

**City of Lawrence, Kansas  
COMMUNITY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS  
January 12, 2010 Minutes (Lawrence City Commission Room)**

**Members present:** Jeanette Collier, Hubbard Collinsworth, Wes Dalberg, Katherine Dinsdale, Loring Henderson, Charlotte Knoche, Shirley Martin-Smith, Robert Mosely

**Members absent:** Mike Monroe, Shannon Murphy

**Staff present:** Danelle Dresslar, Margene Swarts

**Public present:** James Chiselom, Brad Cook, Steve Cowan, Hilda Enoch, Saunny Scott, Sara Taliaferro, Joe Coburn, Diane Etzel-Wise

Chair Dinsdale called the meeting to order at 8:35 am.

**ITEM NO. 1 Introductions**

The members of the CCH introduced themselves.

**ITEM NO. 2 Approval of the Agenda and the December 8, 2009 Minutes**

**ACTION TAKEN**

Motion by Collinsworth, seconded by Mosely to approve the Agenda and to approve the December 8, 2009 minutes.

Motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM NO. 3 Receive Report on the Homeless Outreach Team.**

Henderson said that a meeting was held with Bert Nash staff as well as City staff in December, but due to the budgetary changes that have affected Bert Nash there is no report to give on this agenda item as of yet. Henderson and Knoche are waiting to see what changes in the program, if any, are announced. They will be prepared with a report at that time.

Dinsdale asked to move to Agenda Item No. 5 prior to public comment.

**ITEM NO. 5 Miscellaneous/Calendar**

Dinsdale said that she was struck by the importance of the upcoming Shelter SUP and feels that the neighborhood meetings are very crucial to this issue. As the first element of the Housing Vision is so important, Dinsdale said she finds it difficult to address much else at this time besides the shelter relocation. Dinsdale said that the CCH must come together as a unified body to support this relocation. There needs to be support shown in the public eye as well as support to the governing bodies. Dinsdale asked if the CCH will give her permission to speak on behalf of the Commission's support for the shelter relocation proposal. Dinsdale said that she also thinks that the CCH should consider the agendas for future meetings and asked that there be formal updates given on the HPRP money and programs, Family Promise, and other agencies that are working towards the Housing Vision. She reiterated that the CCH does have a great responsibility first and foremost to support LCS and their relocation.

Martin-Smith said that she believed that Dinsdale speaking on behalf of the CCH in support of the shelter relocation was appropriate. She said that one of the things that she observed at the neighborhood meeting was that it is clear the community does not understand that the real work of the CCH and service providers has distilled down to the Housing Vision. Any time that a member of the CCH has the opportunity to speak about the Housing Vision it should be done. She said that every meeting has new attendees and the Housing Vision cannot be explained too much, and people that do not know about it do not know how crucial the emergency shelter component is to the Vision as a whole. It needs to be addressed every time and the CCH needs to take all opportunities they can to educate the public.

Dinsdale seconded the importance of LCS as the first element of the Housing Vision.

Martin-Smith said that most people at the last neighborhood meeting regarding the shelter relocation were not familiar with the Housing Vision. The Housing Vision is a comprehensive approach that includes much more than the emergency shelter. Martin-Smith said that she was pleased when Scott McCullough, Director of Planning and Development Services, spoke to the neighbors about the Housing Vision and the shelter's place in that plan. This is the main charge of the CCH and Martin-Smith said she agreed that the Commission should be keeping up with what other agencies and providers are doing in terms of the Housing Vision.

Knoche said that it would help if there was a regular report on each piece of the Housing Vision so everyone has it in their mind at all times as it is an overall process. All the pieces of the Housing Vision need to come into play to make it succeed. Things are going on, work is being done, and people are being housed. This information needs to be available for the community to see.

Swarts said that the reports would be something that would be included on future agendas.

Martin-Smith said that she was working on re-wording the Housing Vision so it would be in an easier format for the public to relate to.

Knoche said that the LDCHA now has seven agencies that have signed service agreements to case manage clients in their Transitional Housing program. Knoche reported that currently LDCHA has 51 people under lease in the Transitional Housing program. LDCHA also received permission from the City to move some funding around for a set-aside for the E-Housing program. Knoche said that starting in January LDCHA can begin to use the State HOME funds that they receive through Bert Nash.

Dinsdale asked Knoche how much funding they received for the Bert Nash program.

Knoche said that the LDCHA received \$100,000 this year. They have been working in a partnership and administering this program since the early 1990's.

Steve Cowan, LDCHA, reported on the HPRP program and said that they are working with a maximum of 10 clients per month on rapid re-housing. They take the applications, and as soon as they have reached 10 eligible clients then the list is shut down until the next month. He said

that the program is working for those who are eligible, and by limiting the recipients each month the case load is manageable.

