

## Monthly Meeting Minutes 11/1/2023

3:15 pm, via Zoom video chat

### Ventura Social Services Task Force

Attendees: Vanessa Acain, Judy Alexandre, Jerry Breiner, Kevin Clerici, Leah Coming, Jennifer Harkey, Robert March, Judy Morelli, Kappy Paulson, Marissa Rosales, Debora Schreiber, Elizabeth R. Stone, Dolores Suafo'a, Anna Varela

- I. Welcome & Introductions - Judy Alexandre
- II. Approval of the agenda for 11/1/23 - MSC
- III. Approval of the minutes for 10/4/23 - MSC
- IV. Treasurer's Report - Judy Alexandre
  - A. No changes.
- V. VSSTF Officers need for next year.
  - A. Secretary - Rob March is unavailable for much of the year starting in April 2024.
  - B. Chair / Co-chair - Judy Alexandre will not serve beyond 2024.
  - C. Legislative coordinator.
  - D. Email Judy Alexandre with nominations.
- VI. Report from General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)/City Council - updates on land use, zoning - Judy Alexandre
  - A. Worked for over a year to identify potential parcels for housing.
    1. GPAC came back with fewer units than requested by City Council.
      - a) Planning Commission decreased the number.
      - b) City Council further decreased the number.
      - c) Not currently meeting the state's minimum requirement.
      - d) ~1500 identified parcels
        - (1) Original requirement was **5000**.
        - (2) Not intended to be approval for action, just a tally of locations with a potential for building housing.
      - e) NIMBY anti-housing forces have been very vocal.
- VII. Strategies to end/address homelessness - detailed report & discussion - Jennifer Harkey
  - A. Strategic Plan on Homelessness - funded by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors.
    1. 3 cities signed on to collaborate (Ventura, Oxnard, Thousand Oaks)
    2. LeSar Development Consultants are writing the plan
      - a) Got feedback from:
        - (1) Community surveys
        - (2) Service providers
    3. 2 months ago, Jennifer Harkey presented on what the plan proposed for next steps.
      - a) There were far too many.
      - b) Asked for a top 10 or 20 recommendations. Examples are:

- (1) Hire a homelessness solutions director
      - (a) To work across Ventura County.
  - 4. Make data driven decisions
    - a) Collect data to figure out gaps.
    - b) Regarding grant funding.
    - c) On improving the system as a whole.
  - 5. Ratios of what needs look like for homelessness prevention and permanent housing.
    - a) Asked LeSar to do projections, so we have numbers to advocate for.
  - 6. Engaging with people with lived experience
    - a) To understand their needs.
  - 7. Multi-disciplinary team to do outreach/engagement
    - a) Create rapport
    - b) Offer vouchers.
  - 8. Final draft will be ready next week.
- VIII. VSSTF Faith Subcommittee report - Leah Coming
  - A. Laundry Love
    - 1. Have a location for the 2nd site.
      - a) Laundromat on Harbor & Seaward
      - b) Tentatively planned for the 4th Sunday of every month.
      - c) Leah Coming & Donna Stewart leading the effort
        - (1) John Jones & Marsha Novak are also on the team.
        - (2) Currently need volunteers!
- IX. Foul Weather Sheltering Plan - Judy Alexander
  - A. HOPES Subcommittee
    - 1. 2 months ago, voted to increase the capacity and to make the activation requirements less strict.
      - a) City government pushed back, and reset the activation criteria back to last year's.
        - (1)  $\leq 40^{\circ}\text{F}$  and/or  $\geq \frac{1}{2}$ " of rain
        - (2) Only 20 rooms will be available for each weather event.
        - (3) The city says that they don't have the staff to support the recommended requirements.
    - 2. Elizabeth R. Stone - present at latest HOPES meeting
      - a) The Foul Weather Shelter is a joint project with Oxnard.
      - b) Not yet clear where the shelter will happen, or how transport will be handled.
      - c) The focus on the activation criteria deflected discussion from basic logistics.
      - d) Judy Alexandre - Coordination only means that every city in Ventura County will have some foul weather plan this winter.
        - (1) Ojai recently bought a warehouse to use as their winter shelter.

