non-congregant shelter & would transition to become 70 studio apartments.
 3. Funding
 - a) Expecting the state to release HHAP round 2 funding in November.
 - (1) Will only be about half of what came in round 1.
 - b) AB 3300 - may be a permanent source of funding
 - c) COC Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)
 - (1) Looking to renew grants rather than recompetete.
 - (a) Would require legislative action.
 - d) Emergency Solutions Grants Coronavirus Allocation (ESG-CV)
 - (1) Targeted for homeless services
 - (2) State released funding.
 - (a) Ventura County to receive \$700K, but no apparent formula (need-based?)
 - (i) Much lower amount than other counties are getting:
 - (a) Santa Barbara - \$5 million
 - (b) Riverside - \$30+ million
 4. 2021 Point In Time Count
 - a) HUD hasn't released guidance yet.
 - b) Required by law to do a full count of sheltered & unsheltered people (in odd years, although Ventura County does it every year)
 - c) Need to conduct the count without putting volunteers or homeless people at risk during the pandemic.
 - d) Asking the community to help support the narrative.
 5. Census 2020
 - a) Try to continue counting the homeless population.
 - b) Challenging to deal with the time uncertainty for the census.

- C. Vulnerable Populations Housing Advocacy Network - Clyde Reynolds
 - 1. Still working on the container housing project in Oxnard
 - a) May get donated land for the project
 - (1) Narrowed down to 2 sites.
 - b) Development partner thinks project is too small.
 - (1) Putting numbers together for Oxnard.
 - (2) Reaching out to Many Mansions and Habitat For Humanity
- D. Susan White Wood - a family unit is available in east Ventura for a chronically homeless (12+ months) family
- E. Cathi Nye
 - 1. Annual 2019-2020 report
 - a) Over 1000 students in Oxnard are living in a homeless situation.
 - (1) Definition of homelessness is different for students.
- F. Step Up Ventura - Judy Alexandre
 - 1. Got a waiver from Ventura County Health Department to back into preschools
 - 2. Ready to expand.
 - 3. Fundraiser from 11/1 through 12/15 - Virtual Craft Fair.
 - a) Info at StepUpVentura.org

XIII. Adjourn meeting.

Next meeting is 4 November 2020, 3:15PM on Zoom.

Meetings:

Safe & Clean Housing and Homeless committee meets on 10/26 at 4pm. Zoom link and agenda will be on the City of Ventura website.

Homeless Prevention Fund will meet via Zoom on 10/21 at 4pm

Homes for All will meet via Go to Meeting on 10/15/20 at 3pm. Contact Sonja Flores (sflores@hacityofventura.org)