

Monthly Meeting Minutes 8/5/20

3:15 pm, via Zoom video chat

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Attendees: Judy Alexandre, Jerry Breiner, Kyler Carlson, Tara Carruth, Kevin Clerici, Sonja Flores, Julie Glantz, Mary Haffner, Jennifer Harkey, Brian Hollander, Pamela Kelley, Robert March, Miguel Marquez, Alexa Martin, Staci Millett, Carl Morehouse, Kappy Paulson, Jacqueline Pollino, Maury Ruano, Chris Russell, Jan Schmutte, Mark Stadler, Elizabeth Stone, Summer Ward, Suzanne West, Susan White Wood

- I. Call to order - Judy Alexandre
- II. Logistical Concerns - Kevin Clerici
- III. Approval of the agenda for 8/5/20 - MSC
- IV. Approval of the minutes for 7/1/20 - MSC
- V. Treasurer's Report - Jan Schmutte
 - A. Current balance - \$2,356.46. - no change
- VI. Followup and discussion from last month on housing for those with severe and persistent mental illness. - Judy Alexandre
 - A. Want to decide on whether to encourage the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) to make additional funding available for more treatment beds.
 1. VSSTF sent letter to the BOS encouraging an increase in the # of beds.
 - B. Goal is to identify an action plan.
 - C. Discussion of grand jury investigation
 1. Tabled from last month.
 - D. Susan White Wood spoke at a recent VSSTF meeting about the need to increase resources for board & care facilities.
 - E. Ventura County Behavioral Health
 1. Completed lease up of 7 family housing units.
 2. Public outreach in every city in Ventura County to engage with homeless people
 3. Submitted 5 applications to the state for No Place Like Home funding
 4. Setting up 50 senior residential units on Lewis Road
 5. 2019 - Mental Health Services Act - Team did extensive mental health community assessment.
 - F. Tara Carruth - Without right housing options, the gains from mental health treatment can be lost.
 1. Housing & appropriate services are part of a treatment plan.
 2. Still need to be respectful of people's choices & personal freedoms/rights.
 - G. Brian Hollander - Goal for us all is to eliminate chronic homelessness in Ventura County
 1. People in institutional settings can lose their voices.
 2. Combo of strong housing options and mental health services are key.

- I. Roberta Griego (NAMI) - Concerns:
 - 1. Not enough housing for people experiencing homelessness and/or mental illness
 - 2. Lack of IPU beds
 - 3. Lack of transportation options to get to One Stop
- J. Mark Stadler
 - 1. Would be great for law enforcement officers (LEOs) to have One Stop capabilities/options to use when dealing with people experiencing mental illness, substance abuse issues, etc.
- K. Elizabeth Stone
 - 1. Emphasized that it is most helpful for individuals to have access to quality services before they reach a crisis point.
 - a) Needs to be respectful
 - (1) There are people who won't use available services because they aren't respected.
 - 2. Supports more supportive housing.
 - 3. Opposes grand jury hearing
 - 4. Opposes more emergency treatment beds
 - a) Better to have fully funded quality services that engage & support people before crisis points.
 - b) Mark Stadler - LEOs need a place to bring people in crisis.
 - (1) Need the beds to help people get treatment, and to get LEOs back on the streets.
 - (2) Brian Hollander - LEOs shouldn't be sitting with people experiencing mental illness
 - (a) We need to be addressing the root issues by fully funding community-based services.
- L. Judy Alexandre
 - 1. We want people to have emergency services available
 - 2. We want sufficient community-based services.
 - 3. We want enough supportive housing.
- M. Mary Haffner
 - 1. If we don't have a comprehensive plan for the care & treatment of mental illness, we will continue to spend money on the wrong things (e.g. incarceration)
 - 2. Ventura County has 4.5% self-reporting as experiencing mental illness.
 - a) Haven't been able to get county leadership to commit to addressing the issue.
 - b) Community treatment needs:
 - (1) In-patient beds
 - (2) Specialty interim housing
 - (3) Specialized nursing

