

**City of Lawrence, Kansas  
COMMUNITY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS  
August 18, 2009 Minutes (Lawrence City Commission Room)**

**Members present:** Jeanette Collier, Hubbard Collinsworth, Wes Dalberg, Katherine Dinsdale, Loring Henderson, Shirley Martin-Smith, Robert Mosely, Shannon Murphy

**Members absent:** Charlotte Knoche, Mike Monroe, Sandy Winn-Tutwiler

**Staff present:** Danelle Dresslar, Scott McCullough, Margene Swarts

**Public present:** Saunny Scott, Heather Hoy, Diane Etzel-Wise, Ellen Johnson, Christina Renfro, Damian Scott, Mary Green, Vicky.

**ITEM NO. 1 Introductions**

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

**ITEM NO. 2 Approval of the Agenda and the July 14, 2009 Minutes**

Dinsdale asked to add a report from Henderson to the agenda, as well as a discussion on the issue regarding the drop-in center and what is to happen to it when the shelter moves locations.

**ACTION TAKEN**

Motion by Martin-Smith, seconded by Dalberg to approve the Agenda with Dinsdale's additions, and to approve the July 14, 2009 Minutes.

Motion passed unanimously.

**ITEM NO. 3 Emergency Shelter Criteria/Considerations.**

Scott McCullough, Director of Planning and Development Services, addressed the CCH on the Emergency Shelter Considerations document. He explained the history of the CCH reaching this list of considerations for the shelter, and that the creation of the considerations began at the June Planning Retreat. The group arrived at these considerations for any shelter proposed for Land Use, as there had not been an announcement of a site at that point. The considerations were then put on the regular agenda for the CCH July 14 meeting, and the CCH received discussion on the document at that time. The document was then an agenda topic at the July Planning Retreat and was narrowed down to three points of consideration. The considerations have been placed on the August regular agenda for confirmation that the CCH agrees with this list. It was created comprehensively and the list pertained to any shelter site that was proposed for Land Use. These considerations were applied without a particular site in mind. With this list, the CCH will have the ability to utilize these considerations in making a recommendation to the Planning Commission on any Special Use Permits that are requested by the Lawrence Community Shelter.

Martin-Smith agreed that the purpose was to articulate to the Planning Commission and ultimately the City Commission what the CCH believes will make a successful location site. This was not based on any particular site.

Dinsdale said that in utilizing these considerations the CCH has criteria set for programs, facilities, and land use for the ideal 24/7 shelter. She asked about the fact that there is no set amount of beds listed in the document.

McCullough said that this fact leaves the document open ended. It can be reassessed with new counts and numbers.

Murphy added that it can take into consideration several sources for this information, such as the Point in Time counts, information from service providers, and places such as Family Promise.

McCullough said that the number can change based on the economy, the source of the information, and the season.

Dinsdale asked if there should be an amendment on item number two regarding the transportation use by the Shelter.

McCullough said that it was deemed important that the Shelter be on the bus route.

#### **ACTION TAKEN**

Motion by Martin-Smith, seconded by Murphy to approve the document "Community Commission on Homelessness Emergency Shelter Facility Land Use Considerations".

Motion passed unanimously.

#### **ITEM NO. 4 Work Plan for Subcommittees and Agenda Planning.**

Henderson said that he and Knoche are meeting to review the role of the Homeless Outreach Team. They have not met yet.

Martin-Smith said that she and Knoche will be working on reviewing the Housing Vision. The original goal had been set to have this review done by December, but she believes it should be sooner than that because of the new CCH members that will be coming on board around that time. She said they will convene a meeting in September, and she is inviting all the original members of the team that came up with the current Housing Vision to the review. Those still in the community will get invitations.

Martin-Smith also indicated she was working with Swarts on Resolution No. 6608, which established the Community Commission on Homelessness.

Swarts added that staff was working with the Legal department, and the intention is to have this report ready by the September meeting.

