

**City of Lawrence, Kansas
COMMUNITY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS
May 11, 2010 Minutes (Lawrence City Commission Room)**

Members present: Hubbard Collinsworth, Wes Dalberg, Katherine Dinsdale, Shirley Martin-Smith, Mike Monroe, Robert Mosely, Shannon Murphy

Members absent: Jeanette Collier, Loring Henderson, Charlotte Knoche

Staff present: Danelle Dresslar, Margene Swarts

Public present: Steve Cowan, Saunny Scott, Brad Cook, David Tucker,

Chair Dinsdale called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

ITEM NO. 1 Introductions

The members of the CCH introduced themselves.

ITEM NO. 2 Approval of the Agenda and the April 13, 2010 Minutes.

ACTION TAKEN

Motion by Martin-Smith to approve the Agenda and the April 11, 2010 meeting minutes of the CCH. Seconded by Murphy.

Motion passed unanimously.

ITEM NO. 3 Discuss Retreat with the CDAC – June 8, 2010 (CCH Meeting 8:30 – 9:30, Retreat 10:00am – 1:00pm).

Swarts said that the June 8 meeting of the CCH would be an abbreviated meeting that would run from 8:30 am to 9:30 am. Directly after the CCH meeting, the group will convene in the Development Services conference room to hold a retreat with the CDAC. Staff will provide lunch, and the retreat will run from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. The purpose of the retreat is to discuss the *Step Up to Better Housing* strategy, which is the guidance that the CDAC utilizes in determining their funding decisions for the CDBG and HOME grant. The *Step Up to Better Housing* strategy has been revisited during each grant year and both the CDAC and the City Commission have opted to continue to use it as the guidance for funding considerations. The *Step Up to Better Housing* strategy was established in 1997. The strategy looks at emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent housing underscored by revitalized neighborhoods. In using this strategy, every project eligible for funding allocations has to have a housing component or a neighborhood component to it. The CDAC has a few new members this year, and upon discussing the document it was determined that the Committee would like a chance to visit the document again to see if there were any changes that needed to be made or revisions that needed to be considered. The invitation of the CCH is appropriate because of their contribution to the community in the form of the Housing Vision. The two documents have similar characteristics.

Dinsdale asked if there would be other service providers involved in the process.

Swarts said that the retreat is an open meeting, but there would be no additional representatives from other agencies involved in the process. Swarts said that Sara Taliaferro and Kathleen Ames-Oliver would be facilitating the meeting. They are putting together a plan to look at the document. Staff will distribute a copy of the *Step Up to Better Housing* strategy to the members of the CCH prior to the meeting so they can review it.

Martin-Smith said that the CCH could provide a review of the Housing Vision and walk the CDAC members through the document.

Swarts agreed and said that the Housing Vision is a very important component of the idea of the retreat. She said that staff would get a copy of the Housing Vision to the CDAC to review prior to the meeting as well.

ITEM NO. 4 Appointments by Chair to the CCC.

Dinsdale approved the appointment of Brad Cook to the Community Cooperation Committee.

ITEM NO. 5 Discussion of Future CCH Activities and CCH Member Appointments.

Swarts said that this is an opportunity for the CCH to talk about the original intent of the CDDH and discuss if the group felt that there was still more work to do to accomplish the original intent of the body. The original purpose in 2005 was to report to and advise the City in working with the recommendations of the original Homeless Task Force on Homelessness. The Task Force was established in 2003 and met for approximately two years. The Final Plan of the Task Force was subsequently adopted by resolution by the City Commission and included establishing the CCH to implement the Plan. The Task Force was made up of 20+ individuals from the community representing very diverse opinions. The Task Force created the Plan and the CCH has done miraculous work in implementing the Plan, including developing the Housing Vision. The Housing Vision deals with all aspects of housing movement in the community. The Housing Vision is the plan to deal with homelessness and address the roots of the problem. Swarts said that at this point, three members of the CCH have received term extensions until the end of June, and the CCH needs to figure out what steps need to be taken at that time. If there is still work that the CCH feels needs to be done, then there needs to be a work plan developed. If there is not work left to do, then a plan needs to be in place to look at other options. Additionally, there is the CCC which, regardless of the decision on the direction of the CCH, will be able to remain intact as an important educational element of the issue.

