

**City of Lawrence, KS
Community Commission on Homelessness
February 12, 2008 Minutes (City Commission Room, City Hall)**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeanette Collier, Hubbard Collinsworth, Wes Dalberg, Katherine Dinsdale, Jane Faubion, Loring Henderson, Charlotte Knoche, Shirley Martin-Smith, Mike Monroe

MEMBERS ABSENT: Phil Hemphill, Robert Mosely

STAFF PRESENT: Lesley Rigney and Margene Swarts

PUBLIC PRESENT: Jeanette Parker, Saunny Scott

Martin-Smith called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Approval of the January 8, 2008 Minutes

Knoche **moved to approve the January 8, 2008 minutes.** Dinsdale **seconded the motion, which passed.**

CCC Annual Report

Taliaferro said the group has been working with professional mediators/mentors to learn how to facilitate town meetings and good neighbor agreements. One thing that came out of the LCS/DLI/ONA Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) process with the CCC is that LCS ended up handing out shelter contact cards. The CCC had follow-up meetings with the homeless outreach team and subsequent to the GNA the outreach team divided up the downtown Lawrence area and each one took responsibility for contacting specific businesses to touch base with. It is a wonderful effort for many reasons but especially because businesses can contact outreach workers first, instead of the police. One of the conversations was that LCS taking this responsibility was inappropriate because people causing trouble downtown may not be associated with the shelter at all. The outreach team stepping up has made that a moot point.

She stated that the CCC has several goals for 2008. This weekend there is a two-day mediation training. The committee also plans to launch the website and add a FAQ page. She referenced an article related to the criminalization of homelessness and said the committee wants to add a section with some of the relevant stats such as one night in jail costs 2-3 times what a night in a shelter costs. They will be hosting three town meetings in partnership with the Coalition on Homeless Concerns (CHC).

Martin-Smith thanked Taliaferro for the CCC minutes and said the CCH will receive those.

Taliaferro said there are a couple more documents – an agenda for the year and subcommittee products - the committee hopes to have by the end of 2008. (See Attachment 1 following minutes).

Collier asked about #3.

Taliaferro said there is always a little bit of preparation that goes into applying for a grant. A couple different surveys will be sent out by the CCC – outreach workers will follow up with businesses and see how that relationship is working. The committee also wants to send out a “how can we serve you” survey and try to come up with a statement of values when serving homeless.

Martin-Smith asked who surveys will go to.

Taliaferro said the main one will go to downtown businesses. They also want some baseline information and so the second one will be to CHC, to Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods and to individual neighborhood associations.

Dinsdale said this represents a lot of substantive work.

Taliaferro said it is tricky, because what the CCC is trying to do is change the conversations that surround homelessness. The committee wants to bring more information. There is some feeling that a group like this would be some kind of solver-of-problems. It is more effective, though, if the community gets to determine solutions to problems so the CCC tries to offer a guided conversation.

Henderson said when the CCC has the meeting with outreach workers to talk about the survey the shelter should be involved because the shelter is held accountable in the public eye. It should all be done together.

Taliaferro said there are two different items on the list and the CCC met with the outreach team and LCS and wants to do follow-up with everyone who has been involved in outreach efforts. The CCC wants to suspend their efforts with LCS and DLI. At one point the CCC was asked to step in. In the future they want groups to come to the CCC and ask them to become involved. Experience with the DLI/LCS efforts gave them a lot of areas for improvement.

Henderson said he is open to whatever works for the CCC and the community but it seems that it was designed to do what it started to do with LCS/DLI.

Taliaferro said that was true, but neither group asked them to do it.

Henderson said it was a good faith effort on everyone's part and it would be fine with him if it continued and if not they will still have to find a way to converse.

Taliaferro said it can be discussed further.

Knoche asked what was going on with that process.

Henderson said there have been some changes with DLI. There is some low-level, ongoing, communication.

