

Monthly Meeting Minutes 8/3/2022

3:15 pm, via Zoom video chat

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Attendees: Judy Alexandre, Brian Brennan, Liz Campos, Kyler Carlson, Kevin Clerici, Jim Duran, Sam England, Sonja Flores, Jaydon Gaines, Jennifer Harkey, Mike Johnson, John Jones, Pam Kelley, Megan Knight, Jacob Lesner-Buxton, Mariah Lopez, Robert March, Edwin Marinez, Miguel Marquez, Pam Marshall, Sandra Meyer, Cathi Nye, Leona Rollins, Jan Schmutte, Debra Schreiber, Lee Sherman, Elizabeth R. Stone, Summer Ward, Susan White Wood

- I. Call to order - Judy Alexandre
- II. Introductions - Judy Alexandre
- III. Approval of the agenda for 8/3/22 - MSC
- IV. Approval of the minutes for 7/6/22 - MSC
- V. Treasurer's Report - Jan Schmutte - no change - \$2,316.46
- VI. Action needed on advocacy regarding the ARCH shelter - Judy Alexandre
 - A. There is a need and desire to build the 2nd and 3rd floors of the ARCH into permanent supportive housing.
 1. Ventura County wants to do it.
 2. Developers have been contacted.
 3. The City of Ventura needs to write a letter to the county saying that they will cooperate/collaborate with the county.
 - a) This action costs Ventura nothing.
 - b) The City Manager doesn't want to do it. The public explanation is:
 - (1) Because these programs save people who aren't Ventura residents.
 - (2) The funding may not be available in the future, and the city will be stuck paying for the services.
 - c) Judy Alexandre - We need to get 4 votes at City Council to push it forward.
 - (1) It needs to be on the agenda. The next City Council meeting is on 9/12/22.
 - (2) ACTION: Push for the City Council to have this on the agenda, which will allow the county to request funding.
 4. Jennifer Harkey - Project Roomkey funds would be used for refurbishing the building for permanent supportive housing.
 - a) NO expectation that Ventura would be on the hook for operating costs.
 - (1) There are other sources of funding.
 - (2) We can use state funding up front for converting the building, and to pay for 3 years of operating costs.
 - b) Can also create preferences in admitting policies for Ventura residents.

5. Judy Alexandre - We need a lot of letters and an advocacy campaign to get this on the agenda for the 9/12 city council meeting.
 - a) MSC - That we encourage the Ventura City Council to vote to develop the ARCH as permanent supportive housing.
6. Kevin Clerici - Asked for clarification about the expectations on Ventura regarding operating costs.
 - a) Jennifer Harkey - There are grants available. Also, residents often pay 30% of their incomes for rent.
 - (1) Permanent supportive housing is not the same as a shelter.
 - (2) Permanent supportive housing grant funding - qualifiers would be chronically homeless people with disabilities.
7. Miguel Marquez - How do we verify residency?
 - a) Jennifer Harkey - This is self-reported by clients.
 - b) FEMA funding?
 - (1) Jennifer Harkey - We have FEMA funding with 90% reimbursement through the end of the calendar year.
8. Jennifer Harkey - The ARCH is funded through the city and the county.
 - a) Because the county pays 50% of the costs, preference is given to Ventura residents, but it is not exclusively for residents.
9. Kevin Clerici - How many could the upper floors house?
 - a) Jennifer Harkey - We don't know yet.
 - (1) The goal is for each unit to have its own bathroom.
10. Mike Johnson - We can't even explore the issue without city council approval.
 - a) The Mayor (Sofia Rubalcava) can put it on the agenda.
 - b) We need city manager approval.
11. Liz Campos - Residents should be meeting with the city council.
 - a) Judy Alexandre - VSSTF works to regularly meet with city council.

VII. Introduction of our new housing services manager for the city of Ventura, Leona Rollins - Judy Alexandre

- A. Agencies provided brief introductions about the primary work they do to address housing and homelessness in Ventura.
 1. Salvation Army -Sandra Meyer
 - a) Emergency shelter, street outreach, rental assistance, rapid rehousing, safe sleep program.
 2. Ventura Housing Authority - Sonja Flores
 3. City Center / Tenderlife - Jim Duran
 - a) Food pantry, daily meals.
 - b) Work with Ventura downtown partners.
 - c) Tenderlife Maternity Home is a shelter for homeless women and their babies. Helps for up to a year after birth.

