

**City of Lawrence, KS
Community Commission on Homelessness
March 11, 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: Hilda Enoch, Saunny Scott, Shannon Murphy

Martin-Smith called the meeting to order at 9:08 am.

Approval of the February 12, 2008 Minutes

Monroe noted he was present at the February meeting. Knoche **moved to approve the February 12, 2008 minutes** with that correction. Dinsdale **seconded the motion, which passed.**

Outreach Effort Update

Henderson stated he has been talking to groups and handing out the single Housing Vision Chart. He has been and will continue to speak with neighborhood groups about the vision and about LCS' efforts to relocate the shelter.

Dinsdale talked to Pinckney Neighborhood Association about the Homemaker's Project at 500 Missouri. There was a lot of misunderstanding at first but the discussion seemed to allay fears.

Collier said she and Katherine met with Joe Reitz of Family Promise and as of now it looks like eight churches are participating. They urged him to get started with Emergency Temporary Housing (ETH) for families.

Martin-Smith said she met with the 20th Century Club and they were very interested and want to be notified before the CCH presentation to the City Commission (CC). They are happy that the entire homeless population is being addressed.

Housing Connector Proposal

Martin-Smith recognized that many members have been meeting around this idea and she commended Barbara Huppee with LDCHA for taking this on. Members have copies of the proposal. She was invited to attend the last LDCHA board meeting. There are several issues that need to be worked through, but the proposal was supported by the majority of board members. As a result of this proposal coming out there have been

meetings of case managers around the community. Knoche and Eunice Ruttinger (Bert Nash) have been convening meetings.

Knoche asked if everyone has had a chance to read the proposal. As LDCHA envisions it the connector will be a database of housing inventory that will be able to be accessed by case managers whose clients are homeless or doubled up.

Collier said it still says the case manager is responsible for creating the lease agreement with the client. This creates liability for agencies and case managers.

Knoche said this is a different type of case management. If we are asking property owners to donate units, there has to be a different level of commitment here. The case manager could be a party to the lease or not. It probably is not a good idea for the agency to assume responsibility. The bottom line is that there really is not money to pay for damages. What the proposal means is that the agency is the one that helps the tenant to make an agreement with the landlord. LDCHA can provide sample leases and other technical documents.

Collier said at the last case management meeting she does not recall any case managers being comfortable with this.

Knoche said the case management component is what is going to make this work. LDCHA will be a resource and that is what they are authorized by their board to provide. There is a lot of work to be done on the service piece, and if that doesn't happen, neither will this version of ETH.

Martin-Smith said the CCH is not assuming that every case manager in the city will support this. We are looking for a few to participate in a beginning pilot project. If some early successes can happen it will help the program.

Henderson said this is a little different than a pilot project. We do want everyone to participate from the start. The concept is a good one and we want it to work. He feels comfortable if it is not a sponsored lease. Really what the case manager is doing is following the person. If we are going to put people in temporary housing, case managers are going to have to follow clients. Another issue is the transfer of clients once housing is procured.

Martin-Smith clarified that there is a meeting to discuss these details at 11:00 today.

Enoch asked who is paying for the connector coordinator.

Knoche said it is yet to be determined.

Enoch asked what cash donations would be earmarked for and she has a comment with regard to the worry about the responsibility of case managers in this proposal. Joe Reitz wants to support homeless families – maybe one person from the church could be an assistant to help case managers manage their load.

Knoche said some people might want to donate money to pay for a unit or to pay utilities – that would be the purpose of the cash. The connector would honor the intent of the donor.

Dinsdale emphasized the importance of including Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) in the connector as far as housing unit donations and cash donations.

Martin-Smith said if someone calls with a house they want to donate for PSH, LDCHA will add it to the list.

Knoche said their current proposal is not precluding this. She handed out copies of draft intake applications. If a property is donated and it would be appropriate for PSH it can be added to the inventory.

Henderson asked if this is on the agenda for us to accept.

Martin-Smith said yes and then work can continue.

Henderson said it is a good proposal and he is glad LDCHA is taking it on. It is a lot of work. The section on criminal background checks has the potential to exclude most shelter clients. He suspects that has to be there for the comfort of landlords, but the CCH has put into the vision possibly 100 beds for this category and he wonders if the numbers are there if shelter clients are excluded.

Martin-Smith said Henderson is assuming that there is some automatic exclusion and that is not the case.

Knoche said in situations where a landlord has said they are concerned with a specific issue – like if someone wants to make sure someone with a violent criminal background is not in the unit over their garage, a background check could be requested.