Martin-Smith said that when she looked at the CCH and revisited the resolution, it represented the fact that the charge of the CCH was to carry out the Task Force plan and she feels that the CCH has completed that job. She said that the appointments have changed from the original resolution. There were several community members that were representative of service providers that were originally brought on as advisors, and they were eventually appointed to the CCH. The Housing Vision accomplishes what the task force recommendations were. Martin-Smith said that she feels very good about what the CCH has been able to accomplish and the fact that the CCH has been able to give City staff some direction on how to manage homelessness. Martin-Smith said that she feels strongly that the City Commission has been supportive of the body since it was formed, and that they have continued to vote 5-0 to support

the Housing Vision. She said that she was confident, based on things that are currently going on, that the work will continue into the future in the programs and steps that the community has taken. Martin-Smith said that she does not see that the CCH needs to exist as it exists today. She said that when she looks at what the work was and what the CCH achieved she feels good standing before the City Commission and letting them know that the original charge of the group has been completed and the resolution is not needed in the City anymore. There might be a need for the work of the CCH to exist, but not in this form.

Mosely said that he agreed for the most part with Martin-Smith, but he said that he would stop short of saying that the CCH is not needed. Mosely said that his thought is that the only time that they are not needed is if the final recommendations are accepted.

Collinsworth said that while part of the work of the CCH is done, there are still things that need attention in the community in regards to homelessness. The CCH in its current form has not gelled with the resolution. He said for example the *Step Up to Better Housing* strategy was put together 13 years ago. Emergency Shelter was the first step in that plan. Emergency shelter is the first recommendation. That issue is still not resolved. The issue remains as a dark cloud hanging over the head of the CCH. The CCH has not been able to effectively get the community behind the new location. The community needs to be pulled together. Now that the shelter has found a site, the CCH needs to work with the community and get them behind the shelter so it can move forward. How this gets accomplished is one of the charges of the CCC as they are the public relations arm of the CCH. Collinsworth said that the CCC is working on three public meetings: one with immediate neighbors to the proposed site, one with the overall neighborhood areas, and one with all interested parties in the community. That has not been accomplished yet. Collinsworth said that he agreed with part of what Martin-Smith said and part of what Mosely said. The first link is the emergency shelter plan. The community will not know until August if that location will in fact move forward. He said he wondered what the next issue that the CCH will need to look at will be. He said that the emergency temporary housing component is one that is being tended to by Family Promise and Five Loaves House. Several agencies are working on emergency temporary housing for families but there is no agency looking to help singles to get them out of the shelter and on to a better path out of homelessness.

Murphy said that the tasks listed in the report are what the CCH was charged to do, and from her view there are many components that are yet to be completed. Murphy said that through her appointment to the CCH there are several issues that have been addressed and completed. There are many others on this report, and they may or may not need to be addressed, but the CCH needs to review the document to determine the next steps and to see if they are still needed. The need may be to shift from the current resolution.

Monroe said that they do have the Housing Vision, but the CCH still manages to have a very full agenda each month even when they do not address the Housing Vision. The CCH should refocus and see where they want to go from here. There are many members with good knowledge and intentions and they should be utilized in this fashion.

Martin-Smith said that you can fill up an agenda with items that are not current issues but rather reports and updates. There really has not been any additional work to do over the last

year. There have not been issues that have risen to the surface that require the CCH to rethink what they have done or accomplished.

Monroe agreed and said that the CCH need to figure out what is left and refocus their efforts on those points. The agendas have been all miscellaneous items lately.

Dalberg said that he tended to agree with Martin-Smith that the original purpose of the existence of the CCH has been fulfilled, but he said that there are still a lot of issues in the community that need the attention of a group such as the CCH, so that may call for a new charge and a shift in direction. The original charge has been completed, but now the group needs to look at what is next to look at. If the CCH and the City Commission determine that there is not a next, then this body can go away feeling good about what it has accomplished. Dalberg said he would hate for the CCH to be dissolved, and then as issues come up down the road have the community say that there should be a body to tend to the issues.

