

**City of Lawrence, KS
Community Commission on Homelessness
July 8, 2008 Minutes (City Commission Room, City Hall)**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeanette Collier, Hubbard Collinsworth, Loring Henderson, Charlotte Knoche, Shirley Martin-Smith, Mike Monroe, Robert Mosely

MEMBERS ABSENT: Wes Dalberg, Katherine Dinsdale, Jane Faubion, Phil Hemphill

STAFF PRESENT: Lesley Rigney and Margene Swarts

PUBLIC PRESENT: Price Banks, Hilda Enoch, Shannon Murphy, Saunny Scott

Martin-Smith called the meeting to order at 8:40 am. Members and public introduced themselves.

Approval of the June 10, 2008 Minutes

Collinsworth **moved to approve the June 10, 2008 minutes.** Knoche **seconded the motion, which passed.**

Text Amendment Update

Rexwinkle reviewed the list of comments provided by agencies, CCH members and city staff. See the revised text amendment following the minutes. A final draft will be sent to members prior to submission to Planning Commission (PC) July 25.

Martin-Smith asked for public comment.

Saunny asked about garden space – is that included in recreational uses?

Rexwinkle said yes, the purpose of the statement was to make sure services are provided indoors. A garden would be recreational.

Banks stated he is troubled by requiring that services be conducted indoors. There is no reason to confine people – classes can be held outdoors. He is also troubled with mandating employment levels in land use decisions and references to windows on all sides of building and visibility from public right-of-way. More and more, campus style facilities are being used for social services as well as private roads. There could also be agencies sharing the same facility where shared walls would prevent windows on all sides. What is the reason to have windows on all sides of the building – why not have the architect and building code determine the design issues? It is okay to say outdoor activity areas are visible from inside the facility, but otherwise there is no reason to address windows.

Knoche said maybe instead of being specific about windows, etc. the text should emphasize the reason, such as "the building should be designed and laid out so that safety and security of occupants and neighborhood can be ..."

Rexwinkle said staff was directed by the City Commission (CC) to come up with standards for shelters. These are very typical, but it could possibly be revised to say "building will be designed to ensure that all outside areas are visible to ensure safety and security of occupants and surrounding area... such as windows, electronic surveillance, visibility from public right-of-way, etc."

Collinsworth asked if the design standards apply to a new building or retro-fitting.

Rexwinkle said it will be either, to the degree practicable. The goal here is to provide a baseline where public comment can begin, so it is not starting at square one.

Martin-Smith asked what the appropriate action would be for the CCH to take.

Staff said the CCH could provide something in support of the text amendment to the PC and it will eventually go to the CC.

Henderson is still uncomfortable with the staffing levels. All the code should do is ensure the program has staff on site.

Rexwinkle said this is more concerning the safety of guests.

Knoche asked if staffing for Type B shelters could be moved over to the required management plan.

Swarts suggested changing the standard to refer to the management plan and in the management plan require the operator to justify and explain staffing levels.

Murphy asked if staffing levels are in there for liability issues.

Rexwinkle said that of the 40 cities that staff reviewed, all have staffing levels.

Henderson said he has worked with Boulder extensively and their language is much more open – "no facility shall be open for use with clients unless there is staff onsite to supervise/oversee clients." It is appropriate to flesh this out in the management plan.

Swarts suggested leaving "at least one staff person should be employed by the agency." The management plan can include how many will be on site at what time and the reason.

Martin-Smith **moved to extend the meeting 30 minutes.** Collinsworth **seconded the motion, which passed.**

Enoch said she was at the Coalition on Homeless Concerns (CHC) meeting when someone from Salvation Army (SA) expressed a concern about middle-of-night emergencies.

Martin-Smith said the risk is that if operators fail to operate at the level the community expects, we can end up right back at square one. This has been a huge challenge for everyone – the CCH, the community, city staff, etc. We have to have something in place to avoid five hour marathon public debates. The point is to make it easier to get through the process.

Mosely said his concern is not necessarily the clients getting sick at night, but if the volunteer has to leave for one reason, does everyone have to leave?

Rexwinkle said that is why there should be a minimum of two staff at all times.

Martin-Smith stated that if the CCH supported the text amendment, they need to forward a letter of such support to the governing body.

Collinsworth **moved to send a letter in support of the proposed text amendment.** Mosely **seconded the motion, which passed.** Henderson abstained due to potential conflict-of-interest.

Martin-Smith thanked Rexwinkle for all of his work.

2009 Recommended Budget

Staff handed out copies of the proposed budget for outside agencies. Swarts stated all of the applications from agencies are available online. Two city commissioners met to come up with this recommendation. The overall homeless funding remained intact, but cuts were made to LCS, SA, the CCC, and Bert Nash Case Management Outreach Team to fund the LDCHA Housing Connector.

Swarts said Dave Corliss forwarded an e-mail from David Johnson asking for direction on what to do with the remaining funds and what should be cut. She read through some e-mails concerning the cuts. There was discussion surrounding the budget implications.

Henderson said it will no doubt be a loss to have one less case manager on the street.

Martin-Smith noted this puts a lot of pressure on the LDCHA and the CCH to conduct a lot of outreach.

Swarts said she is hopeful that Bert Nash will still be able to keep three case managers. The CCH pitched this program as a pilot program saying the private sector and the public will get on board if there is a coordinated effort. Here is where the rubber meets the road – the public will get on board now or not.

Martin-Smith thinks there should be a liaison from the CCH to the LDCHA to work on outreach to landlords. If this passes through the city budget there are three months to get geared up. This CCH will be held accountable for the success of the Housing Connection. It is not about watching LDCHA, it is about a partnership.

Henderson said we may find that it is not going to work and that will not be a failure. What would be a failure is if we don't give it our best shot.

Mosely asked what the relationship is between the LDCHA and the CCH.

Martin-Smith said the LDCHA submitted a proposal to the CCH, which the CCH solicited. There will need to be communication outside of CCH meetings. She envisions a very fluid partnership.

Collier said there is one outreach worker that can bill Medicaid for services – maybe they can hire another with the credentials to bring in additional funds.

Swarts said she thought the CC might generally discuss and determine how to proceed with budget adoption at their meeting tonight. There is a Budget Study Session with the CC on July 14 and then later, the public hearing. After the budget is published, she wasn't sure about the process for making changes.

Collinsworth said he has one major problem with the \$57K to the LDCHA. If you read the application, the person that is the housing connector has to be LDCHA personnel.

Martin-Smith said that has already been approved by the CCH.

Enoch said Bert Nash should be held to the standards they agreed to in the beginning.

Collinsworth underscored the importance of having a liaison working with the Connector.

Martin-Smith said we have that in Knoche and she will be happy to help with media outreach, etc.

Enoch said regarding the connector, James Dunn has told people about a house available in August. He is willing for it to be a group home that will cost \$1700/month. That could be put together really easily. Dunn does not want to deal with individuals, he wants some agency to take over it and manage it.

Martin-Smith asked if they can issue a statement in support of the budget recommendation.

Swarts suggested, "The CCH supports as much funding as possible for Outreach Case Management, but understands the budget situation and believes the Housing Connector is essential to the CCH proposed Housing Vision."

The group concurred.

Other Business

Regarding the appointment of Shannon Murphy, Martin-Smith will e-mail the Mayor and the County Administrator.

Henderson has been doing substantial outreach with the homeless vision.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:40 am.