# VSSTF Meeting Minutes

**I. Call to order and introductions (Judy Alexandre)**

* Call to order at 3:18 (Judy Alexandre)

**II. Approval of or changes to the agenda for 3/5/25 (Judy Alexandre)**

* John Jones motion to approve
* Approved by consent (Judy Alexandre)

**III. Approval of or changes to the minutes of 2/5/25 (Judy Alexandre)**

* Jenn Harkey motion to approve
* Approved by consent (Judy Alexandre)

**Introductions**

* John Sanders Jones, Faith Subcommittee, Homes for All, Homeless Prevention Fund
* Kevin Clerici, Downtown Ventura Partners
* Kristian Nunez, Policy Advocate with CAUSE
* Jenn Harkey, Director for COC with County Executive Office
* Amanda Cruz, Mercy House ARCH Program Manager
* Javier Villa Solis, Ventura County Homeless Services Program
* Darnele Santiago, Rescue Mission Community Relations
* Cathi Nye, Ventura County Office of Education Homeless Education Coordinator
* Suzanne Trooliness, Access Central Coast previously known as ILRC, Housing Support Specialist
* Miguel Marquez, Ventura County Behavioral Health
* Judy Alexandre, VSSTF Chair
* Anna Varela, Mercy House Community Engagement Specialist
* Deborah Schreiber, Ventura Homeless Prevention Fund

**IV. Financial update (no change)**

* No change

**V. Tenant protections: (Kristian Nunez)**

* VSSTF has been working on, with Homes for All, along with CAUSE, on tenant and landlord protections (Judy Alexandre)
* Meeting at Planning Commission last week, meeting at Housing and Homeless Commission on 19th and Tuesday 25th at City Council discussing tenant protections (Judy Alexandre)
* City Council decided to prioritize tenant protections workplan.; City had community workshops to gather feedback from tenants and property owners; collected and organized data; results were presented to Planning Commission last week; on the 25th will be presented at City Council. (Kristian Nunez)
* 3 main things VSSTF and Homes for All have been advocating for:
	+ enforcement of current housing laws,
	+ legal representation for tenants going through unjust tenant violations or eviction to try to avoid further displacement
	+ also want rental registry for available units (Kristian Nunez)
* Planning Commission’s recommendations are in favor of what we’re looking for
	+ Expansion of HRC contract, expansion of legal representation, rights for property owners. City Staff’s research into other cities that have implemented similar programs, like Pasadena and San Francisco; Planning Commission in favor of rental registry, but have questions about cost and concern of cost/fees being passed onto renters; would require more transparency from property managers to make sure City can run it and collect data (properties available, rental rates); Planning Commission will make recommendations to council. Kristian will be meeting with City staff soon to further discuss. (Kristian Nunez)
* Registry will provide more transparency in rental market in the area; CPI has rental cap of 10%, the state has a rental increase cap of 8%, but no way of tracking actual rental market and how property owners are renting out their properties; interest groups causing rates to increase for renters and causing displacement. Rent previously gone up 10-15% in some places; Helps to compare rent in the area; determine what’s a reasonable rate and where there’s vacancies.; registry will allow City to make informed decisions; Folks meeting with Council to gauge where they are with initiatives; Need to keep voicing the interest for these things; advocate for more education for tenants and property owners; Topic is going before City Council for full review on the 25th; City staff will take direction, after, will be several rounds of discussions; we need people to be there and give comment, talk about what it can do for the community and people at risk of eviction and who are currently unhoused. Kristian will connect with city staff and will come back with answers to questions. (Kristian Nunez)
* Housing and Homeless Committe members will be making recommendations to Planning Commission, which then goes to Council; need those 3 members to be supportive. Those members have said that they want to hear from people who are impacted and from more people overall; speak, write, and show up. (Judy Alexandre)

**a) Upcoming meetings: Housing & Homeless Committee (3/19, 3pm City Hall community room)**

* The County does a lot of work with the Housing Rights Center (see link below); there are also some fair housing workshops going on around the County (see link below); when we get some pushback from landlords or property owners, we can remind them its advocacy for them, too. <https://www.housingrightscenter.org/> <https://www.housingrightscenter.org/workshops> (Jenn Harkey)
* Small group meeting on Saturday to strategize how to approach upcoming meetings. Council is averse to the phrase” tenant protections”, suggested “keeping people housed. (Judy Alexandre)
* The County uses the phrases spare housing and housing retention; to help people retain housing. (Jenn Harkey)

