

**City of Lawrence, Kansas
COMMUNITY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS
June 9, 2009 Minutes (Lawrence City Commission Room)**

Members present: Hubbard Collinsworth, Katherine Dinsdale, Loring Henderson, Charlotte Knoche, Shirley Martin-Smith, Shannon Murphy

Members absent: Jeanette Collier, Wes Dalberg, Mike Monroe, Robert Mosely, Sandy Winn-Tutwiler

Staff present: Danelle Dresslar, Margene Swarts

Public present: Hilda Enoch, Carla Helm, Heather Hoy, David Tucker

ITEM NO. 1 INTRODUCTIONS

Dinsdale called the meeting to order at 8:35am. Members of the Community Commission on Homelessness introduced themselves.

**ITEM NO. 2 Approval of the Agenda and the May 12, 2009 Minutes
ACTION TAKEN**

Motion by Martin-Smith, seconded by Knoche to approve the Agenda and the May 12, 2009 Minutes.

Motion passed unanimously.

ITEM NO.3 Kansas Point in Time Count Report – Margene Swarts

Swarts reported that the United Way of the Plains has moved the announcement of the Kansas 2009 Point in Time count numbers until Wednesday, June 10. The numbers were originally slated to be announced on June 9, but there was a hold up and it was moved to the 10th.

Martin-Smith said that she was eager to see the numbers so the CCH can begin to reevaluate the Housing Vision if needed.

Henderson asked if the CCH could authorize Dinsdale and Dalberg to make a general statement regarding the final numbers to the media. His concern was that the CCH was prepared when the Lawrence Journal World calls for a comment from this body.

Martin-Smith said that the CCH will want to get with Swarts and look at the numbers when they come out as everyone is anxious to look at them. The Housing Vision is what this is all about.

Dinsdale asked if the CCH needed to meet to look at the impact of the numbers after their release, so they are effectively able to make a response.

Martin-Smith said that the point is that the CCH should expect to respond to the media when then call on the numbers.

ITEM NO. 4 Discussion of the July Meeting/Planning Retreat.

Dinsdale began the item by stating that the group can decide if they wanted to work the retreat into the July meeting or if they wanted to hold a separate retreat time.

Dresslar told the CCH that if they choose to do the retreat at the July meeting then they would have to cancel the meeting and hold the retreat.

Martin-Smith said that she did not want to cancel the meeting in July because the Point in Time numbers would be available.

Dinsdale offered the suggestion of a quick business meeting before breaking for the retreat. The date of the next CCH meeting is July 14.

Knoche informed the CCH that she would not be in town that week so she could not attend.

Martin-Smith said that if the entire CCH is not there then the retreat misses the point. She feels very strongly that this entire commission needs to be in attendance.

Dinsdale said that it is important to have the Point in Time numbers to look at before the retreat.

Swarts brought up the possibility of utilizing the CCC for facilitation of the retreat. She indicated that she had contacted Sara Taliaferro to look into that option. She also was looking at the last retreat to see what was discussed and the format that was used. She reminded the CCH that the Point in Time numbers were to be released on Wednesday the 10th, so they would have those numbers in plenty of time for the retreat.

Dinsdale said that her strongest concern was that they will need a good block of time to discuss their role as a commission. She was not sure if it was necessary or not to have another person present to facilitate that discussion.

Swarts answered that sometimes there is an advantage to having someone there who is experienced in meeting facilitation.

Martin-Smith said that the last retreat was very successful and they did utilize a facilitator. She suggested no more than one facilitator for this retreat.

Swarts said that staff was only thinking of utilizing one or two people. She suggested that the CCH set a date, and staff would work on the facilitation part. She recalled that the last retreat started around 8:30 or 9:00 a.m. and lasted until 1:00pm. Lunch was provided at that time. She offered that 9:00-1:00 would be a good block of time and the retreat would be held in a comfortable atmosphere.

Dinsdale said that she knew that Sara was very busy. She did not want this fact to postpone the retreat.

Collinsworth said that he had served on the CCC and some of the members of the CCC have had additional training in facilitation. He said that if Sara was willing to facilitate the session then he would be willing to back her up as much as he could. He has had part of the training, but not all of it.

Knoche said that the facilitator keeps the CCH from having to run the meeting. It makes it more effective.

