

Monthly Meeting Minutes 9/1/21

3:15 pm, via Zoom video chat

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Attendees: Judy Alexandre, Sue Brinkmeyer, Kyler Carlson, Kevin Clerici, Jim Duran, Jennifer Harkey, Doug Jensen, Mike Johnson, John Sanders Jones, Pam Kelley, Mary Kerrigan, Michael Lee, Jacob Lesner-Buxton, Robert March, Ella Moore, Carl Morehouse, Erik Nasarenko, Maria Navarro, Cathi Nye, Kappy Paulson, Daniel Powell, Kathy Powell, Clyde Reynolds, Jan Schmutte, Inger Smuts, Daniel Wall, Summer Ward, Susan White Wood

- I. Welcome & Introductions - Judy Alexandre
- II. Call to order - Judy Alexandre
- III. Approval of the agenda for 9/1/21
- IV. Approval of the minutes for 8/4/21 - MSC
- V. Treasurer's Report - no change - \$2,316.46
- VI. Update from the City - Daniel Wall
 - A. River Bottom cleanup is happening monthly
 1. Removing debris from the Santa Clara River Bottom (> 866,000 pounds over the last nine months) & not displacing those who are residing in the areas we clean.
 2. We allow the temporary camping equipment and tents, but the large compounds and built structures are being downsized.
 3. The only time someone is asked to relocate is if their camp is along the depression which floods in the rain, and along the river as the debris goes straight to the ocean.
 4. Outreach connects with the individuals when the camps are cleaned no fewer than three times, and each individual is told to move any of the belongings they want to keep to the side and they are not touched during the clean-up effort.
 5. Meredith Hart is very conscious to do this the right way, to build trust and support, and keep the area clean.
 - B. HOPE & Solutions Subcommittee meeting on 9/7
 - C. Looking for Safe Sleep locations
 1. Especially need someplace suitable for RVs.
 - D. Mike Johnson - SB 9, the California Housing Opportunity and More Efficiency (HOME) Act looks to pass (editor: Gov. Newsom signed it)
 1. Will affect the Housing Element
 2. SB 10 passed, but weakened.
 3. Both pieces of legislation will be on the council agenda.
- VII. Presentation on law impacting homelessness - DA Erik Nasarenko
 - A. Homeless Court
 1. Operates on a monthly basis.
 2. Samaritan Center (Simi), Rescue Mission (Oxnard), Salvation Army (Ventura)

3. When someone is issued a citation, fine or misdemeanor. Low level offenses (drunk in public, illegal camping, vehicular issues, etc.)
 - a) HC program - Individuals show proof of community service, rehab, vocational progress
 - (1) Use proof of progress to dismiss fines/fees
 - (2) Trying to help people avoid reoffending.
 4. Judge Pro Tem Nancy Ericson presiding.
- B. Mental Health Diversion\
1. Pre-conviction - for low-level offenders (who aren't a danger to the community).
 - a) For someone with DSM-based diagnosis.
 - b) If someone can show the court that the commission of a crime was due to the diagnosis.
 - (1) Judge may allow the case to be diverted.
 - (a) If the person can show that they have completed the judge's instructions for mental health treatment.
 2. There is a separate court for veterans.
- C. Judicial or Judge-based Diversion - based on new state law
1. Judge can divert some misdemeanors unilaterally (with some exclusions).
 2. Diversion will have requirements:
 - a) Transitional housing, sober living, or some similar action to create positive change.
- D. Q&A
1. Judy Alexandre - What are the legal issues with trying to criminalize homelessness?
 - a) Erik Nasarenko - Crime trends are:
 - (1) Catalytic converter thefts.
 - (2) Hate crime reporting.
- VIII. Update on actions needed as follow-up to the 11 program recommendations for the Housing Element - Judy Alexandre.
- A. City council approved all 11 recommendations.
 - B. Kyler Carlson - Next step is to acknowledge council member support with letters.
 1. Claudia is sending the letter that Judy Alexandre & Sonja Flores wrote.
 2. Recommendations are up at California Department of Housing and Community (HCD) for review (60 days)
 - a) To be followed by a Planning Commission hearing & a formal vote to approve.
 - b) Advocacy - will need public support at the Planning Commission hearing (Oct-Nov TBD).
 - C. Judy Alexandre - Getting pushback from city planners on some of the recommendations.
 1. Would like VSSTF to give permission to write a letter to HCD about the recommendations.
 - a) Clyde Reynolds - We need to push for stronger language.

