

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Minutes 12/4/2024

3:15 pm via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81514995979>

Present: Miguel , Sue Brinkmeyer (Ventura Homeless Prevention) Kevin Clerici (Downtown Ventura Partners), Miguel Cardenas (Behavioral Health) Judy Alexandre (VSSTF Chair), Anna Varela (Mercy House), Jenn Harkey (CoC), Cathi Nye (VCOE), Javier Villa (VC Homeless Services), Kristian Nunez (CAUSE), Clyde Reynolds, Suzanne Troolines (Independent Living), Kappy Paulson (Lift Up Your Voice/ Homes for All), Kyler Carlson (HACSB), Maria Navarro (CAUSE).

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:17
2. The agenda was approved with the addition of a motion to adjourn and an indication that the next meeting will be February 5 (MSC Jenn Harkey, Cathi Nye)
3. The minutes of 11/06/2024 were approved without changes - Kappy wanted to include the PowerPoint from the presenter, but it was never received. (Approved by consensus)
4. Financial Update - same as last month
5. **VSSTF priorities**, plan and discussion
  - 5.1. Foul Weather Shelter - VSSTF has been pushing for an expansion of the Foul Weather Shelter. The planning commission wanted to increase the number of beds and adjust the triggers, and the Homeless Committee voted for both also ; it will not happen primarily because the facility we use for it is not available to increase the number of rooms. River Community Church does amazing work. Those present agreed that representatives of Homes for All and Ventura Social Services Task Force will meet with representatives from the City, County and River Church to try to implement changes for next year, even if that means changing the location.
  - 5.2. RV dumping update for dumping station - It is more complicated than originally thought. There is no dumping station open to the public in the City of Ventura; those available are 20-30 miles away. Other sites require a day use fee of \$10-20, and what is needed is a free dump site. The Water Commission said that the waste coming from an RV is concentrated compared to what comes from homes, so it would need a pre-treatment before going into sewage system. Kappy is investigating where the companies that empty porty potties take what they dump. It will be on the next Homelessness and Homes Committee agenda. It continues to be something that will be expensive and will need to be monitored. Kappy will take it to the Measure O Committee. It would be a health benefit for the entire community.
  - 5.3. Plan for RV all day/eve parking with case management - This remains on the table. A group is meeting on Dec. 5 with Rachel Diamond to talk about it. Kappy has asked Jeff Lambert if the site on Valentine Road could be used. Jeff has said it will be used for apartments eventually, and Kappy asked if it could be used in the meantime. An RFP for the Safe Sleep program was responded to only by Mercy House. Jen wondered if the RV Parking and Safe Sleep might be joined in some way. Judy added that she understands that Mercy House will be doing it. Kappy added that the UU Church can take up to 5 RV's. Church of the Foothills has been taking cars, and Kappy does not know if they will expand it to RVs. Anna Varela will report on this at the next meeting.
  - 5.4. Storage (Judy reported in John Jones' absence that we will get bins from Harrison as they put out new ones. Old bins will be cleaned and then available. A group that will provide a location and manage/supervise the site is needed. A program is needed so that regular access can be provided. The program in San Diego uses formerly homeless people to manage it. Judy asked that people send ideas as to who might manage it. Kevin added that it would need a dedicated property with insurance and a non-profit to manage it. Kevin stated

that the Ambassadors could help, but that an entity to take on the legal responsibility is necessary. Kappy asked if the site behind the hotel that was previously proposed could be used. Kevin added that the earlier site that was in a storage container closed because there were never enough volunteers to fill in the proposed schedule. It was unable to be used except by specific request through the police department. Cathi asked if anyone had approached a storage facility to see if they might donate a space. Cathi offered to approach some in Midtown or on the Avenue. The staff at One Stop once talked about trying to have lockers or something similar but was never able to find the space, but might still be willing if only a locker was required. There is no space for an additional pod, as parking lot is overcrowded. Jen will bring up the idea of lockers to Health Care Agency staff and James.