**b) City Council 3/25 5pm, Council chambers**

**c) Speak out, write letters, be advocates for our goals: enforcement of existing laws, have legal representation available (city atty designated and or expansion of the contract with Housing Rights), establishing a city rental registry. Questions contact Sonja Flores (****sonjaflores805@yahoo.com****) or Kristian Nunez (****kristian@causenow.org****)**

**d) Discussion**

**VI. Gap Needs Planning (Judy Alexandre and John Jones)**

**a) Storage (John Jones)**

* No updates, need to connect back with Leona. (John Jones)

**b) RV mobile dump (Kappy Paulsen)**

* Working on how to get mobile dumping in Ventura; people can’t drive old RVs all over the county; dump station needs to be available in town; considering using voucher system; It's a public health hazard; need a location where RVs can go, and mobile dumping can be arranged; Ventura OneStop is overparked because of the hospital parking.(Judy Alexandre)
* Are we looking for something like a campground? (Suzanne Trooliness)
	+ There is one place in Ventura that does it, it's a $15 fee at the Ventura Resort; a private campground for recreational vehicles; used to be a couple of other places; one in Fillmore and one in Thousand Oaks. Ventura residents can’t go there and don’t have the funds; details for voucher system aren’t worked out yet. (Judy Alexandre)

**c) RV permanent parking (Judy Alexandre)**

* See comment above, Judy’s response to Suzanne’s question

**d) Foul Weather expansion to also include below 45 degrees and ¼ inch of rain and open to a larger group of people. What is needed for a 3-month nightly shelter? How did the 40 beds work out during the last storm? (Leona Rollins and Judy Alexandre)**

* Leona is not present to provide update. We opened once; should be reopening in the next few days if the storm does come as predicted. (Judy Alexandre)
* Also not sure, was coordinating with Oxnard at that time. (Jenn Harkey)

**e) Laundry Love expansion (John Jones)**

* Currently two open, one on Olive Ave. and the other on Harbor Blvd.; Group that was running one on Olive Ave. are about to open new location at 2611 E. Thompson Blvd., Ventura; Can’t confirm hours yet, but they believe it will be 9-11am on the 4th Saturday of the month; that will give us 3 of the 4 Saturdays a month; very few issues with washers and dryers being out of order and no instances of dollar to quarter machine being out of order. (John Jones)

**f) Portland Loo update and what is needed to have a second Portland Loo? (Leona Rollins)**

* No one from the City is here to give an update; it went before City Council and funding was approved for one Portland Loo, which is insufficient but is progress. (Judy Alexandre)
* Approved Portland Loo will be located at what’s referred to as the California Street mini park; city park space outside of the parking garage off of Santa Clara Street. (Kevin Clerici)

 **g) Need for bus passes? How, who? (Judy Alexandre)**

* Ongoing need for bus passes; OneStop passes them out when they have them but they’re expensive and have; we’re looking for a way to get an increase in bus passes; at the last faith subcommittee someone indicated they were going to look into a grant. (Judy Alexandre)

**h) Housing advocacy (Karen Flock and?) What do we need to do**

* Karen not here to give update (Judy Alexandre)

**i) Planning discussion...2-month plan and 6-month plan of action (John Jones)**

* Have been looking into storage for a while; need an update from Leona about whether EJ Harrison is able to provide storage units; need a place to store them and would need staff. Laundry Love is moving forward and is expanding. (John Jones)
* At the last VSSTF meeting we decided to prioritize housing advocacy; increase our working with Homes for All. (Judy Alexandre)
* County had an update on our Homelessness Plan, and the City also had a plan in place with next steps, but would be something that the Subcommittee (Housing and Homelessness Subcommittee) should focus on; being able to take things to Council; it's opportunity for VSSTF to take gaps and needs and look for ways to cover those; In the past, its typically just presentations or updates, not call to actions or requests. There are some providers who participate with VSSTF who can give updates on gaps and needs, like DVP and their outreach, and Mercy House outreach and shelter needs. (Jenn Harkey)
* Rental registry would be great. I call different agencies for updates and openings. More communication from the departments would be great. (Suzanne Trooliness)
* I have a property management background; learning more about what resources we have so that we can partner up with the county; I’m glad I’m involved and glad to be here. (Darlene Santiago)
* We have so many that are in doubled up situations; not really thriving in school when they don’t have a place to do the homework. I’m glad we have roofs over their heads; number of kids in shelters in school is minimal, but they’re overcrowded; families get evicted from the room they’re renting, and they don’t have a lease; don’t have any recourse because they don’t have protections, because they’re being illegally rented to. (Cathi Nye)
* Expand the foul weather shelter; not enough beds in any shelters; from a public perspective, easiest thing to get approved would likely be the RV dump station; people would be more receptive to it. (Javier Villa Solis)
* More shelter beds at all shelters in the county to cut down on shelter wait list (Anna Varela)
* Transportation and storage are most important for people going to jobs and appointments; should be the easiest ones of the whole list; we really want people to be proactive but need tools to be proactive. (Miguel Marquez)
* She will talk to John about what will be most achievable and have success; will come back; meanwhile, tenant protections and fair housing are crucial this month. (Judy Alexandre)
* On the homeless prevention side, Ventura Homeless Prevention Fund has money to help fill the gap if Human Services Agency or United Way is unable to help or if the person doesn’t qualify; would like to have flexibility in fund use. (Jenn Harkey)
* We’ve previously talked about this, we understand there's a need there; we’re doing what we can do; We are not going to look into every possible situation and we’re not looking to expand our scope, but we’re focusing on people who are going to be evicted, not other important things. (Deborah Schreiber)
* If a certain situation keeps someone from paying rent, then help fill that gap; Homeless Prevention Fund comes from the mainly from faith community; can pay up to $1500 for someone that will help them stay housed for up to 6 months; come to fundraiser on March 22nd to hear the stories. (Judy Alexandre)