Swarts added that LDCHA has structured the program this way so there is not a waiting list for the services. People who need these services do not have the luxury of being on a wait list. There is a point where LDCHA cannot take any more applications in a month. Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing is a very short window of time to assist someone, and it is to be utilized for housing stabilization, so some of the clients have been able to jump to the Transitional Housing program. Transitional Housing will get them in and stabilized for a longer term. After that then they can move into the Section 8 program.

Cowan said that as time allows they are meeting with service providers and are focusing on referrals and redirecting services for those who are not eligible for HPRP or have not met the application deadline. They are working hard to use a wrap-around continuum of services.

Swarts said that this was the idea of the Housing Vision. A person starts with emergency shelter or emergency housing, then moves to transitional housing and then to permanent housing. This all fits into the "Step Up To Better Housing" strategy as well as getting the individual or family off the street and into housing.

Dinsdale asked if this was a sustainable program.

Swarts said in the case of the HPRP award, it is a finite amount of money. There is a possibility that there may be more depending on other grantees and their ability to spend the funding that they received. The State was awarded a finite amount of money from HUD and they allocated the funding across the state on a competitive grant award basis. The City and LDCHA are putting themselves in a place where they can be ready to accept more funding if more funding becomes available, all while spending the HPRP funding as indicated in the application.

Collier reported on the ARRA funding that ECKAN received and said that upon reviewing the applications that they have received thus far 99% of the aid went to preventing evictions. They spent their allotment of funding in two months. ECKAN was able to redirect some of the stimulus funding. Collier reported that she has seen things slow down a bit, and they opened 225 cases. The focus was originally for re-employment, however maintaining housing in the Lawrence community was what they determined to be most important.

Collinsworth asked how long the HPRP award of \$648,000 would last.

Swarts said that the plan is that the funding will run out before the end date of the grant award. LDCHA is working to not have any idle time, and at the same time not overload with an abundance of cases since the case management component is very intensive. The program was proposed with a very workable case load and in a very manageable format.

Knoche added that the funding should last about 24 months. They are helping the maximum they can every month, and they have based those maximums on the funding that everyone can have. The goal is to spend the maximum amount of funding on the maximum amount of people they can.

Collinsworth said that there needed to be a plan in place to explore additional funding options so that this program can continue assisting people after the HPRP grant is expended.

Swarts said that was a very good point. She said that right now there are not a lot of funding resources. It is something that should be looked at in the future as the economy recovers and more funding sources begin to surface. The HPRP program plan was effective because E-Housing was already in place. E-Housing has changed along the way as well, and in its current form it was a perfect fit for the HPRP program.

Martin-Smith asked what constitutes success with the HPRP program.

Swarts said that stabilization was the key with getting people housed and keeping them housed. It is not hard to house a person or a family. The difficulty is in providing services and support to them to keep them in housing. Every agency that assists people with housing runs into this same dilemma. Different individuals and families need different levels of service and assistance. Some folks just hit a bad patch. They hit the bad patch, receive assistance, then they are stabilized. Some hit the bad patch, and subsequently get caught up in the bad patch. The longer someone is not housed the harder it is to keep them housed when they do obtain housing. Swarts said that if they are able to remain housed then that is a success. She added that she believed that if the community has programs to help these people obtain housing and remain housed, the homeless population will decrease.

Martin-Smith said that she agreed with Swarts in that if individuals and families are able to obtain housing and remain housed that the population of homeless in the community will decrease. She said that each family has unique needs and they will need to receive wrap-around services to be fully functional in the community. The end result is the same in all the service models. The stream of people may never end if the community is not able to come up with a successful model when there is the benefit of funding the program. The community can have a story of success in showing what we were able to accomplish with this program. That is the real goal of the broader vision.

Knoche said that if the basis is the Housing Vision then that is the approach that we will need to take. The simple answer to homelessness is permanent housing. There are different programs and agencies that fill the gap between permanent housing and homelessness. The longer a person is homeless the harder it is to get them housed.

Dinsdale said that before the Housing Vision the community did not know how they were going to accomplish this. The numbers at the emergency shelter are slightly down from the past. She said that it is hard to know why that is, but it may be a reflection of the community's efforts with regard to the Housing Vision. She added that Family Promise has housed seven families including 45 people. Family Promise also has additional case management now.

Collinsworth asked if these service providers and agencies had written reports that they could submit to the CCH.

Swarts said that there are no reporting requirements from most of the agencies. There are reporting requirements for HPRP that staff can supply. She said that it may be a good idea to have these agencies come to the CCH meeting and report in person.