5.5. What is happening with the Portland Loos - It is on Measure O projects list for next year. It may need to go to City Council for final approval. Someone on the Water Commission questioned the location at a recent meeting. Judy will follow up with Leona and Jeff.

5.6. Bus passes need - Sue Brinkmeyer reported that, in working with a woman who was new to homelessness, she has recently become aware of how important free or reduced fare bus transportation is for no-income or low-income individuals so that they can get to food banks, free pet-food locations, free meals, and medical and social services. She learned that the Gold Coast Transit District offers free or reduced fares to small children, youth, college students, seniors, Veterans, Medicare recipients and persons with disabilities. When boarding the bus, they must show the driver the correct type of ID for the discounted fare categories. A reduced fare monthly bus pass would run \$32. There is also a \$5-a-ride service using GO ACCESS vehicles for rides between 4:30 am and 7 am and 7 pm and 12 am; reservations must be made at 805-485-2319 by 10 pm one day before for early morning rides or by 11:30 pm one day before for late night rides. She recommended that the GAPS committee address the following needs:

5.6.1. For people who are new to homelessness or those who do not yet have a Medicare card, a free 15 or 30-day pass would allow them to get to the many places they must go to get signed up for services and acquire needed ID, and become familiar with using the bus to get around town. Ideally, such a pass would be provided at One Stop.

5.6.2. Similarly, for those whose income does not even allow them to purchase the \$32 monthly pass, free passes would provide them the opportunity to live a fuller life, including getting to free showers and laundry services and even job interviews. Having a new pass available from each person's case manager or at One Stop each would not only improve their life but also enhance the case manager-client relationship because of the frequent contact. I'd like to see the GAPs committee address these needs.

5.6.3. Jen indicated that a 501(c)(3) would need to apply for a grant perhaps to Amgen Mercy House, Independent Living, or Turning Point might be willing to sponsor. Disabled can get 10 passes mailed to them each month; with their ADA card they can a free monthly pass. Sue will pursue a grant, working with Anna at Mercy House or Susanne at Independent Living. CoC can only fund bus passes for shelter. Suzanne Troolines will pursue getting passes through the Independent Living agency.

## 6. **Tenant Protections** (Kristian Nunez, Kyler Carlson, Leona Rollins)

6.1. Where are we now - City of Ventura recently hosted 5 workshops for property owners and tenants as they are looking to craft ordinances. Kristian attended 3 of the 5. The majority of attendees were property owners. Kappy attended two workshops. There was no back and forth allowed. People who attended did not like the format. Comments are still welcome. It is going to Planning Commission in January and then to City Council in summer. Staff will report back to City Council on results of workshops and public comment can then be

encouraged to ask Council to continue to work on this. Judy will send out talking points that will be provided by Kristian when the item comes before the Planning Commission or City Council. Council will need encouragement to continue working to get tenant protection ordinance in place.

## **7. Housing updates (Leona Rollins)**

7.1.Valentine Road (Kyler Carlson) - 27 residents moved over from Room Key. Remaining 40 units are awaiting paperwork; it is over half leased up. Construction phase 1 to renovate initial 64 units is ongoing with completion and lease up due for May. Courtyard, parking lot and bus ramp and finished. 40 Room Key residents will move into 64 initial units and an additional 24 will be leased, and construction of additional 69 units will take place. Working on finance for Phase II and it is expected to be finished by March 18.

7.2.College Development - Developer received a tax credit award and so is obligated to begin construction soon. Includes affordable and farmworker component.

7.3.Ventura Springs - 122 units; 54 supportive housing; several matched through VASH vouchers; 51 homeless veterans have been matched for supporting housing units. We are getting very close to ending veteran homelessness. Many partners have been supportive, including the VA, Supportive Services for Veterans' Families, Gold Coast Veterans, U.S. Vets. A team of US Vets has been doing outreach.