(1) Haven't seen what the city sent to HCD.

(a) Judy Alexandre - We need to see what was sent before we respond with a letter.

2. 2 areas for housing being considered in the draft Housing Element.

a) 1/3 of the space at Pacific View Mall.

b) Lot on Johnson near the freeway off ramp.

D. Mike Johnson - Wasn't able to get any money budgeted for Housing Element v2.0.

1. Increases the importance of Housing Element v1.0.

E. Kappy Paulson - Moves for Judy Alexandre to work with Homes For All to prep a letter to HCD based on what is presented to the city council. - MSC

IX. Agency Updates.

A. Ventura County Homeless Services Program - Summer Ward

1. Homeless prevention and rapid rehousing.

a) To help people at-risk of losing their homes.

2. 805-385-1800 - information and referral line.

a) Staffed Monday through Friday.

B. Step Up Ventura - Mary Kerrigan (805-232-6993)

1. Mission - Supportive services for 0-5 year olds who have been homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.

2. Many children in program didn't return due to COVID-19.

a) Some virtual help was available.

b) Have seen kids losing gains due to the pandemic.

3. Serving ~60 children in 6 classrooms.

a) 3 classrooms closed due to positive COVID tests.

4. Focus on kindergarten readiness.

a) Educational & Mental health/trauma.

5. Pre-literacy project - one-on-one volunteer project for reading to kids.

6. Outreach at Learn4Life and other locations.

C. Family To Family - Jan Schmutte

1. Dining room at Catholic Charities building on Ventura Ave, Ventura.

2. Feeding the hungry since 1983.

a) Everyone has dignity and worth.

3. Served 50K/year before covid.

a) Just doing sack lunches for now.

(1) 5 meals/week - 3 lunches and 2 breakfasts.

(a) Serving about 100 each time.

4. Hoping to restart indoor meals in October.

5. Non-profit and non-sectarian.

a) 500 volunteers across many groups in our community.

6. <https://familytofamilyvc.org/>

D. The Moving In Project - Kathy Powell

1. "Moving In" is a multi-congregational effort coordinated by Lift Up Your Voice to End Homelessness, a program of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura.
 2. Since April 2020, we have helped 85 households consisting of 144 formerly homeless individuals (30 of them veterans; 22 of them children)
 3. Work with local case managers.
 4. The program needs:
 - a) Able-bodied folks willing to help move donated furniture,
 - b) People who can show up with their trucks, vans or trailers,
 - c) Donations to pay for storage space,
 - d) Donations of gently used furniture and household goods
 5. To volunteer, donate or inquire, contact Kathy Powell
 - a) (805) 910-8860 or KathyPurplePrincess@gmail.com
 6. Cathi Nye - Can post volunteer opportunities to United Way volunteer website.
 7. Summer Ward - The project has been great!
- E. Continuum Of Care - Jennifer Harkey
1. Offered to help The Moving In Project apply for grants.
 2. Project Room Key
 - a) 300 in motels throughout the county.
 - b) Getting 100% funded by FEMA through December.
 - c) Must be:
 - (1) Case managed
 - (2) Vulnerable to COVID
 - (a) 65+ or with health conditions.
 - d) Maria Navarro - How do we refer people to Project RK?
 - (1) Easiest through 2-1-1.
 - (a) Also can contact Salvation Army, Turning Point, etc.
 3. Annual Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) cycle.
 - a) Applying for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funding.
 - (1) Seeking proposal on:
 - (a) Domestic violence prevention
 - (b) Rapid rehousing.
- X. Update on Everyone Needs Housing workshop - Pamela Kelley
- A. Thursday, September 30, 2021, 5:30PM - 8:00PM
 - B. O'Brien Hall Mission Basilica San Buenaventura, 211 East Main Street, Ventura, CA
 - C. Register through EventBrite.
 - D. Will follow CDC COVID protocols, but are also prepared to go digital.
 - E. Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura provided the workshop insurance.
 - F. Prepping greeters and table hosts
 1. Contact Judy Alexandre or Pam Kelley to volunteer.
 - G. Updating book of resources for distribution at the event.
 1. Judy Alexandre - Get agency/program updates submitted this week.

XI. Adjourn meeting. Not meeting in person next month.

Next meeting is 6 October, 3:15PM on Zoom.