Henderson said that it made sense to have the retreat before the next public meeting so the Point in Time discussion could happen more effectively.

Murphy said that it was important to make sure that the entire body was on the same page and that they all understood how they would be presenting the numbers.

There was a discussion on the CCH regarding dates for the retreat. It was determined that June 30, 2009 at 8:30 am – 1:00 pm would be the best date for everyone.

Swarts confirmed that the meeting would take place on June 30, 2009 from 8:30 am – 1:00 pm in the Development Services Conference Room. She indicated that a continental breakfast and lunch would be served.

Dinsdale started a discussion regarding the regulations of the CCH and if it is possible for a person to serve when they live outside of the City Limits. She asks this question because of Jeanette Collier. Collier recently moved out of the County and there is a question about if she would need to resign her position or not on the CCH. She is still a provider in Douglas County so Dinsdale wondered exactly what the rules were on that.

Martin-Smith asked Swarts if the resolution forming the CCH could be amended to include membership for service providers in Lawrence and Douglas County even if they do not live in the City limits.

Swarts asked Dinsdale to let Collier know that she should attend the retreat and the July meeting. The CCH can discuss the issue at the retreat and make a recommendation regarding the makeup of CCH members.

Dinsdale asked to talk about what they are planning for the retreat and how the CCH would like to run the day.

Martin-Smith said that it would be helpful to gather the notes from the last retreat and to look at what the CCH wanted to do and determine if they did it or not, and if it is relevant or not anymore.

Henderson said that it is important to look at the relevance of the Housing Vision.

Dinsdale said that she wanted to discuss clarification about information distribution and decision making on a City level and what the role of the CCH is in that process. This includes decisions about funding and staffing. How much authority and responsibility

does the CCH have to review and know things as they occur? There is currently not a clear line of communication within the city.

Martin-Smith said she would like to see something that says “this is what we are and this is what we would like to do”.

Dinsdale said that this was originally the Mayor’s Taskforce. Maybe it would be a good idea to see what the Mayor suggests.

Swarts reminded the CCH that this is no longer the Mayor’s Taskforce, but it is an established advisory board to the City.

Martin-Smith said that reviewing the resolution is a good idea as well. There is the possibility to asking the City Commission to make changes to the resolution, and that can be done all at once. She said they could pose the question about how the CCH can help the City Commission move forward.

Henderson offered two areas for discussion. The first was the role of the CCH in the City and how they can help in those important decisions on homeless issues, and the second is asking the question if the CCH sticks to the implementation of the Housing Vision or become the place where the homeless issues are taken. He said he was okay with either focus, but the discussion needs to happen so everyone knows that they are on the same page.

Martin-Smith said that the current City Commission has done a better job of reaching out to the CCH than some in the past have. Part of the retreat is to determine how the CCH wants to perform and look to the City Commission. At some point the determinations from the retreat can become a Study Session. The CCH wants a Study Session, but the body does not necessarily know at this point what it is they want to talk to them about. The City Commission does have an interest in this body. The job of the CCH is to get them up to speed on the role they represent to the City.

Henderson suggested they start including the County Commission as well.

Martin-Smith said that the inclusion of the County would need to be driven by the elected officials. There is an interest County-wide in knowing more about what the CCH is doing. Increasing communication would be a good thing.

Dinsdale said that there are extraordinarily important decisions being made that have an immediate impact on the Housing Vision. The process seems scattered and ineffective at this point.

ITEM NO. 5 Public Comment.

Hilda Enoch said that it bothered her that after all the time the CCH has been in existence there are still so many people today who need help and are homeless in the community. There needs to be real action taken to change what exists. The community needs to be behind the charge of the CCH. There was a perfectly good mission and

work on the original Mayor's Taskforce. There is no need for the CCH to anguish about what they are here for; they just need to go forward.

David Tucker said that the primary focus for the CCH is the Housing Vision. He would like to ask if the CCH has any advice or what information they had that could help in the discussions of the shelter situation. He asked if there was anything that the CCH could do to help discuss this with the City Commission. As an advisory board the City Commission will listen to what they have to say.

Dinsdale said that one of the reasons that the communication lines need to be reopened between the City and the CCH is because of the Shelter situation. This has not been a discussion that has included the CCH.