**VII. Impact of HUD cuts and what it might men for Ventura (Jenn Harkey, Leona Rollins)**

* Things are changing day to day; COC funding, ESG funding, and CDBG funding are secure as of this year because it's been approved by congress; not sure after the year, but we also have state grant funding; encampment resolution funding and HHAP funding; City of Ventura has been approved for Homeless Prevention grant; we have more funding coming in to help with prevention and expansion of PSH units. We're leaning on a lot of state dollars; have not heard of other funding; youth grant is on hold. (Jenn Harkey)
* Are you guys having any issues with verbiage when applying for grants? We're having some inner conflict with words being used, like ‘advocacy, ‘consumer,’; now have to use ‘client.’ Is that an issue with applying for HUD or other funding?
	+ We have not been advised to change wording; with the exception of DEI. (Jenn Harkey)
* Is there anything you can tell us, in general terms, about PIT count? (Judy Alexandre)
	+ We overall had a decrease; COC report for the Board this Friday; report out to COC Board next Wednesday; can report back to VSSTF in April and Board of Supervisors on April 8th. The funds that have been coming in are making an impact (Homelessness Prevention, Home Key/Room Key); A lot of clients have gotten housing from Casa Aliento and Valentine Road; Whole report next month.

**VIII. Vote on use of AI for minutes (John Jones)**

* Kevin hosts and has power over what happens with the recording and transcription; it's not filtered through and reviewed by a bot. Kevin will ensure whoever is taking notes has access and Judy. (John Jones)
* Makes note taking easier. Anybody uncomfortable with that? (Judy Alexandre)
* No objections

**IX. Election of a secretary: (Judy Alexandre)**

* Kappy has offered to be secretary if we implement AI note taking. Motion to elect Kappy as secretary? (Judy Alexandre)
* No objections

**X. Agency reports:**

**a) Mercy House (Anna Varela)**

* Shelter remains at capacity, always in need of Welcome Home Baskets. (Anna Varela)

**b) COC, grants meetings, other (Jenn Harkey)**

* Referrals from Homeless Prevention should go to United Way and Human Services Agency

**c) Cause, housing coalition (Kristian Nunez, Maria Navarro)**

* CAUSE working to keep immigrants housed (Judy Alexandre)

**d) Housing update, Ventura Springs, farmworker, Valentine Road, College Courts, others (Leona Rollins, Housing Authority, others)**

* Valetine Road filled in first 40 units from Project Roomkey or in shelter or in bridge housing from VCBH; second phase starting to match clients through CES; primary focus is those under VCBH Bridge Housing (Jenn Harkey)
* VCBH has leased Vagabond for Bridge Housing Program; 80 rooms will be utilized with 2 for case managers (Jenn Harkey)
* Program that was RAIN Transitional Housing is now RAIN BRIDGE Housing, any homeless families will be screened to see if they match RAIN units (Javier Villa Solis)
* Ventura Homeless Prevention Fund, March 22 fundraiser and online auction starting on the 15th, need donations of gift cards for restaurants and businesses. (Deborah Schreiber)

**e) Housing and Homeless Committee (Leona Rolins)**

* None

**f) Faith subcommittee (John Jones)**

**g) Agency information: we want to hear from you!!!!!!**

**Motion to adjourn until 3:15pm on 4/2/25 via Zoom at 3:15p (Judy Alexandre)**