Dinsdale agreed with Dalberg, and said that the City Commissioners cannot be experts on everything. That is what the CCH has been able to provide to the City Commission. There has been a little lost lately in that the CCH was a little unsure about what their charge has been. In the past the CCH has made recommendations and they have not necessarily been followed. A new charge would give the CCH a clear expectation of their role. There would be a requirement of a new resolution if the group was to continue. The CCH should be celebrating what they have been able to accomplish. The Task Force plan does still include a lot that has not been done. To dissolve this body does away with an important link between service providers and lay people and the City Commission. There needs to be a redefinition of the charge and a clear directive from the City Commission, as well as a vote of confidence from the City. This era should end and another can begin. There needs to be a clear restart.

Martin-Smith suggested that the CCH go through the original recommendations of the Task Force. There are some suggestions that will never be accomplished. The emergency shelter was a large component of the Task Force recommendations, and the evolution was in place for the Housing Vision to come about. Martin-Smith said that she would be in favor of having a retreat to go through the plan and see what the CCH wants to do. The CCH should look at what still needs to be done and they should explore what already exists in the framework to see if the charge can be managed by another body. Martin-Smith said that her worry was that a life-long board would be created and would have members that are bored with their charge. Martin-Smith said that she was not upset when the City Commission did not use a recommendation of the CCH. She said that what that told her was that the City Commission was confident in their direction and confident in what decision they were making. Their job is to hear from the public and take public input into account. Martin-Smith suggested that the CCH look at the task force recommendations and give a final report to the City Commission. The CCH needs to let the City Commissioners know what they have done and what still needs to be done. Martin-Smith suggested a study session with the City Commission to look at this and move along. She worries that dissolving this board and adding another board to take on the new charge might be too many voices and weaken what everyone is trying to accomplish. The marketing and the communications components of the problem are not the job of the CCH. That effort takes a different focus.

Murphy agreed that a study session is a good step to look at.

Swarts said that there are no current agenda items for June 8. She suggested that the CCH look at the ordinance and discuss the future at that point. The goal will be to go through the ordinance in the allotted hour and then ask for a study session with the City Commission in late June. If there needs to be additional time spent in between those two dates then the CCH can explore additional meeting times.

Dinsdale said that she would like to see the Mayor give the CCH a specific task. The City should drive the discussion. The City should tell the CCH what they want from them as an advisory commission. It is important that they drive the charge or the CCH will not be fully utilized.

Swarts suggested providing the City Commissioners with suggestions and options. From the staff perspective, the sense is often that times the City Commission might not necessarily know what they need or what they can utilize. There are five City Commissioners. They rely on advisory boards and committees to tell them what they need. They have gotten used to the fact that there is a body such as the CCH that they can turn to with problems that need to be addressed. It took the City Commission awhile to get used to that idea and to utilize the CCH. Many times, items and issues go straight to the City Manager's office and the City Commission has been able to utilize this body to advise them on the issues at hand.

Martin-Smith said that they should offer the City Commissioners a report of what they CCH has accomplished and if there are recommendations moving forward then they should be presented at that time as well.

Dinsdale confirmed that the CCH wanted to spend the June meeting going over the resolution.

Swarts said that the CCH can look at Section Four of the resolution and go through it sentence by sentence. As far as the Study Session, there are budget talks occurring currently, and the Study Session would probably occur at the end of June in the late afternoon on a Tuesday. The input of those with expiring terms is valuable and the importance of that cannot be lost in the discussion.