Martin-Smith said that the resolution is very broad in terms of defining those appointed to the Commission. She met with Mayor Rob Chestnut and asked him if he would like input from the CCH with regard to selecting members of the CCH to replace the three seats being vacated due to term limitations. Mayor Chestnut was very much in favor of receiving input from the CCH on these appointments. The appointments should be made long before December when the other three terms end. Martin-Smith said that the discussion that the CCH needs to have is in regard to the make-up of the Commission, and that the expectation of the those who sit on the Commission need to be actively engaged in moving the Housing Vision forward. The CCH was originally selected with two representatives from the business community and a member from the faith-based community. The members of the CCH should expect to be engaged in a lot of public speaking and community outreach. This is very important to the success of the Commission. Those who join the CCH will need to understand that there is a meeting each month that must be attended. The body needs to stay strong and continue to move forward on the Housing Vision as they were originally charged. The CCH is working on very important issues right now. Mayor Chestnut said that he would like to get the appointments in October. This way staff could provide an orientation for the new members, as well as those who are interested. The next step would be for the new and outgoing members, along with the remaining CCH members to meet with the City Commissioners so everyone can move forward and there is not so much time needed to catch up on issues. With the three members leaving, there needs to be an equal commitment.

Swarts said that timeline would fit nicely with the suggested November Study Session with the City Commission. This would get the new members on board in October.

Martin-Smith added that the new Chair could be elected in January.

Swarts agreed and said that with the new starting prior to January to familiarize them with the work of the CCH it would make sense to make the Chair selection in January.

Martin-Smith said that it makes sense to finish this work and then hand the CCH charge off in a logical way to the new members.

Martin-Smith asked each CCH member present to relay what sector of the community that they represent.

Henderson said that he represented the service providers. He said that when the CCH was first started from the original Task Force, the list that is in the Task Force documents said that the CCH should be a representative body. The CCH struggled in the beginning because Henderson was the only service provider represented. The service providers are very important and it is important to have multiple representations.

Martin-Smith said that aspect was in Resolution 6608. She indicated that the CCH was missing landlord representation as well. There is a longer list of represented parties then there are seats on the Commission.

Henderson added that an important voice missing on the current CCH is the neighborhoods, in an official capacity. This should be someone who has a record of working with neighborhood associations.

Martin-Smith agreed and said that it was originally the spot that Sara Taliaferro held on the CCH. That is an important component; however the CCH can work with the CCC in that capacity as well.

Dalberg said that he represented both the faith-based community as well as the service providers. He thinks that there is a balance of direct service providers, and he does not want to see the CCH become another commission filled with providers of service. It is important for others to be involved in the CCH such as the business community.

Mosely said that he felt that his purpose was to represent the community as a whole. He is not a member of any group, a provider of any service, nor does he have an agenda for anything. He is just here to represent the people of Lawrence.

Dinsdale asked Mosely what he would like to see accomplished by the CCH.

Mosely answered that he would like to see the CCH accomplish everything that they want to accomplish and have everyone housed. He said he does not know how to go about that, but it is what he would like to see that happen.

Murphy said that she was representing consumers, with the particular population of those reintegrating from corrections. She also sees herself as a liaison between the CCH and County government as well.

Collinsworth indicated that he represented the homeless community. He has friends in housing communities of all types, from camping to the shelter to corrections to couch surfers. He would like to see concrete progress made. He wants to see the new shelter up and running as well as emergency temporary housing. He would like to see other providers represented on the CCH who are doing housing, especially for homeless families.

Collier said that she represented service providers and homeless families. She wants to see the CCH work closely with the City and County to find funding to support the mechanisms that are going to be important to implement any housing program that is going to exist. The CCH needs to be a voice to the community regarding the housing needs and gaps. There is a lot of confusion in the community about where people can go for services and help.

Dinsdale asked about the topic of reporting on various items in a set agenda format.

Murphy provided a rough draft of CCH Agenda Reporting Items. She indicated that she took different topics as outlined in the Housing Vision and different issues and outlined them for each month. She listed the area of reporting and who can report on it each month. She said it really reminded her of the interconnectedness of the community. She tried to keep a miscellaneous category open as well. The sections listed as reports

that the CCH would like to see consist of Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, Case Management, Food Providers, Funding/Budget concerns, PIT Count, USD 497 School District, CCC & CHC Review/Update Membership, Miscellaneous, Emergency Shelter, Temporary Emergency Shelter, and the Day Shelter. She also listed out service providers that could contribute reporting on the different topics on a revolving basis.

