

Monthly Meeting Minutes 2/5/20

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

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Attendees: Judy Alexandre, Jerry Breiner, Brian Brennan, Nancy Broadhead, Kyler Carlson, Kevin Clerici, Denise Coin, Betsy Erickson, Jillian Fleming, Mary Haffner, Jennifer Harkey, Meredith Hart, John Sanders Jones, Christy Madden, Robert March, Miguel Marquez, Pam Marshall, Andrea Palmer, Jackie Pearce, Sabrina Petrescu, Dan Powell, John Schipper, Jan Schmutte, Susan White Wood, Dana Worsnop

- I. Call to order - Kevin Clerici
- II. Approval of the minutes for 12/4/19 - MSC
- III. Approval of the agenda for 2/5/20
 - A. Adding time after agency updates for additional reporting.
- IV. Treasurer's Report - Jan Schmutte
 - A. Current balance - \$2,356.46. - no change
- V. Election of VSSTF Officers
 - A. Judy Alexandre & Kevin Clerici nominated as co-chairs; Rob March nominated as secretary - MSC
- VI. Moment of Gratitude for the opening of the ARCH - Judy Alexandre
 - A. Thank you to everyone who worked for so long for the opening of the shelter.
 1. It was a community effort: city, county, non-profits, community-at-large.
- VII. Update on the ARCH by site manager Sabrina Petrescu
 - A. Every piece was thought out
 1. Mural, check-in desk, etc.
 - B. Thanks for bringing in Mercy House
 - C. ARCH is a safe space - physically & emotionally
 - D. Mercy House views the shelter as a tool to achieve permanent housing
 1. Each client has a navigator who helps with all sorts of issues.
 - E. Opened on 2/2/20, in a slow opening.
 1. Staff of 25 employees (24 hours/day staffing)
 - a) Have cumulative 500 hours of Mercy House training.
 - (1) Doesn't include outside training (HMIS, food handling, etc.)
 - b) Created 12 full time jobs (1 FT employee was formerly homeless)
 - c) Sabrina P. is the program supervisor
 - (1) 3 site leads, each with a 6 member team with a team captain.
 2. Referral based shelter - 10 people are now enrolled.
 - a) Have had to send people away, since it is referral based.
 - (1) Meredith Hart - Pulling back from broadly sharing shelter address to discourage drop-offs.
 3. Early success! Helped someone transition to a nursing home.
 4. Put out a call on the morning of 2/4 and had 8 on the list by afternoon of 2/5.
 - a) Impressed with referral network & a motivated community.

- 5. Meredith Hart - Very excited about the ARCH.
 - a) 3 chronically homeless Ventura residents are in the shelter now and looking happy.
 - F. Kevin Clerici - What does the shelter need from the community?
 - 1. Sabrina Petrescu - Still working on volunteer coordination
 - a) Email to AnabelG@mercyhouse.net to sign up to volunteer.
 - b) Clients require TB tests before check-in.
- VIII. Update from City of Ventura - Meredith Hart
- A. Thanks to everyone who could attend the ARCH opening ceremony
 - B. Foul Weather Shelter update
 - 1. Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura (UUCV) board has approved use of the parking lot for foul weather tents - 20 people/tent, 2 tents
 - a) Foul weather tents would be available through end of March.
 - b) Miguel Marquez - Requiring TB tests?
 - (1) Meredith H. - Yes, but please encourage clients of various social service agencies & non-profits to remain current on TB test
 - (a) One Stop offers free TB testing.
 - c) Contact Sue Brinkmeyer suebrinkmeyer@earthlink.net to get involved
 - d) Rev. Dana Worsnop - concerned about having enough volunteers to staff the tents.
 - (1) Meredith H. - will try to have at least one trial run this season.
 - C. Met with Conejo Valley Meal & Shelter Program operators
 - 1. From December - March, 7 churches open spaces for shelter, with 38 congregations supporting.
 - 2. Volunteer staffed and funded.
 - 3. Typically 15 clients per night, maximum is usually 30.
 - 4. Asked for meeting with faith-based groups to get guidance on setting up something similar in Ventura.
 - a) Tentative meeting at Ventura City Hall in early March (~3/10-3/12 timeframe)
- IX. Mental Health Advocacy Action - Mary Haffner
- A. Currently serving on the Behavioral Health Advisory Board for Ventura County
 - B. Worked in 2017 to advocate on for the successful passage of Laura's Law (a California state law that allows for court-ordered assisted outpatient treatment)
 - C. Ventura County has a severe mental health crisis - Letter to VC Star from November 2019
 - 1. There is a dire lack of front-end psychiatric emergency services for seriously mentally ill people.
 - 2. Not enough beds (public, non-forensic) - comparing several counties in CA:
 - a) Ventura - 30 beds for pop. of 850,967
 - b) San Francisco - 187 beds for pop. of 883,305
 - c) Kern County - 152 beds for pop. of 896,764
 - d) Santa Barbara - 16 + 80 new beds for pop. of 446,527