- d) City Center Transitional Living - for homeless families with kids that are 12 and under. Help for 12-24 months (job and life training, debt management)
 - e) Wave Program - permanent supportive housing.
 - f) Emergency Family Shelter contract with the country
 - (1) For families with kids 13 and older.
- 4. Ventura County Homeless Services - Summer Ward
 - a) Help people to stay in housing.
 - b) Rapid rehousing.
 - c) Have several grants.
 - d) Help homeless clients with social security benefits.
- 5. Continuum Of Care - Jennifer Harkey
 - a) Receive federal & state grants for:
 - (1) Emergency shelter
 - (2) Rapid rehousing
 - (3) Street outreach
 - (4) Motel Vouchers
 - (5) Homelessness prevention
- 6. Ventura County Behavioral Health Housing - Susan White Wood
 - a) Oversee >200 units of permanent supportive housing.
 - (1) Expecting another 107 units to come online in the next year.
 - b) Offer permanent supportive housing loans to clients who choose to live independently.
 - c) Augment people who require 24 hour care.
 - d) When we get ready to expand the ARCH, make sure that we know who is going to provide the services for the next 20 to 50 years.
- 7. RISE Program - Miguel Marquez
 - a) Engage people to get behavioral health.
 - (1) Help them get connected to whatever services that they need.
 - b) Outreach for the whole county to find housing and shelter for various clients.
- 8. One Stop - Sam England
 - a) Brings multiple services together for homeless people.
 - b) Food, showers, clothing, mail, outreach, case management, insurance assistance, application assistance.
 - c) Backpack medicine program.
- 9. Downtown Ventura Partners / Park Ambassadors - Kevin Clerici
 - a) Street outreach, facilitator and partnering with local agencies.
- 10. Step Up Ventura / Ventura County Office Of Education Homeless - Cathi Nye
 - a) Step Up Ventura provides
 - (1) Supportive services to children (0-5) who are homeless or at-risk of being so.

- (2) Currently serves 60 children in Ventura.
 - (a) Pre-literacy program.
 - (b) Social/emotional development program.
 - (3) Save the date for benefit concert on 10/15 from 3:00-5:30 at Easter Seals Development Center.
- b) Office of Education
 - (1) Work with all 20 school districts in Ventura County
 - (2) Grant through federal government to support homeless students and transitional age youth (18-25)
- 11. Family to Family - Jan Schmutte
 - a) 5 days/week - serving one hot meal per day (2 breakfasts and 3 lunches) at Catholic Charities.
 - b) Hot meals on Wednesday nights.
 - c) 25-30 local organizations provide volunteers.
- 12. Turning Point Foundation - Edwin Marinez
 - a) Emergency shelter - 30 to 90 day programming.
 - b) Drop-in services reopening.
 - c) Work towards permanent housing for those who are eligible.
- 13. Tri-County ILRC - Jaydon Gaines
 - a) Variety of services for people with disabilities and older adults.
- 14. Mercy House - Mariah Lopez
 - a) Run the ARCH - 55 beds (38 for men, 17 for women)
 - b) Clients have access to job opportunities, life skill classes, medical services.
 - c) Rapid rehousing funds.
- 15. Homeless Court - Kevin Clerici
 - a) Bi-monthly meeting led by VPD and public defender's office
 - b) Diversion program for people who get caught up in criminal justice system.
- 16. Laundry Love - John Jones
 - a) To help people get laundry done without cost.
 - b) Currently 1 is open on Ventura Avenue.
 - c) Hope to open 3 or 4 others across the city.
- 17. Ventura Homeless Prevention Fund - Debora Schreiber
 - a) Offshoot of VSSTF
 - b) Helps Ventura residents with one-time difficulties in paying rent.
 - (1) Funds come from churches and private individuals.
 - (2) Up to \$1800 paid directly to landlord.
 - c) The Salvation Army provides case management.
- 18. Moving In Project - Rob March
 - a) Kathy Powell set up this initiative to help newly housed people furnish their homes.