Dinsdale said that in talking about reporting, sometimes the CCH receives these agency reports and the group does not necessarily know how to respond to the format of the information. She asked Murphy if there was a directive in this agenda reporting plan for those who are responsible for giving these reports to take it beyond just being an agency standing up and reading a report.

Martin-Smith added there could be a template for these agencies to report from.

Murphy said that she also questioned if the CCH wanted to obtain the minutes from the different groups that meet regularly, but who would be in charge of that. This might be good for those who the CCH is hearing from once a year to keep up to date on what the other committees are accomplishing. She was not sure how that might work, though.

Martin-Smith said that these agencies must also be willing to attend and report to the CCH.

Collinsworth suggested the responsibility of gathering minutes from other groups could be something that the CCC can assist with.

Martin-Smith said there must be an effective way to distill and apply the information that the CCH receives from these agencies.

Dinsdale said that this will require someone to take the initiative to meet outside of this body. The example that Murphy shows in her document regarding Case Management appears overwhelming because of the amount of reports that would have to be heard by the body. She suggests that someone be responsible for gathering the information for the CCH in regards to the topic of the month, and then work the information into a format that is not just a formal report from each body. The CCH needs to get past these reports and distill and apply the information. It would be nice to hear reports that address this.

Martin-Smith said that what the CCH has to remember is that these entities are successful in their own right. She would like to see that the service provider's case management has a goal, and how that goal has been reached. She is interested in if they are getting people into housing. The CCH needs to be careful in that any information that they receive should be helping the Housing Vision. The question of if these entities got anyone housed should be asked, as well as what housing type. Out of this information is where you can locate your weaknesses. This makes the community feel that they are really getting people into housing. The agencies should report on how the Housing Vision complements the work that they are doing.

Dinsdale asked what the basic purpose was of the CCH. She suggested that the CCH creatively address problems in the community to further the Housing Vision. The E-Housing Connector has come from this creativity. She posed the question if they are going to be a body that receives information and organizes it, or will they be a body that sits with those who have creative ideas. She has higher hopes for the CCH in that they will not just receive paperwork and they will work toward more out-of-the box creative thinking.

Martin-Smith said that the CCH is a creative group and not a group of number people. This is the Housing Vision, this is what the CCH needs to work on and work towards. If it is not the focus then they will forget what they are working on. It is the responsibility of the CCH to see that these programs are getting the help that they need.

Swarts added that addressing the issues that the CCH sees and how they are working or not working is important. Those that are working are working towards the goal of the Housing Vision. Those that do not work can be met with creative thinking to make them effective. The CCH has the framework in the Housing Vision. They just need to see all the parts and fine tune it and go from there. This may entail receiving the information and then looking at the big picture. The CCH Resolution 6608 will be on the September agenda. The CCH should decide what agenda topics they want to have in the Housing Vision report and outreach report. Staff can incorporate this information into the agenda. In September there is a miscellaneous topic. The CCH is hearing about panhandling today from Henderson. The miscellaneous in September can include fine tuning the agenda reporting items and the criteria that the CCH wants to see included. This can be the way the body proceeds and it will give the CCH a jumping off point to go from.

The subcommittees will meet in the meantime and the work plan on the agenda for this meeting was more or less to discuss what subcommittees were outlined. Whoever is interested in the outreach worker subcommittee should let Henderson or Knoche know. Swarts asked if September was too ambitious of a deadline for the subcommittees to report back to the group. If it is, then the CCH will need to look at October for these reports. The next meeting is scheduled for September 8, which is the day after Labor Day. The CCH may want to look at moving the meeting or not doing this piece in September.

Martin-Smith said that she can report on the appointments, Resolution, and Housing Vision in September.

Henderson said that he can report on the outreach workers in October as he and Knoche have not had a chance to meet yet.