Taliaferro likes that the outreach team is doing direct intervention because she would like for it to not look like the shelter is all responsible for what goes on downtown. Henderson handed out contact cards to businesses and no one ever actually called him.

Henderson said the outreach workers are not really separate from agencies. It needs to be seen as integrated.

There was a brief discussion about shelter perceptions downtown.

Dinsdale said #1 will go a long way in the public's eye.

Taliaferro said when there was a TF there was a retreat with law enforcement, mental health, housing folks in the room together and several situations were posed and all of those people weighed in on those situations. The CCC is going to do that again – the CCH is welcomed to be involved but they want to collect a body of information to go on the website. They want to have another conversation – other than what the shelter or the police should be doing to take care of this. The CCC wants to talk about effective things communities can do to address these issues.

Outreach Effort

Martin-Smith said that it makes the most sense to her to wait to do outreach to civic groups until the vision is complete. Now, she is continuing to meet and talk with groups informally as requested and that would still be appropriate. The mass mailing will be pushed back a month or so. The same is true with the Study Session the group wanted to have with agencies and CCH. It may be that the vision and recommendations will not go to the CC in April – it could be May before it gets there. The CC needs to have specific suggestions about how to help and if there is money needed we need to tell them. She needs to sit down with staff and identify any loose ends. Today is the day they had hoped to hear proposals from agencies but nothing has been received. So the group needs to move on, clarify to the community what is going on and people may still come forward.

Collinsworth said one of the reasons, besides a communication gap, is that they may not know about us, and they may think we are not going to be effective, although we are becoming more and more effective. The CCH just has to keep moving forward and keep letting the community know what we are trying to do.

Collier said one option for transitional housing for victims of domestic violence that we hoped would be available will not be. A group of agency personnel met last week and discovered that this year the Department of Justice is not accepting any new proposals but the group will continue to meet throughout the next year to make an application for 2010.

Martin-Smith asked if others will step forward and tell us what they are working on. The challenge is finding out everything that is going on. It is her hope that people will share

their ideas, hopes, and plans. The CCH needs to hear what those are. Her sense is that the clarity of the homeless vision will help agencies.

Dinsdale said Homemakers has established an advisory board that is operating under the auspices of the LCS. They are developing a template for PSH that others can use.

Dinsdale said Dalberg has stated that Salvation Army (SA) is getting out of the emergency shelter business and moving toward transitional housing. Are they ready to make a more detailed proposal about where they fit in to this vision?

Dalberg said SA will be doing TH, PSH or both. They are in the process of making some long-range projections but there is no long-range plan in place.

Martin-Smith asked if they could give a general idea of where they are going by spring.

Dinsdale said it is just a formal description of their intent that would be very helpful to the CCH.

Martin-Smith said the community is hopeful about what SA will offer to the vision.

Dinsdale said to have the vision and to have personalities associated with each category shows the public that we are making progress. It would strengthen the SA's position in the community.

Dalberg said when they have something concrete determined, he will present it to the CCH. Right now he can say TH and PSH are where SA is heading. There are no more details than that. They should have something more definitive sometime during the spring.

Knoche said the larger the agency, the longer the process. LDCHA cannot plan for or apply for anything without board approval.

Collinsworth asked if the CCH could ask what kind of time frame they can expect from agencies – the earliest.

Swarts said Dalberg stated that he would have more information in the spring so perhaps at that time there will be a time frame available. For LCS, we have an idea with the SUP process of a rough time frame. The CCH can ask for time frames and hopefully by the time the group is ready to present to the CC there will be some more parts filled in. She said that regarding Collier's information – that is important to tell the CC. We have also thrown in with the Balance of State Continuum of Care, which will hopefully create additional opportunities – that can be shared. It is always tentative, but when you are able to talk about a finite thing you are working on as opposed to more general statements, it is more meaningful. As the community becomes more familiar with the vision, more and more people will say that they are thinking about or already doing a piece of it.

Knoche said could see that happening at the study session with agencies as long as all agencies are present.

Martin-Smith said she wants to have it as soon as possible but she wants it to make sense.