Sara Taliaferro, CCC, said that the CCC has two main goals for 2010, and one of those goals is to move forward on the committee's website and create a complete picture of who is doing what in the community and show how the agencies interact with each other. The CCC can update this quarterly. The CCC will be participating in a "matchmaker" program. They will match CCC members with professors and their classes through the KU Center for Service Learning. These classes will work to interview and compile information for the website, as well as designing the website. Taliaferro said that one of the things that she hears in the community is that no one has a clear understanding of how the agencies interact with one another.

Dinsdale said that this will also help the CCH to be equipped with bullet points. The website and reports will be a condensed and positive statement on how the Housing Vision is already working. It is very hard to condense all this information and make sure that the CCH is speaking correctly towards the accomplishments of the Housing Vision.

Martin-Smith said that it was important to identify the talking points as different programs are working towards different components of the Housing Vision.

Taliaferro said that the CCC could generate a quarterly report that they can present to the CCH based on the website information.

Dinsdale said that would be extremely helpful.

Taliaferro said that the CCC will request the assistance of a few CCH members to help with the planning stages.

Henderson commented on the flyer that he handed out to the CCH members and public present at the meeting. He said that there was a public meeting that will be held on Thursday, January 14 for the residential neighbors of the proposed shelter location. Henderson said that LCS wants to set up a conversation between the residential neighbors and LCS with the CCC facilitating. LCS wants the neighbors to be able to talk to the shelter staff and board about questions and concerns that they have. They have had difficulty contacting the residential neighbors so they decided to plan a meeting to see if they will come. There was one person who was the leader of the neighborhood group that was against the shelter relocation, and numerous attempts have been made to contact her, however she is yet to show any interest in talking or respond to any of the attempts to contact her. Henderson said that LCS staff and board members have met with the business neighbors and a number of changes were made to the Management Plan based on those meetings. The Planning Commission hearing is two weeks away, and LCS is very interested in meeting with the neighbors before that hearing.

Taliaferro said that this is one in a series of meetings that will be held. She said that the CCC has done an imperfect job of contacting people and meeting with them. They have been trying to work with flexible meeting dates, and the weather further complicated contacting neighbors door to door. The CCC and LCS realize that this meeting is a starting point and there will be another meeting to follow up in a month. The facilitation team will work to contact the neighbors that do not attend the meeting this Thursday and will be able to outline for them what was discussed at the first meeting. Taliaferro said that there are a number of ways that

the neighbors will be able to participate in the discussions. The meeting itself will be very structured and there will be ground rules explained in the beginning. The neighbors will be able to list their concerns and prioritize them. The first discussion will be the first five concerns and the subsequent meetings will cover the rest of the concerns and suggestions.

Dinsdale asked if this meeting has been publicized in the newspaper.

Taliaferro said that they have distributed flyers and are contacting neighbors, as well as relying on word of mouth.

Dinsdale asked if the CCC stretched out the 500 feet to neighbors of the proposed location.

Taliaferro said that they are using this first meeting as a starting point and moving forward the process will be able to be improved.

Martin-Smith commented that word of mouth has a tendency to spread very rapidly.

Taliaferro said the important thing that the CCC is trying to accomplish is to have a conversation with the neighbors in a fashion that is productive. Trying to get neighbors to digest a list of 30 concerns is not an easy task and a conversation is necessary to approach these issues. Taliaferro said that this is an ongoing process as the neighbors already feel as if they are being pushed on this issue. It is not realistic to think that one meeting can occur and everyone's concerns and issues are solved in two hours. This is a mobile process, so if the proposed location changes this process remains ongoing. It should be able to move across neighborhoods.

Dinsdale thanked Taliaferro on behalf of the CCH for the hard work she is doing.

Taliaferro said that this was a human process and the CCC is open to having people help and correct them as they go.

Henderson said that as of right now LCS does not have a contract on the Don's Steakhouse building. The business neighbors have tried to be constructive in their talks, including making suggestions of alternate locations on City-owned property. There are a mix of things that are currently happening. Although there is no contract currently, Don's is still on the list of possible relocation sites. The neighborhood meeting is important because that site is still being considered, but the neighborhood concerns can be helpful to address in any neighborhood in the city.

Collinsworth asked if it would be wise for the CCH to give updates to the newspaper about forthcoming agenda events to involve more public in the meetings.

Swarts said that the local media is included on the CCH list serve. When the commission members receive the agenda and minutes, the media is receiving the information as well. What the CCH chooses to do in regards to contacting the media is their decision, but the media is already receiving the meeting information.