3. How do we help people see the humanity of those suffering from mental illness?
 4. Ventura County contributes to the problem by failing to provide services to 5150 involuntary holds
 - a) People are cycling between hospitalization, incarceration and homelessness
 - (1) They become high-resource utilizers because we are not helping them live functional lives.
 - (2) We need services to address all aspects of homelessness and mental illness, or we will enable long-term homelessness.
 5. Ventura County currently has 43 beds, but only provides staffing for 30.
 - a) Other counties are creating 5150 hold facilities.
 - b) We need more beds!
 6. Jan Schmutte - what percentage of homeless people are mentally ill?
 - a) Jennifer Harkey - typically self-reported
 - b) John Schipper - 40-60% of chronically homeless people are severely mentally ill.
 7. John Schipper - Mental health facilities are not profitable
 - a) However, without them, patients eat up the resources at regular hospitals
 - b) St. John's Hospital is looking at creating beds for people with mental health needs.
 - c) Santa Paula is looking at possibly building a crisis treatment center
 - (1) But have to deal with the same sorts of issues that make it difficult to build shelters.
 8. Judy Alexandre - Moves that VSSTF joins in advocacy effort
 - a) Supporting the need for increased number of chairs and psychiatric beds
 - b) MSC
 - c) Kevin Clerici & Judy Alexandre will draft a letter of support.
- X. Update from Continuum of Care - Jennifer Harkey
- A. Submitting HAP (Housing and Assistance Program) Grant application
 1. SB850 authorized it
 2. Sent to state this week.
 - a) Has recommendations for county and CoC.
 - (1) County would receive separate allocation.
 - B. Point In Time Count 2020
 1. Thanks to the nearly 500 volunteers countywide
 2. Also went to local camps on Thursday of that week.
 3. United Way gave hygiene kits for distribution
 4. Food Share gave granola bars for distribution
 5. It was a good time to engage with people & talk about the shelter
 - a) Lots of people already know about the ARCH

- 6. Expect preliminary report to board on 3/11/20
 - a) Currently going through de-duplication process
 - b) Meredith Hart - Expects to numbers to grow from 2019 PITC
 - (1) Santa Clara River bottom is seeing lots of growth in population
 - (a) People are building structures, which are getting red-tagged (deemed unsafe by the city)
- 7. PITC also reached out to the Ormond Beach and The Nature Conservancy properties.
- C. Interface opened a minor youth (12-17 year olds who don't meet criteria for foster care) shelter a few weeks ago
 - 1. Have already helped 4 people.

XI. Other

- A. Andrea Palmer - Discussion about Westside issues
 - 1. Issue with homeless people defecating in alleys
 - a) Meredith Hart - Incidents are down lately
 - b) Looking at solutions - CDBGs
 - (1) What resources are available to homeless people outside of business hours?
 - c) Judy Alexandre - We need 24 hour bathrooms available
 - (1) How do we have sustainable safe bathrooms?
 - (2) Meredith Hart - 24/7 attendants are used in LA & SF
 - (a) LA spends \$600K/year on 2 bathrooms
 - (i) Need to find a creative affordable solution
 - (ii) City needs community support on this.
 - (3) We need to add this item plus storage lockers to a future agenda.
 - (4) Brian Brennan - Using port-a-johns at Rincon, which is currently working out well
 - (a) Servicing county parks
 - (b) Meredith Hart - wants to do a field trip to check out

XII. Reports & Updates

- A. Homeless Prevention Fund - Brian Brennan
 - 1. Last year, HPF paid out \$45,432 to help people stay in housing.
 - 2. Helped 102 people (61 adults, 41 children)
 - 3. Amount of income paid for rent - 54%
 - 4. Average cost paid out - \$1200
 - a) ~\$445 per person
- B. Vulnerable Populations Housing Advocacy Network (VPHAN) - Judy Alexandre
 - 1. Meeting in February
 - a) To encourage cities to:
 - (1) Take a stand on zoning changes
 - (2) To consider low-income housing across all districts
 - 2. Seeing a big decline in boarding care facilities

a) Impacts mentally ill population

XIII. Next meeting is **March 4, 2020, 3:15 pm, Catholic Charities Building.**

XIV. Meetings:

- A. City Council Subcommittee on Homelessness, Housing and Safe & Clean Initiative -
March 9 at 4pm
- B. Faith Sub Committee TBA.
- C. Vulnerable Populations Housing Advocacy Network, Clyde Reynolds
(cbreynolds@roadrunner.com) Feb. 20,2020; 9:30 am
- D. Homes For All, contact Sonja Flores (sflores@hacityoffventura.org)
- E. Ventura City Council, 1st Monday of the month, open mic.