- (1) Furniture, housewares, etc.
 - (2) All items are donated.
 - (3) Multi-congregational effort.
 - b) 2021 - furnished 78 households (118 people, including 24 children and 19 veterans).
 - c) 2022 - furnished 77 households (126 people, including 34 children and 13 veterans)
 - B. Leona Rollins introduces herself to the community.
 - 1. New housing services manager for the City of Ventura.
 - 2. Working on a comprehensive homelessness plan.
 - a) Will bring the plan to the HOPES subcommittee.
 - b) To help people with housing instability.
 - c) Want to make sure that all stakeholders are involved.
 - 3. Wants to see more permanent supportive housing and affordable housing.
 - 4. Mike Johnson - Excited to have her on staff with her expertise.
- VIII. Update on Faith Subcommittee gathering on 8/30/22 - Pamela Kelley
 - A. At Temple Beth Torah.
 - B. Intended for helping to increase the involvement of the faith community on the issues of homelessness and housing.
 - C. Finalizing details for the meeting.
 - D. Gathering information to share about resources and opportunities to volunteer.
 - E. Leona Rollins and Meredith Hart will be the MCs of the event.
- IX. Continuum of Care update - Jennifer Harkey
 - A. Grants open for applications:
 - 1. Emergency Shelter Grant
 - 2. Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Grant - for services for transitional age youths.
 - 3. Request for proposals (RFP) is out for qualified organizations to get people with lived experience assisting local clients.
 - 4. Upcoming HUD-funded grant to help unsheltered people.
- X. Candidates forum on Wed 9/28/22 - Judy Alexandre
 - A. At the Church of the Foothills
 - B. Need more help on the planning committee
 - 1. NExt meeting is 8/5/22 at 3:30pm.
 - C. Jeff Lambert will be the moderator.
- XI. HOPE & Solutions Subcommittee and Ventura City Council - Mike Johnson
 - A. At 7/25 meeting, looked for an update and next steps for addressing homelessness.
 - 1. Jeanette Sanchez-Palacio moved to restore 2 positions to the patrol taskforce.
 - 2. Mike Johnson wanted to get some of the COVID funding reallocated for addressing issues
 - a) Currently, \$0 has been spent on homelessness.
 - b) Hoped to spend funds on:

- (1) 2 Port-a-potties in town.
- (2) \$50K grant to local nonprofits trying to prevent evictions.
- (3) \$25K budget adjustment for winter warming shelter
- (4) Additional funds for permanent supportive housing.
- (5) The above items were approved, but are not currently in the budget.

(a) Waiting for staff to come back with a plan.

c) Asks that we thank city council for finally taking some action.

- B. Ventura needs to rebuild its relationship with the county, which hurts progress.
- C. Ventura city manager is making decisions without apprising city council.
- D. Judy Alexandre - Action Items
 - 1. Encourage city council and the city manager to cooperate and collaborate with the county.
 - 2. List of items (recommendations) that were voted on,
 - a) Write to city council in support of these.
 - 3. Advocate for building up the ARCH to include permanent supportive housing.

XII. General Plan / Inclusionary Housing Update - Sonja Flores

- A. Housing Element - being worked on by a consultant.
 - 1. Want a readoption by city council by the end of the calendar year.
- B. No General Plan updates.
 - 1. Hope for VSSTF to meet with the city about the land use alternatives.
- C. Mike Johnson - Council is looking to get a rental registry started as part of tenant protection.

XIII. Legislative Update - No Update

XIV. Other

- A. Debora Schreiber - Would like to see a workshop for city council to learn about homelessness.
 - 1. Council currently appears to need educating.
 - 2. Judy Alexandre - there are plans for educating the planning commission, which will hopefully include the city council.

Meetings:

City Council HOPES & Solutions Subcommittee (addressing issues regarding homelessness).

Faith sub committee 3rd Friday of each month, 3pm Pam Kelley (pamjk3@msn.com) patio of Judy Alexandre