Swarts said that the Housing Vision plan review maybe a case of disbursing the fine tuned Vision to the CCH. The same can be said for the Resolution. The outreach worker report may be a different category of reporting. She said that to assume for September that there will not necessarily be anything to report on. The CCH can discuss what they are expecting to see from the reports. Staff can assemble the information for the CCH based on what they want to see. It all depends on what the CCH wants to see.

For example, maybe instead of seeing a written report from Bert Nash, the request is to have them explain the report. Sometimes it is also the case that staff gets a report and are not exactly sure what they are looking at.

Dinsdale said that the CCH should consider ideas about the reporting format. She said that maybe a template is a fair suggestion. There should also be a committee for each topic.

Heather Hoy, LDCHA, suggested that with the case management reports that most agencies show the positive results, but what would be helpful to the CCH might be a list of the top ten things that the case managers are faced with that they have no solution for and nothing in the Housing Vision to address the circumstance. These would be issues for which there are no solutions. The CCH needs to know what these case managers cannot do. This will help to fill the gap and show the areas that are lacking.

Martin-Smith said that an idea would be to list the top five challenges that the case managers have each month. You have to have the challenges with the successes.

Hoy said yes to list the successes and then the stumbling blocks.

Martin-Smith said that this was information that the CCH could use.

Hoy agreed and said that it is information that the CCH needs to know in order to effectively work towards the Housing Vision.

#### **ITEM NO. 5 Public Comment.**

There was no public comment at this time.

#### **ITEM NO. 6 Miscellaneous/Calendar.**

Henderson presented the panhandling report as requested by Dinsdale. There have been discussions ongoing between the Lawrence Community Shelter (LCS) and the Executive Committee of the Coalition for Housing Concerns (CHC). At this time, panhandling is permitted, but after LCS began dealing with more families this summer they are seeing that the families are going downtown and panhandling with their children. They are trying to work on a plan to handle panhandling if the person or family is a guest of the shelter. This is an introductory report and LCS is trying to find a way to work with these individuals who are at the shelter to keep them from panhandling. The CHC Executive Committee has discussed the same thing and they are taking it to the entire coalition to discuss. The Executive Committee of the CHC said that there was support for public education and prohibitions to develop an attitude that panhandling is not good. Panhandling undermines the public perception of homelessness, as well as hindering the community's way of thinking about the issue. The LCS sees panhandling as unnecessary. These people are getting a place to sleep and getting food. LCS is committed to doing something about this problem. Henderson said that LCS staff and the Executive Committee of the CHC are very concerned about

this issue. They are looking at a small card to hand out to business owners that they can give those who are panhandling that will list services and where to go if they need help. This is an important issue, and he is not sure what the CCH can do, but this is a report to them on the topic. It is not acceptable for people to panhandle with their children. It is not safe for them.

Collinsworth said that it is still under discussion with the CHC as far as they are concerned, and how far that the CHC wants to go with it. They do not want to restrict performers on Massachusetts because they are part of downtown Lawrence, but it is the use of the children that is the problem.

Collier asked how many families are involved in this.

Henderson said that he can name two specifically of which he is aware. He said another thing that LCS is doing is having their security personnel occasionally walk Massachusetts Street to see who is out there and who is staying at the shelter. They are working to discourage them from panhandling.

Martin-Smith noted that there are a lot of panhandlers on Saturday and Sunday downtown.

Henderson said that LCS wants to be part of the solution to the extent that they can. There is something the shelter can do as a private organization.

Collier noted that the families may not realize the danger they are putting their children in.

Henderson said that they have had discussions with them, and Child Services has been brought in as well to assess the situation, and it is not viewed as a form of abuse.

Dinsdale said that this was an excellent example of things that the CCH should be aware of. It is very helpful to the body to hear this and for the CCH to be educated and know what is going on. She is happy that the shelter is addressing this issue. She suggested that the CCH could help to lead a response to the community.