3. The Foul Weather Shelter is really only for elderly and/or disabled people.
    - a) People stop coming because there are so few rooms.
    - b) People are getting banned for sharing their rooms.
    - c) Elizabeth R. Stone - having a car to sleep in also disqualifies people from getting these rooms.
  4. Judy Alexandre - We need advocacy
    - a) The community needs to ask the city for sufficient staffing and funding to run a better & bigger program.
      - (1) It's the city's job to do this!
    - b) It's hard to get the word out about the shelter.
      - (1) Agencies are told, but the news often doesn't reach the unhoused community.
  5. Kappy Paulson - we need to ensure that the city continues foul weather services during the holidays
    - a) Many city staff are on vacation.
- X. Grant Updates & Point In Time Count 2024 - Jennifer Harkey
- A. Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Round 5
    1. Letter of intent is on the Continuum of Care website.
    2. Funding is ~\$6 million
      - a) Emphasis on new permanent supportive housing projects.
        - (1) Operational subsidies
        - (2) Supportive services
        - (3) Rapid rehousing
      - b) Should know the official allocation by the end of January 2024
  - B. Next Point In Time Count is on 1/24/24
    1. Need volunteers.
    2. Hope to hand out hygiene kits and Bomba socks
  - C. Judy Alexandre - Ventura received a \$30+ million grant for the Valentine La Quinta project
- XI. Update from HOPES Committee
- A. Debora Schreiber - feels a bit rote now
    1. The formalized meeting structure changed the previous more collaborative style
    2. Discussion about meeting quarterly.
  - B. Judy Alexandre - Ventura needs to hire enough people to
    1. Support the HOPES subcommittee
    2. Expand the Foul Weather Shelter program
    3. We need regular meetings to keep the discussions moving.
      - a) Homelessness is the #1 issue in Ventura according to recent surveys.
      - b) Switching to quarterly meetings is disappointing.
      - c) Kappy Paulson - we need regular meetings to keep the issue politically visible.

(1) Councilmember Liz Campos proposed meeting every 2 months instead of quarterly

- C. Elizabeth R. Stone - concerned with the increasing silence in the committee over the last several months.
  - 1. City staff are making arguments that are not based on data.
- D. Kappy Paulson - Ventura keeps saying that it has a Safe Sleep Program when we haven't had anyone in the program (at UUCV) in over a year.
  - 1. Judy Alexandre - We need to reduce the barriers for entry.
- E. Judy Alexandre - we need to be advocates for:
  - 1. Monthly meetings.
  - 2. Transparency in the decision making process
    - a) Let us see the data
- F. Jennifer Harkey - Disappointed in the direction of the subcommittee
  - 1. Will draft a letter from the COC about the importance of addressing homelessness.
  - 2. New meeting format is not good for the exchange of ideas.
  - 3. Many issues and concerns are not getting to the city council level.
- G. After much discussion, Judy Alexandre summarized:
  - 1. We want regular meetings, every 2 months at a minimum.
  - 2. We want to have time for discussion, apart from the current formal format.
  - 3. We want sufficient funding/staffing to meet the needs of the team addressing housing and homelessness
    - a) And the Foul Weather Shelter and the Housing Element.
  - 4. We don't accept lack of staffing and funding as an adequate reasoning for not meeting the people's needs, or addressing the #1 issue in Ventura.
- H. Judy Alexandre requested that Rob March write a letter based on the above points.
  - 1. Leah Coming - What does the committee need from us to feel that their time is spent effectively?
  - 2. Judy Alexandre - We can say that we are supportive of forward movement and positive action.
  - 3. We encourage the community to write their own letters and highlight the issues that are most important to you (and your organizations).
- XII. Report from meeting with City Manager Bill Ayub - Judy Alexandre
  - A. Kristian Nunez, Judy Alexandre, Debora Schreiber, Karen Flock & John Jones met with Mr. Ayub.
    - 1. He wants to address the cost and availability of housing.
    - 2. We let him know that we are here to work with him.
- XIII. Other
  - A. Kappy Paulson - Memorial for our Homeless Neighbors
    - 1. 12/16/23 in Ventura - Plaza Park
    - 2. 12/17/23 in Oxnard - Plaza Park
    - 3. Currently talking with the medical examiner

- a) Counting deaths from 12/1/22 through 12/1/23
4. Anna Varela - invited the Spirit of Santa Paula to speak at the Oxnard event
  - a) Will compose a list of names from Santa Paula for the memorial.
5. May ask Pamela Kelley if she will read her poem (see last month's minutes).

Meetings:

City Council HOPES & Solutions Subcommittee (addressing issues regarding homelessness), Nov 28 2023, 3:00pm, Ventura City Hall.

VSSTF Faith Subcommittee 3rd Friday of each month, 3pm, Anna Varela / John Jones, via Zoom