Mosely said that he agreed that the City should give some direction on the charge, as he does not think it is the intention of anyone on the CCH to go up to the City Commission and say what they will be doing. He said he is bothered by the fact that the City Commission opened up the CCH, and all the years that the CCH has been meeting there have been no City Commissioners that have attended meetings of the group. The City Commission says that they are interested and concerned about the issue, but he said that in his opinion they do not show it. Mosely said that if he started an advisory group that he would be interested in what they were doing. To him, the City Commission not attending meetings shows a lack of interest, and when they then pass on recommendations made by the CCH he wonders how interested they really are in the issues. The only time cities put together these committees is when they are getting pressure from the community. They have no intention of doing anything with them. They fill them with good people who have good intentions. When the same people are steering the ship it will continue to go in circles. He said that he is waiting to see a City Commissioner come in and listen and show an interest in the CCH. He said he has yet to see that happen.

Martin-Smith said that there were a couple of City Commissioners who have come in over the years to take an interest in the proceedings. She said that from her standpoint having followed the homeless issue within the City Commission, she feels the Commissioners do have a deep interest in what the CCH is doing. They have had several 5-0 votes on the recommendations of the CCH. Martin-Smith said that our form of government needs advisory boards and committees. The City Commission has always been 100% in support of the work that the CCH has done. She said that she originally became interested in the homeless issue in the community because she did not like how the community viewed the homeless problem. She said that she feel more positive about the issue now. She said that the charge was not to educate the public, but to forward the Vision.

Dinsdale said that the City Commissioners did not attend this body's meetings, but through discussions with the City Commission on behalf of the CCH, she felt that the City Commission is very interested in the charge. She said that she felt respected and felt like the fact she represented the CCH got her the face to face meetings that she did.

Martin-Smith agreed and said that she has felt as if they have reached out.

David Tucker said that while he respected Martin-Smith's viewpoint, he disagreed on the work of the CCH being completed. He said he could see where she was coming from in saying that the work is done, but there is still much to do. He said that he felt that the CCH was a good advocacy group for the City. There is a lot going on with the shelter relocation, and the CCH should not give up on that. He said that there were always issues that can be worked through that require the assistance of a group such as this. Tucker said that he understood that there were three commissioners stepping down because of term limits, and with those three go a lot of knowledge and experience, but there is also still knowledge and experience in the community that can step in and help. If those outgoing commissioners work to mentor and guide new members, that knowledge will not be lost. Tucker said that the thought of dissolving the CCH frightened him because the City Commissioners are very busy and they need this group as they cannot be experts at everything. They need a filter for the issues. The CCH can look to change that focus to support that filter.

Saunny Scott said that there are a lot of visions, and the Housing Vision is just one of them. She said that the Housing Vision in her opinion was not working very well. She said that besides the emergency shelter component, there is not much happening in temporary emergency housing. She said there was a lot of work that needed to be done to bring the Vision to life. She said that the original idea was that the emergency shelter was supposed to house people for two days and then the individuals would be funneled into alternative housing options. There is also a gap in long term supportive housing. There are not enough services currently in the community for the mentally ill. The Vision needs continuous work. When the shelter does move, there will be a lot of issues downtown. The lack of a drop in center that is currently utilized by people who live on the streets will not be available anymore. There are also issues such as pan handling. This is not necessarily a homeless issue, but it is perceived to be one. If someone is bored with serving on the commission then it is time for them to step down.

Brad Cook said that he supported the continuation of the CCH. He said that homelessness was not going away. He said that the CCH should not dissolve just because there are terms coming

up. Homelessness is still a complex issue. Mosely pointed out that the City Commissioners are not coming to the CCH meetings. That is exactly the reason to keep meeting. This is the voice of homelessness for the City Commission.

Dinsdale said that the CCH will plan to proceed with the review of the resolution and staff will look into setting up a study session.

ITEM NO. 6 LCS Relocation Update – Loring Henderson.

Henderson was absent so there was no report on the LCS relocation.

ITEM NO. 7 Miscellaneous/Calendar

There was no additional calendar information.

ITEM NO. 8 Public Comment

There was no public comment.

ITEM NO. 9 Adjourn.

ACTION TAKEN

Motion by Mosely, seconded by Dalberg to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 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	+	+	+	+	E							
Charlotte Knoche	+	+		+								
Shirley Martin-Smith	+	+	+	+	+							
Mike Monroe			+	+	+							
Robert Mosely	+	+			+							
Shannon Murphy	E	+	+	+	+							