Carla Helm asked the CCH if they had received the updated Homeless Outreach numbers on the newly formatted report. The staff at Bert Nash listened to the CCH regarding the concerns about the original report and she wanted to make sure that the addendum was received.

Dinsdale thanked Helm for being there and said that they did receive the updated report and that the CCH appreciates the information.

Helm said that one thing that was different on the new report was that they will be able to include the counts of children that are homeless.

Enoch said that at the last CCH meeting Knoche spoke of the need for transitional housing. This would be something that the CCH could focus on and have an impact on. It would take the initiative of transitional housing and determining the number of empty units that can serve people with real need. This is something that the CCH can help to pull together. She asked Helm about the number on the waiting list for Bert Nash.

Helm said that she did not have the numbers in front of her.

Dinsdale said that it would be good working with a group that is widely representative of agencies in the community.

Knoche added that the transitional housing providers are meeting quarterly and that the LDCHA is continuing to work on the E-housing Connector. Things are moving forward.

Dinsdale said that the CCH could do better being involved in more active committees in the community. It is important to have representation of the CCH on these types of committees.

Enoch suggested the CCH provide a report to the community. It can be done in the Lawrence Journal World. People in the Community need to know what the CCH is doing. Something like the E-Housing program would be an example of something the community needs to see.

Hoy added that the LDCHA and the City of Lawrence are working together to host a Landlord Summit for the last week in August. This will address what Enoch is saying about the Point in Time numbers. They are also trying to recruit more Section 8 landlords to the program. This will inform the community about the E-Housing Connection and how it works. There will be additional Community outreach at the end of August. At this time vacancy issues will be more apparent. If the HPRP funds are allocated to the City they will also be able to tell the landlords at the Summit that they will have money to pay rent. She said that she was hopeful that the CCH can be represented at the Landlord Summit as well. It will be on August 26 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at Maceli's.

Enoch asked for a report from Henderson on the second shelter.

Henderson said that he first wanted to apologize for the way that things have come out of the overflow shelter situation. He did not intend any disrespect to the City or to the zoning requirements that had just been changed. Things had been moving very quickly and he thought it would cause embarrassment to the City if he went to the City Commission to ask for a rule change so quickly. Right now things are up in the air. There are a lot of people that are working on it. The County Commission deferred the item for three weeks before they will reach a decision. The First Christian Church, LINK, the City and the County are all having a meeting tomorrow with inspectors. The First Christian Church has initiated the conversations regarding the Shelter to be invited to stay there for an open ended amount of time. He is not sure what will be needed in terms of the sprinkler system and showers. That process is underway. The City Commission agenda has the Shelter on it for next Tuesday, June 16 to discuss the SUP for the current shelter at 10th and Kentucky. There is a lot going on. They have turned their focus to a single sight at this point. LCS has all the things in place to start a Capital Campaign and they are ready to move on that when they can. There is not a specific site to announce at this time.

Enoch asked if it was in fact a permanent shelter that they had in mind how long would it be until it was available for occupancy.

Henderson said that they would be looking at 12-18 months. They have until next April on the current SUP.

Enoch asked how many are being housed each night at the overflow location.

Henderson said that they had 38 on the first night, and then it went down to 31 then back up to 37. They are utilizing mats for sleeping. The area is a convenient space for them as it is across the street from the LCS building.

Dinsdale said that it was important on Tuesday night to be ready to stress the importance of the Housing Vision and the decision of the CCH was to have one emergency shelter, and LCS is that shelter. The CCH needs to make sure that they are able to provide these services to the community. Taking the steps to getting a new facility to house these people is extremely important. The CCH needs to speak strongly that night in support of these plans.

Henderson said that there is so much going on it is creating a lot of confusion. He is happy to answer any questions he can for the CCH.

Martin-Smith said that the CCH does not really ask Henderson what is going on. When Dinsdale was gone and she had to speak last week it was brought to her attention that she really was not up to speed on the shelter situation. She said that the CCH knows that three years ago came a letter that said the goal was to be out of the current location by April of 2010. If they will be out on the SUP at that time then why is the shelter going to the County right now. No one is trying to beat the LCS up, nor is she defending anyone, but she needs to know the answers to these questions when she is asked them. She realized that she could not answer any questions about LCS. She encouraged Henderson to keep a City Commissioner in on all these discussions. Any one of them would be willing to work with you and keep a dialog open.