7.4.People who are couch surfing or living in a church where they have access to a restroom are considered At Risk of Homelessness and can qualify for some units in that way. People who stay in a place not meant for human habitation like a car or shed without a restroom are considered homeless. To get people ready for housing and housing vouchers, One Stop is a great place to start to get a case manager and on to lists. County Homeless Services can provide a case manager as well. Different units have different criteria. Some are available only for homeless families, or just veterans, or just certain income limits, so a case manager can help individuals get onto the right lists.

## **8. Updates:**

8.1.Continuum of Care: grants, meetings, programs - Point in Time Count, January 22, needs volunteers. Need coverage across entire county, so volunteers may end up in the city of greatest need, not necessarily their home city. We also cover One Stop and survey individuals there. Local libraries have bins to collect donations of socks and hygiene items to hand out on the day of. A couple of companies have offered to provide items for volunteers to hand out. Two grants are open. Rapid rehousing and Housing homeless assistance and prevention program also has RFP through end of week. Operational subsidies for housing, prevention, and rapid rehousing are key priorities. Human Services Agency and United Way are both working on these priorities and on forming relationships with landlords.

8.2.Housing and Homeless Committee - Will be meeting on third Wednesday at 3 pm beginning in January. Next meeting is January 15 at 3 pm in Community Meeting Room. RVs are supposed to be on agenda.

## **9. Agency updates on what they accomplished this year toward homelessness prevention, intervention, services.**

9.1.Rain is going to be part of Homeless Services beginning in January. Family Emergency Shelter program will phase out and become part of Rain program.

9.2.Housing Authority working on Valentine project and several other projects.

9.3.LUYV - Longest Night Homeless memorial Saturday, December 21 at 3:30, Plaza Park Ventura; Oxnard Sunday, December 22 at 3:30 in Plaza Park, Oxnard. Agencies please send names of those who died homeless in the County who may not be on the list.

9.4. Mercy house - Quarterly newsletter went out last week. Need folks to provide a holiday meal between Dec 19 and 23 at any Mercy House site. Judy will send out flyer. Approval for Mercy House as the shelter provider goes before Council on December 10. Supporters are needed to back the recommendation.

9.5. One Stop - Need men's shoes, belts, jeans, warm clothes. Bomba socks are available.

9.6. Moving In Project - In 2024, the Moving In project furnished 234 apartments for 416 people who were moving from homelessness into their own home; 286 of them were adults and 130 children; 52 of them veterans; 2 had lost their homes in a fire. Since 2020, they have furnished 679 new homes for 1,109 people, 375 of them children and 122 of them veterans.

9.7. Ventura Homeless Prevention - To date has provided \$85,000 in rental assistance, which kept 177 people, 71 of them children, from eviction and homelessness at a cost of \$473 per person/\$1,230 per household.

## 10. Elections

10.1. There were no volunteers for Chair. Judy said she will only do it as co-chair or vice chair who acts as assistant and attends some of the meetings. Elections will be on the agenda again for next meeting.

10.2. Vice Chair or Co-Chair - Mike Johnson may offer to be a vice chair.

10.3. Secretary - We need a secretary. Rob March is out of town most months. Kappy offered to take action item minutes for February, March and April, if she is in town.

10.4. Judy will send out an email indicating Ventura Social Services Task Force will be disbanded unless people step up to be co-chair or vice chair.

### Meetings:

Housing and Homeless Subcommittee 12/15 3pm City Hall community meeting room. Beginning in Jan 2025, the meeting will be on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed at 3pm

Faith subcommittee Dec. 20 3pm via zoom contact John Jones ([johnsandersjones@gmail.com](mailto:johnsandersjones@gmail.com))

City Council Dec 10 5pm Approval of the Mercy House shelter is on the agenda (a few speakers would be helpful)

Meeting was adjourned at 4:25 pm

Respectfully submitted by Sue Brinkmeyer