Collier said before they met with Joe Reitz last week she did some number crunching. Over the last six months they have served more than 50 families with more than 100 children – the numbers are there for families.

Scott said she is happy to see they are considering backgrounds of property owners as well.

Dinsdale said what about people who are donating a property for two years and at the end of two years there is nothing available.

Knoche said if you know it is a 24 month contract, there is time to plan ahead.

Martin-Smith said we have a responsibility to keep the story in the forefront of the community's thinking over time.

Knoche said they see the service piece as different in this model. It is not services to get them into housing; it is to provide services in the temporary unit to work with them

while they are trying to get into permanent housing. It is not just getting them into the ETH – it is to get them through ETH and into stability.

Henderson **moved to accept the Housing Connector Proposal.** Collier **seconded the motion.**

Enoch said it is an excellent proposal. It gets the ball rolling – she understands the timeframe but it would be great to go back to the LDCHA board and ask to have PSH added to the proposal. It would tie in well with many of the needs of the homeless. Also, with regard to Henderson’s comment concerning the number of people with criminal records at the shelter. It is one of the most difficult populations to place and while LDCHA will not serve them under current programs this can provide an opportunity for others to serve them because some of them are working very hard for a second chance. This can be an opportunity to include them as well.

Collier clarified that Dinsdale is talking about an entirely different model of housing – PSH. The connector is for ETH.

Dinsdale said that there are overlapping resources that can be valuable if PSH is added to the potential beneficiary of the connector.

Martin-Smith said at some point in the future we can address this. It is clearly in the minutes and clearly in the intent of this commission to include PSH in all outreach and support. They cannot get hung up on this at the current stage.

The motion passed.

Martin-Smith said with regard to movement to ask LDCHA to do something at this moment with PSH, we have more work to do to respond to their legal concerns so she wants to wait with that.

Spring Timeline

Martin-Smith drew attention to the timeline for spring. Staff met with several members to discuss the proposal and to address some of the legal issues. She is requesting a Study Session date with the City Commission during the week of April 28.

Swarts said the CCH should meet in April to fine tune the details of the presentation to the CC. The CCH will obviously provide an update to the CC on the vision now that it is complete. Another reason they wanted to meet with the CC was to speak with them about the budget. The CCH can authorize Shirley to talk about this. They can recommend continued funding for outreach workers and because they are all in support of the connector, they may want to recommend to the CC to fund the connector. That is really the only money that they are talking about. They can also try to communicate the importance of CC support for a shelter location, especially regarding periodic UPR renewals. The other thing to consider is the 3-unrelated ordinance and how it might influence ETH.

Dinsdale said this ordinance seriously curtailed their project at 500 Missouri as they had hoped to have two graduate students share a downstairs bedroom to help with the two mentally ill clients. Due to this ordinance, they will not have the on-site caretaking staff they had hoped for.

Martin-Smith said the point is to try to remove some barriers that won't cost a lot of money.

Collier asked about anything from Salvation Army's perspective they would like to have included.

Dalberg said they have kicked around the idea of a group home. They would like to have the ability to house multiple unrelated individuals in one home.

Scott said to consider the buses now cost twice as much and the funding was never increased from the original amount.

Martin-Smith said she has not met with Swarts about HMIS yet.

Swarts gave an update about the status of HMIS and the recent meeting with MAAC.

Shannon Murphy with the new Douglas County Re-entry Program introduced herself and talked about the steps they are taking to get the program off the ground. They have a wide variety of people participating – long-timers they can do long-term plans with, while others that are only there for a few days it is more crisis avoidance. She is glad to be coming to these meetings and learning about all that is going on.

Martin-Smith said this Committee has had a very strong interest in the re-entry program. The Sheriff is really supportive of what the CCH is doing and she hopes to hear feedback from Murphy on what they are doing.

Other Business

Henderson provided an update on the status of the LCS move. They are looking at a building in East Lawrence and he is in the process of talking to neighborhoods and others. They are considering several different places. After the recent SUP process, the LCS board organized and hired a buyer's agent, a fundraising consultant, an attorney and so forth. The building they are looking at is industrial and the zoning does not allow for any transient housing. The shelter asked that the code be amended to allow this use in all industrial areas and then subsequently had the item removed from the agenda in order to speak with more people. One meeting is usually just the beginning of a discussion. He does not know when it will go back on the agenda. They cannot even start fundraising unless the use is allowed.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.