Knoche asked if it would make sense after today since the PSH piece is in place. Other than the housing connector the vision is really complete. It would be fine to go ahead with the meeting with agencies so that information can be included in the letter to civic leaders and can be sent out right before the CCH goes in front of the CC.

Collinsworth said it should be a media release that lists agencies associated with the vision and lists their timelines.

Knoche said by the time the vision is brought to the CC the community agencies need to have bought in to this.

Dinsdale said it will be nice to say to Commissioners that the community has the capacity to do this.

PSH Work Group Proposal

Dinsdale said the group kept the same format and made some content changes under target populations and programmatic components. She thinks it is ready to be approved.

Martin-Smith said to take a minute to look it over.

Henderson **moved to adopt the PSH proposal**. Collinsworth **seconded the motion**.

Dinsdale said Kent Hayes made the comment to her that this is the most important project in our community. It is a big deal to go forward with this.

Collier asked if this fits within Dalberg's idea of PSH.

Dalberg said nothing in the description is a surprise.

Martin-Smith said it is meant to be very broad to allow many different possibilities.

Knoche said it needs to allow for many different configurations – this would allow for Shelter Plus Care (S+C), a boarding house, etc.

Collier said the one agency she can think about that hasn't been approached is SRS. The person who oversees the people aging out of foster care should be contacted. There are funds available for housing this population and we need to have this discussion. The CCH needs to reach out to SRS.

Dinsdale said it is important but the PSH proposal is on the table.

The motion passed.

Housing Connector Update

Martin-Smith said even though there is not a formal proposal on the table, LDCHA has put a lot of thought into this. Barbara Huppee hosted a meeting during the last month and went over expectations and possible accomplishments. It went very well but one of the missing pieces was case manager responsibilities with regard to the connector. The proposal that the LDCHA took to the board is on the web.

Knoche said it was brought to the board in January and the Board asked staff to do some more work and bring it back. The Board is concerned with liability issues.

Martin-Smith said Eunice Rutinger has called, in response to the LDCHA meeting, a meeting to develop a case management model and a formal communication method.

Dinsdale said the questions LDCHA is trying to answer for the connector are the same questions Homemakers is trying to address for PSH. Lines of communication need to stay open.

Knoche said she could see someone come through ETH to get to PSH.

Dinsdale said she was so excited to hear about a potential bank of resources people could use if they are willing to extend themselves.

Martin-Smith said it was a very productive meeting and it is a work in process that is beginning to look like a real possibility.

Other Business

Henderson met with Michael Stoops, with the National Coalition on Homeless Concerns, and he found out that they are working on getting with HUD and some members of congress to broaden the definition of homeless. He asked if members could get copies of the outreach report that was on the CC agenda.

Swarts will forward the reports.

Henderson asked if the survey results are compiled.

Staff is working on it.

Collinsworth asked about HMIS.

Swarts said we are not getting good information from HMIS. People are entering data but we are not getting good reports. She will need to meet with MAAC to find out what we need to do to pull meaningful reports.

There was a discussion around HMIS effectiveness and problems with getting the data out.

Collinsworth asked if a member of this group needs to be designated to work with staff on HMIS.

Martin-Smith will work with staff on this.

Collinsworth said the CCH needs to meet with LPD and the jail regarding the reentry program. He is also concerned with escalating violence within shelters and on the streets. How can this body address this particular issue?

Martin-Smith said this is a CC issue with LPD and the community in general. She is assuming that elected officials are working with the city manager and police chief to address that.

Collinsworth asked how the banning and suspension policy will play out with the emergency shelter – how will the CCH handle these issues? At what point do we have to remove an individual from the shelter?

Martin-Smith said only agencies who are providing the service can remove an individual from a program. The CCH will only concern itself with end results.

Collinsworth said this is where he has some confusion with the many “hats” he wears. He thanked Martin-Smith for making it clear.

Martin-Smith asked for public comment. There was none.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.