

Monthly Meeting Minutes 1/3/2024

3:15 pm, via Zoom video chat

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Attendees: Judy Alexandre, Martha Cervantes, Kevin Clerici, John Sanders Jones, Jeffrey Lambert, Robert March, Miguel Marquez, Judy Morelli, Pam Nelson, Kappy Paulson, Cole Prime, Chris Russell, Lee Sherman, Anna Varela, Javier Villa Solis, Eddie Viveros, Susan White Wood

- I. Welcome & Introductions - Judy Alexandre
- II. Approval of the agenda for 1/3/24 - MSC
- III. Approval of the minutes for 12/6/23 - MSC
- IV. Financial Update - Judy Alexandre
 - A. No changes.
- V. Review of VSSTF Mission Statement - Judy Alexandre
 - A. No changes.

B. VSSTF Mission Statement:

The mission of the Ventura Social Services Task force (VSSTF) is to create and implement an integrated community strategy to end homelessness in the City of Ventura.

The goals of the VSSTF include:

1. involving a broad cross section of the community, including representatives from elected officials, governmental agencies and departments, law enforcement, businesses, social service agencies, charitable foundations, faith-based organizations, community groups, public and private housing developers, homeless individuals and concerned citizens;
2. developing a common understanding of the root causes and circumstances of homelessness, how persons are affected, and the impact of homelessness on the community;
3. identifying current best practices to end homelessness;
4. developing and/or adopting strategic initiatives that identify measurable objectives, timelines, responsibilities, budgets and sources of resources, including funds.

Strategies include networking, advocacy, public education, and action in the community.

- VI. Upcoming Advocacy Needs & Plan - Judy Alexandre
 - A. Measure O for homeless needs funding - Lee Sherman
 1. Measure O Oversight Committee meets in February
 - a) Leona Rollins says that we need to advocate for funds here.
 - b) Judy Alexandre - VSSTF Faith Sub-committee selected 2 gap needs to prioritize.
 - (1) Anna Varela - top 2 items are:

- (a) Foul Weather Shelter - want either:
 - (i) Shelter open every night for 3 months
 - (ii) Increase the number of clients supported to 50 (from 20)
- (b) Storage - Judy Alexandre
 - (i) People need someplace secure for:
 - (a) Personal papers (PRIORITY!)
 - (b) Other belongings
 - (ii) Need to know what it will cost.
 - (iii) Lee Sherman - Ventura tried to do this before unsuccessfully. We need to know:
 - (a) # of people to serve.
 - (b) Storage requirements for each person
 - (iv) We are still figuring out what approach to advocate for.
 - (a) Could be a smaller pilot program to start.
 - (i) Don't expect to serve the entire homeless community at first.
- (2) Laundry Love is a lower priority because there are now 2 locations with a potential 3rd location.
- (3) Safe Sleep is on the city's agenda.

B. Housing Element - Lee Sherman

- 1. Judy Alexandre - Asked for info on tenant protections.
 - a) Lee Sherman - currently researching the topic.
 - (1) Reaching out to city attorneys.
 - b) Nearby communities have tenant protections that Ventura could emulate.
 - c) The City of Ventura must design any ordinance.
 - (1) VSSTF will need to advocate.
 - (2) Once there is a preliminary draft, VSSTF can meet with city council and the planning commission.

C. Homes For All Housing Strategies - Jeffrey Lambert

- 1. Holding internal strategy meetings.
 - a) How do we counter the misinformation coming from NIMBYs (Livable Ventura)?

D. City/County Homeless Strategies - Lee Sherman

- 1. Strategy plan received and reviewed.
- 2. Homelessness Survey
 - a) Survey closes on 1/19/24
 - (1) Presenting results to planning commission on 1/24/24
 - (2) City council will discuss the results in February.

(a) Planning commission will provide recommendations.

- F. Gap Needs - John Jones
 - 1. Laundry Love
 - a) 2nd Saturdays 9-11am on Olive Street behind the Vons.
 - b) 4th Sunday 330-530pm on Seaward/Harbor.
- G. Planning Commission Info - still forthcoming.
- H. City Council - Updates
 - 1. City council now meets every 2nd & 4th Tuesday at 5pm
- VII. VSSTF Goals for 2024 - Judy Alexandre
 - A. Will need to wait until next month when we have more information regarding:
 - 1. Homelessness survey
 - 2. Homes For All info
- VIII. Point In Time Count (PITC) - Judy Alexandre
 - A. Lee Sherman - 1/24/24 - same day as the Planning Commission meeting
 - 1. PITC will have a meeting on evening of 1/23/24 to train the volunteers.
 - 2. Had 80 volunteer slots and most are filled.
 - 3. It's important to talk to people, not just observe.
- IX. Foul Weather Shelter (FWS) - Lee Sherman
 - A. Activated on 12/29 - all 20 rooms were filled.
 - B. As of 1/3/24, FWS was open for 3 nights.
 - C. Judy Alexandre - Thanks to River Community Church for their awesome efforts.
 - 1. Thanks to the City of Ventura staff who showed up during the holidays.
 - D. Hoping to see more Measure O funds put towards next year's FWS.
 - 1. We want a dedicated source of funding that isn't just federal grant money.
 - E. To double the number of available rooms would require at least \$100K plus the labor costs of city staff.
- X. HOPES Subcommittee - Lee Sherman
 - A. No meetings in November or December 2023
 - B. Next meeting date will be shared once it is known.
- XI. Continuum of Care Updates
 - A. Susan White Wood - next COC meeting is 1/18/24 at 1030am on Zoom.
 - B. Round 5 of Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HAPP) funding is still being allocated.
- XII. Valentine Road Project update - Jeff Lambert
 - A. Generated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH). Thanks to Susan White Wood for her work.
 - B. Funding from HUD is delayed.
 - 1. Can't close escrow on the property without it.
 - C. Name of new apartments: Valentine Road Apartments.
 - D. Recently had a productive meeting with city staff regarding permitting.
- XIII. Agency Updates
 - A. VCBH - Susan White Wood

1. Ventura County Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved a VCBH bridge housing proposal
 - a) 24 new shelter beds in Ventura
 - (1) 20 at Salvation Army / 4 at Our Place Safe Haven
 - (2) Short term
 - (3) Developing construction timeline.
 - (4) Must be available by 6/24, as per state law
- B. River Community Church (RCC) - Judy Morelli
 1. Got another apartment for the emergency shelter (available in the middle of January) for unhoused families
 - a) Now have 1 duplex and 2 apartments.
 - b) Javier Villa - 2 apartments in Ventura and 1 in Oxnard
 - (1) For 60-90 day stays
 - (2) Partnership with RCC
 - (3) Case managed
- C. Mercy House - Anna Varela
 1. Getting good donations from local community.
 2. ARCH - All 55 beds are full
 - a) 4 beds are set aside for referrals.
 - b) No updates about possible expansion to upper floors.
- D. Lift Up Your Voice To End Homelessness (LUYV) - Kappy Paulson
 1. Recent letter in VC Star about the Memorial Service
- E. One Stop - Kappy Paulson
 1. To agency providers:
 - a) People have to sign the correct forms to receive mail.
 - (1) Need to be in HMIS.
 - (2) Can affect receiving food stamps, benefits, etc.
 2. Always need men's jeans smaller than size 40.

Meetings:

Planning Commission

City Council

Measure O

HOPES Subcommittee

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