Henderson began the topic of the relocation of LCS. He said that LCS has a contract on the former Don's Steak House building on East 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. The closing is set for the first week in December. They are meeting with the architectural staff and the LCS board. They are working to get a design to be submitted with a site plan and a SUP. The plan is to submit the SUP on September 14<sup>th</sup>. The SUP will go through the Planning Commission and the public hearing process. The item should be on the City Commission agenda on December 4. The timing should be okay with the closing as long as there are no problems and nothing else affects the dates. The shelter appears to have the support of the City Commission and the site seems to fit the three considerations that the CCH has set forth for the shelter Land Use. There is an automotive service that is concerned about the placement of the shelter, and has begun organizing opposition. Henderson said that he has been meeting with business owners in the area. The closest residential area is the trailer park behind the facility. There are things in the new code

that have to do with the landscaping of the facility, planning of the facility, considerations of neighbors and other similar aspects. The new facility will have space for a couple of families, and the idea with the families is to get them in and out of the shelter. The LCS has four families right now, totaling 18 people. Families are automatically getting into the shelter. The idea in the new facility is that families will be very separate from the rest of the population. There will be a common dining area, but the sleeping quarters will be separate from the other sectors. Henderson added that the shelter does envision a tiered living arrangement. There will be an emergency level with beds and lockers. If the client commits to a program then they can move up in accommodations. The shelter wants to show that there is a sense of movement forward within the structure of the facility. They will also have job programs similar to Cottonwood. Depending on the fundraising they would like to have a separate building for that program. The piece of land that they are purchasing is a little over an acre, and the City is working on getting another two to three acres for them, putting their property even with Diamond Everly. It is a reasonable sized piece of property. They want people to gain assistance and stay there for their services. Henderson said that he has been asked why they would want to build at the edge of the city. He answers that it is on the bus route, it is near DCCCA, the East Hills area, and it is closer to 19<sup>th</sup> and Haskell where SRS is located. They will also have the agreement with the Baker University School of Nursing to have onsite health care, and there will be a bed or two associated with that room. These are just outlines at this point and it is what they are looking at. The community and the CCH need to take into consideration cold weather and related winter problems. If the shelter has 100 beds now and there are 89 people signed up during this time of year when it is nice, there will be a problem. Lastly he added that there will be a meal program serving three meals a day.

Swarts asked if LINK will remain in effect.

Henderson indicated that he had not had a specific conversation with them. His first reaction was what would happen to the residents of Vermont Towers if LINK closes or moves, but by and large, LINK is more of a homeless service now than what it started as.

Dinsdale added that there needed to be a discussion on peripheral issues specifically related to LINK and the Drop In Shelter.

Swarts said in terms of a 24/7 emergency shelter, within a few days people were supposed to be in a program, depending on the individual. If that was the case one would have to ask the question why a drop in center would be necessary. Swarts said that if the shelter is set up to work with what it needs to such as life skills, training, health care, and sleeping quarters, all while making the expectation that the client needs to participate in services, is there any reason for a drop in center?

Dinsdale added that the location of the drop in center may have unintended consequences. The CCH needs to look at how as a community, we respond, and what will the CCH do in terms of outreach. If the CCH does not have a conversation regarding what will happen then it is irresponsible.

Swarts asked if it should be an agenda item for the CCH in their September meeting.

Dinsdale said that she felt that was appropriate.

Henderson said that if it does not happen now it still will need to happen and the city will still need a drop in center of some form. There will be people out there that need it. There are those who are camping, those who are banned from the shelter, and those that need to use mail service or use the phone. Cities have them.

Dinsdale said that it is a discussion that needs to happen.

Martin-Smith said that she felt that the topic does need to be discussed because it is very important. These questions will be ones asked by the public. If there is not agreement on this commission, then the issue will go on and on and the community can never move forward. It is important to clarify what the CCH thinks is important to this community.

Henderson said that he is not saying that Lawrence will not have a drop in center. It will likely be based on geography.

Collier asked when it will be appropriate to have a discussion on families because there is no place to send these families now. Family Promise is full.

Henderson told Collier that LCS will take them.

Collier said that it is absolutely critical that when the new shelter is in operation that there is a spot for families.