Dinsdale said that the lines of communication are not clear enough. These decisions are being made and this body has spent a lot of time trying to learn what is going on with this issue. These questions include why it has taken so long and why some places will not work. The CCH is as informed about this situation as anyone, but the lines of communication are not there.

Martin-Smith said that there are no updates given to the CCH from anyone, such as LCS, the Salvation Army, ECKAN, or the City.

Henderson said that the LCS did ask some months ago if someone from the City could be on the building committee. He was told by the City that it would not work to do that.

Dinsdale said that it would seem that someone from the CCH should be on that board. There should be a special line of reporting back to the City.

Henderson said that he does not always report because he does not want to seem foolish. If he reported on every little thing that they do, every little property they look at it would be overwhelming.

Murphy said that she disagreed a little that they were not getting information from Henderson. The CCH should look at having regular agenda items each month. There needs to be a rotation of agenda items that the CCH is making sure that they hear from at least twice annually.

Dinsdale said that Helm is an example of someone who has represented an agency and has sat through three meetings.

Knoche said that they could look at the structure of each segment of the Housing Vision. Each segment can have a report on each agenda. That way they can be sure that the items are being covered.

Dinsdale added Case Management and funding to the reports that she would like to see.

Knoche said that within each step of the Housing Vision there are specific agencies working to meet those goals.

Dinsdale suggested the CCH formalize an agenda at the retreat.

Swarts said that the frustration of the CCH has is the feeling of being behind the motion instead of ahead of it. Finding out what is going on and getting reports can help deter that. She used the example of LCS. The CCH can look at what is out there and see what might or might not need their support. When the CCH knows about something going on because they are in the loop, they can then utilize mechanisms in place to get that information out. They can structure what Knoche and Martin-Smith said and get things to everyone in the form of monthly reports. Staff can take more responsibility for this and determine ideas for how to help with that, making them more of the advisory board that they should be.

Dinsdale commented that this was a healthy discussion. The CCH members all want the same thing. It is an enormously complicated issue. Everyone is doing the best that they can. They are still trying to define their roles while moving forward, and it is something that is worth moving forward. The more paths and systems that the CCH can get into place to be more effective, the better they will perform.

Hoy said that they always have the E-Housing meeting after this meeting. She offered to submit the meeting minutes to the CCH each month. She said that maybe as a commission a letter could be sent to housing providers speaking about needing input. There are only a few opportunities where everyone who provides services can be in the same room. Making people aware that this is a forum where then can be in the same room is important. If they do not show up then you can not get their input.

Dinsdale asked if it would be more beneficial to attend the CCH meeting or the E-Housing meeting.

Tucker wanted to clarify that the CCH is asking for updates and the more people who they can get into the room the better the questions can be answered.

Saunny Scott added that the Interfaith group was meeting this afternoon at 1:00 pm. All the food providers are on the agenda.

Dinsdale said that they needed to come up with a list of people that the CCH would need to hear from.

Enoch said that they should send a letter and request that when the service providers have something that needs the input of the CCH they should request that information.

ITEM NO. 6 Miscellaneous/Calendar.

Knoche said that the reentry program vouchers are up and running. Two people have been issued vouchers. They had been in the Douglas County Jail. The Board has set aside five vouchers. The program will provide the first three months rent in full, and

then it goes into income based rent or will move to rent structure if they are working. The vouchers are good for 24 months.

Murphy said that the vouchers provide for utility deposits as well as security deposits. It will not cover bills, but deposits. The Sheriff's department is paying for the application fees.

Knoche said that they are modeling the program on the transitional housing program, but the difference is the first three months are paid in full.

Helm asked who will be providing the ongoing case management.

Knoche said that that State parole office or probation officers will provide case management for 12 months. They will transfer the service after 12 months to another provider.

Henderson asked about talking about other issues that might come to this commission. One is the Drop-In Center. When the shelter moves, if the Drop-In Center is not downtown, there will continue to be homeless people downtown. This is a different population from the Shelter. This issue will come up, and the CCH might want to be prepared for future discussion on it.

Martin-Smith said that that communication should go directly to the City Commission. The City Commission needs to look at those who know what the ramifications will be of moving the Shelter out of downtown. If the CCH does not address it right now it will set the cause back years. This should be part of public record. The public needs to be aware of it now instead of 18 months from now after they have already pledged money to the building. This needs to be addressed.