Dinsdale said that she felt the appropriate time to notify the media will be when the Housing Vision is updated. It would be a good pairing with the Housing Vision, bullet points, and how HPRP funding is affecting the Housing Vision. Any time the media is contacted by the CCH they are willing to cover the information. She agreed that the Housing Vision should be kept in front of the media.

#### **ITEM NO. 4 Public Comment**

Diane Etzel-Wise, Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition, informed the CCH that the application for funding for the Balance of State Continuum of Care was not submitted in a timely manner and there were no new projects that were funded this year. HUD agreed to fund renewals, but no new projects were funded. The Coalition is in the process of appealing this decision to HUD, but at this point there is no indication that the decision will be overturned.

Dinsdale asked what projects were included in the new project applications.

Etzel-Wise said that Mental Health America in partnership with LCS had an application for permanent supportive housing and the other was The Salvation Army for transitional housing. The problem with the submission of the application was the application was not accepted in the electronic form, and time ran out and the errors could not be corrected in time to meet the deadline.

Collinsworth asked what the next deadline was.

Swarts explained that yearly HUD sends out a SuperNOFA. The date changes every year. The date depends on the workload in Washington among other factors. It is not like CDBG or HOME where we know the deadline and they do not change over the course of the years. This is not entitlement funding, and the rules and process for the grant submission can change. The Exhibit One that has to be submitted every year can change from year to year. When Lawrence had their own Continuum of Care (CoC) staff had to be very careful about every piece and part of the application. That application was local only. This application that missed the submission deadline was the entire state, with the exception of Topeka, Wichita, Johnson County, and Wyandotte County.

Etzel-Wise added that it is a competitive grant process and no funding is guaranteed every year. The entire process is electronic.

Swarts said that the final year of Lawrence's CoC, it was still a paper submittal. Any time something is moved to an electronic submittal there can be issues. The first year HUD did not anticipate that everyone would wait until the last minute to submit their applications and the server crashed. That has been fixed, but there are still glitches to the system that exist that can be very problematic.

Collinsworth asked how much time is allotted to put the application together.

Swarts said that it is not a large window of time. The SuperNOFA is released and there are generally 120 days to put the application together and submit it. When Lawrence had their CoC, the Practitioner's Panel worked together to put together Exhibit One. With schedules and

other commitments, this group was difficult to get together to meet. With the Balance of State CoC, this gathering of information would be elevated statewide to rural communities, urban rural communities, and urban communities. It is difficult to coordinate locally, and it is difficult to coordinate on a state level. The way to ensure that the application is submitted in a timely manner is to know that things are coming up, plan for what you can plan for, and try to stay on top of the process on a yearly basis. This year added the element of ARRA and HERA funding into the mix as well.

Taliaferro mentioned that she is still in the process of putting together the CCC's annual report. She said that she had previously mentioned that the CCC had two goals for 2010. The first goal was the website that she referred to earlier, and the second is putting together a series of community meetings on homelessness. The model that they are looking at was used in Denver in 2003. The CCC is in the process of putting this together. Taliaferro said that there is a series of four meetings with different relevant topics in the community. There are facilitated meetings, and everyone is invited to participate. There are reading assignments and homework for the participants, as well as an exercise in determining family expenses for a family of four with one breadwinner. Participants fill out the information as they see it, then the actual data is given to them. In Denver in 2003 the salary that had to be maintained to rent a modest apartment for a family of four was \$43,000 per year. Each session has discussion points and there are reports generated from each meeting. The meetings cover anything that touches homelessness, such as panhandling.

Dinsdale said that the InterFaith Initiative has some similar information that is covered in their community meetings and that may be a good partnership for this project for the CCC. She said that Family Promise also had a nationwide curriculum called Just Neighbors that may be a good model as well.

Taliaferro said that the Denver program was built on partnerships between coalitions and neighborhoods sponsoring the meetings as well. The idea is to have actions come out of the meetings.

Enoch said that the InterFaith Initiative has had a series of community meetings on homelessness and mental illness. Enoch suggested that Talliaferro partner with other groups and not have the CCC do this on their own. She said that the entire community should be involved.

There was no additional public comment.

#### **ITEM NO. 6 Adjourn.**

#### **ACTION TAKEN**

Motion by Martin-Smith, seconded by Collinsworth to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Attendance Record**

Members	01/ 10	02/ 10	03/ 10	04/ 10	05/ 10	06/ 10	07/ 10	08/ 10	09/ 10	10/ 10	11/ 10	12/ 10
Jeanette Collier	+											
Hubbard Collinsworth	+											
Wes Dalberg	+											
Katherine Dinsdale	+											
Loring Henderson	+											
Charlotte Knoche	+											
Shirley Martin-Smith	+											
Mike Monroe												
Robert Mosely	+											
Shannon Murphy	E											

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