Henderson said that this experience with the families in the shelter has raised the question that LCS needs to work with these families.

Dinsdale requested that the September agenda include an item regarding homeless families.

Henderson said that he will have a conversation with the LINK board. He is not sure what has changed with LINK or First Christian Church, but there needs to be some discussions in advance on how the conversation is going to go. Henderson offered to go talk to LINK, and added that First Christian Church is going through some changes.

Dalberg offered to accompany Henderson.

### **ACTION TAKEN**

Motion by Dinsdale, seconded by Martin-Smith to move the September meeting date to September 15, 2009.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **ACTION TAKEN**

Motion by Collinsworth, seconded by Mosely to extend the meeting to 10:10 a.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

## **Public Comment**

Ellen Johnson spoke to say that she was very upset that the previous night at LCS there was another family that had come to the shelter, forcing women into the lottery. Her understanding was that women had always been given a spot and had not had to be part of the lottery. She was 28<sup>th</sup> on the list the previous night and she had to sleep in a dark shadow, which is also where the sex offenders sleep. The change in the policy at LCS is upsetting, and the result was a pregnant woman was put out on the street the previous evening. It is on the street that rape and sexual assault are most likely to happen and it is not safe to be on the street. She would like to be able to stay at the drop in shelter and she feels that she needs structure. She needs to have space so she can work out her game plan and that is her primary concern. She feels that if she is behind a dumpster or in a dark shadow that someone else will be there as well.

Christina Renfro told the CCH that she is eight months pregnant and she had to sleep on the street the previous evening as well. She is trying to find a place to live but it is hard. LCS is telling her and her companion that they are not a family.

Damian Scott said that he no longer resides at LCS because he was banned, but his opinion is that the ladies being placed on the lottery while the alcoholics are allowed to continue living in the shelter and not trying to get straight is wrong.

Mary Green said that she understood the issue of overcrowding and funding, but her main concern is for those who have high blood pressure and arthritis. These people cannot walk the street all night. The lottery brings about a great fear of being on the street.

Dinsdale said that the CCH and LCS are overwhelmed with the problem. The City has to put limits on the shelter for safety. The shelter has to abide by those numbers and decisions have to be made by those numbers as well. If the law is not obeyed then the shelter runs the risk of being shut down. The community needs solutions. There may be a need for additional overflow shelter space. The CCH cannot solve the problem right now.

Vicky said that she was in the office of LCS this morning seeing to her medications. The staff was saying that they were going to see about getting the awning reopened. She has seen a lot of drunk people and drug addicts come in and out of the shelter. As soon as they get help they fall right back. Those who are really trying to get help are being pushed aside. There are a lot of people who are really trying to get their life back in order. The staff cannot get to everyone. Her daughter-in-law filled out a paper Friday for assistance and as of Tuesday morning she had not been able to talk to a staff member

yet. It is safer for the women to get into the shelter because men can defend themselves and women cannot.

Dinsdale acknowledged that these are important issues and are issues for LCS and how they run their program.

**ITEM NO. 7 Adjourn.**

**ACTION TAKEN**

Motion by Martin-Smith, seconded by Collier to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

**Attendance Record**

Members	01/09	02/09	03/09	04/09	05/09	06/09	Jun PR	07/09	July PR	08/11/09 **	08/18/09	09/09	10/09	11/09	12/09
Jeanette Collier	+	+	+	+	E		+	+	+	+	+				
Hubbard Collinsworth	+	+	+	+	E	+	+		+	+	+				
Wes Dalberg	+	+	+	E	+	E	E	+	+		+				
Katherine Dinsdale	+	+	E	+	+	+	+	+	E	+	+				
Loring Henderson	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				
Charlotte Knoche	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	E	E	E				
Shirley Martin-Smith	+	E	E	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+				
Mike Monroe	+	+	+	+		E		+	E						
Robert Mosely	+	+			+						+				
Shannon Murphy	+	+	E	E	+	+	+	+	+	E	+				
Sandy Winn-Tutwiler			*E	+	+		E	+							

\* designates first meeting after appointment.

\*\* no meeting; lack of quorum