Henderson added that some cities have part time centers.

Dinsdale said that this is an example of a non-vision topic that this body should discuss.

Martin-Smith said that this is the same issue that caused all of this to originally exist. If seven or eight years out, the community has the same concerns from the public that we have now, what exactly has the CCH been able to accomplish. That may be something that the CCH needs to bring to the Study Session.

Henderson suggested that when the CCH brings that to the City Commission, then the City Commission will look to the CCH for help.

Martin-Smith said that it should be discussed in the CCH.

Dinsdale said that the new set-up of the committee is one of the discussions that need to be planned so that the CCH will be able to perform in a proactive mode. Another issue is funding that is coming from various sources and what influence will the CCH have on these decisions. This would include what agencies are participating, is there a

common intake form, and what else will be happening. She is unclear about how to address this.

Martin-Smith said that there is a funding crisis at Women's Transitional Care Services. She asked what will happen to them and what has happened that has made these problems come to the surface.

Enoch suggested that the CCH request a report from WTCS as well.

Dinsdale said that there needs to be a system in place where the CCH can regularly get reports.

Martin-Smith asked how the CCH can communicate with those who provide services to the homeless so they can utilize this body as an outreach component when their funding hits a crucial point. All of these agencies were an original part of the Task Force and they should be able to contact the CCH with issues such as this.

Martin-Smith went on to discuss the Community Career Connection with the CCH. It is taking place on June 16, and there will be services for the unemployed. This connection does not cater to those looking for a career upgrade. There will be human resources professionals, mock interviewers, and those who can assist with resume formatting. Success by Six is a partner, and they will provide day-care to the participants in the fair. This is the public's opportunity to talk to companies face-to-face. Not all will be hiring, but they will assist the job-seekers in information about their company including expectations, mental and physical health, and how to manage money. There will also be representation from secondhand stores for career clothing for job seekers. The website is www.communitycareerconnection.com.

Dinsdale asked Swarts how many openings are on the CCH and if staff can keep track of absences.

Swarts said the CCH is full and staff can do a monthly chart for attendance.

Enoch informed the CCH that they have not heard from David Tucker yet.

Tucker said that he did not have much to discuss that he has not already brought up. He added that he always feels welcome to speak at these meetings and he appreciates that.

Collinsworth asked about the ongoing concern about where the community stands on HMIS.

Henderson said that now that there is one shelter they are entering HMIS data. The main thing that HMIS is concerned with is bed nights. All the bed nights in the community are being recorded now because they are using HMIS.

Knoche said that LDCHA is also using HMIS.

Henderson said that the numbers being required are being tracked; it just is not necessarily helpful to get all the information that the community needs.

Collinsworth asked Henderson that if he came to the shelter can Henderson show him bed nights for him only?

Henderson told Collinsworth that there is a record for him and the services that he has been provided, but he could not tell him specifically if that data will be on the report.

Hoy added that with the federal money for HPRP there will be a requirement of HMIS, so it will force the community to start utilizing it.

Swarts said that there were some problems with HMIS, but she still thought of HMIS as a good thing. It has not been found to be effective locally because of the difficulty with the system, and others that do not have a compelling reason to use it are not doing so.

Dinsdale said that she still has great interest in streamlining that process. There could be a meeting of the people who can streamline data from a common intake or a common form. This needs to be addressed. There is a lot of cohesion in that group. She is hopeful that they can work towards that common intake and streamlining of information.

Murphy said that she also wanted to discuss case management and data management on the retreat.

Collinsworth asked Swarts to clarify if Lawrence was now with the Balance of State.

Swarts told him that was correct.

ITEM NO. 7 Adjourn.

ACTION TAKEN

Motion by Martin-Smith, seconded by Murphy to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

Attendance Record

Members	06/ 09																	
Jeanette Collier																		
Hubbard Collinsworth	+																	
Wes Dalberg																		
Katherine Dinsdale	+																	
Loring Henderson	+																	
Charlotte Knoche	+																	
Shirley Martin-Smith	+																	
Mike Monroe																		
Robert Mosely																		
Shannon Murphy	+																	
Sandy Winn-Tutwiler	E																	

* designates first meeting after appointment.