- O. Julie Glantz
 - 1. Should be increasing Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) beds in the county & private beds.
 - a) Need multidisciplinary treatment teams
- P. Judy Alexandre
 - 1. We misuse our jail system
 - a) People end up where they don't need to be (& don't get help)
 - 2. We want people to receive the best possible **appropriate** treatment.
 - 3. Two major goals:
 - a) Increase housing for people with acute mental illness.
 - b) Make sure people can go to where they are best served.
 - (1) Increased community services.
- Q. Carl Morehouse
 - 1. City Council elections are coming up
 - a) Will impact the General Plan, which affects housing
 - 2. County impact on city health issues is big.
 - 3. Need to continue to educate the community on mental health issues.
- R. Judy Alexandre moves (MSC):
 - 1. **VSSTF recognizes the need for increased services to help those with mental illness. We want people experiencing mental illness to receive appropriate immediate (not emergency) treatment and to be referred to the appropriate mental health services & supporting housing. VSSTF will continue to advocate for permanent supportive housing.**
- S. Mary Haffner - We should be studying the cost of not providing services to the population in crisis.
 - 1. Need to commit to treating people.
 - 2. Ventura County is the target of a class action suit over the treatment of people experiencing mental illness in county jails.
- VII. Housing Element and General Plan & the update on inclusionary housing.
 - A. Will be discussed at the September meeting.
- VIII. Updates
 - A. Continuum of Care - Tara Carruth
 - 1. Project Room Key
 - a) County couldn't negotiate full lease renewals
 - b) Found safe placement for many clients (but not all)
 - c) Set up followup motel voucher program
 - (1) Supporting 100 people (VTA, OXN, TO)
 - (2) Working to expand it to Simi Valley
 - (3) For 65+ or high-risk health issues.
 - (a) Following state public health & FEMA guidelines

3. Project Home Key
 - a) Funding to purchase motels & other buildings to convert into supportive housing.
 - b) County selected Mercy House as its partner.
 - c) Potential to add up to 100 housing units.
 4. Request For Proposals (RFP) - for Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) funding
 - a) Issued all grant agreements. Included:
 - (1) Additional street outreach by City of Ventura
 - (2) Support for Mercy House in Oxnard & Ventura
 - (a) Including Navigation Center
 - (3) Gold Coast Veterans
 - (4) Interface - transitional age youth - host home programs
 - b) Expect another round of HHAP funding from the state.
 5. Federal updates.
 - a) Concern with reduction in census-taking period.
 - (1) Need to work out plan to count people experiencing homelessness
 - b) 2021 Point In Time Count will be changed due to COVID-19
- B. Homes For All - Sonja Flores
1. Close to finishing the letter with the list of parcels for the affordable housing overlay.
 2. Projects:
 - a) Willett Ranch - 50 unit apartment complex for seniors
 - (1) 4/2021 completion
 - b) El Portal Building
 - (1) Mixed use building on N. Ventura Ave
 - (2) Will have 23 special needs units (of 28-30 planned)
 - c) Westview Phase 3
 - (1) 105 multi family affordable units
 - (2) Beginning construction soon.
 - (3) Hope to complete construction by 4/2022
- C. Ventura Housing Authority - no update
- D. The ARCH - Staci Millett
1. 2 male beds are available for community partners.
 2. Have had recent success in reuniting a client with their family.
 3. Continuing to partner with COC.
- E. City of Ventura - Judy Alexandre
1. Winter Shelter - waiting for Meredith Hart's return to start discussions.
 - a) No current plan.
 - b) Tara Carruth - Other cities in Ventura County are still evaluating the safety of any shelters in light of COVID-19.
 - (1) Advocating for more non-congregant facilities.

2. Election Planning

- a) Want to invite city council candidates to next meeting
 - (1) Kevin Clerici - Normally done as a separate event.
- b) Judy Alexandre & Kevin Clerici will work out the date for a candidate forum.
 - (1) Kappy Paulson - This needs to be scheduled to support mail-in ballots.

IX. Adjourn meeting.

Next meeting is 2 September 2020, 3:15PM on Zoom.

Note in Sept. we hope to have VPD, the Ambassadors provide a report for us.

Meetings:

Date for the Safe and Clean, Housing and homeless committee not yet available

Homes for All, contact John Jones, johnsandersjones@gmail.com

Homeless Prevention Funds (VSSTF Inc), contact Sue Brinkmeyer, suebrinkmeyer@earthlink.net

Vulnerable Populations Housing Advocacy Network, contact Clyde Reynolds, cbreynolds@roadrunner.com