

**City of Lawrence, Kansas
COMMUNITY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS
September 15, 2009 Minutes (Lawrence City Commission Room)**

Members present: Jeanette Collier, Hubbard Collinsworth, Wes Dalberg, Loring Henderson, Shirley Martin-Smith, Shannon Murphy

Members absent: Katherine Dinsdale, Robert Mosely, Charlotte Knoche, Mike Monroe, Sandy Winn-Tutwiler

Staff present: Stephanie Russo, Margene Swarts

Public present: Sara Taliaferro, Diane Etzel-Wise and Barbara Balentine from Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition, Heather Hoy, LDCHA, Hilda Enoch, Saunny Scott, David Tucker from Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center

ITEM NO. 1 Introductions

In the absence of Chair Dinsdale, Vice Chair Dalberg called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. Members of the Community Commission on Homelessness introduced themselves.

ITEM NO. 2 Approval of the Agenda and the August 18, 2009 Minutes

ACTION TAKEN

Motion by Shirley Martin-Smith, seconded by Hubbard Collinsworth to approve the Agenda and to approve the August 18, 2009 Minutes.

Motion passed unanimously.

ITEM NO. 3 Sub Committee Updates (Housing Vision, Resolution, Outreach Team).

Martin-Smith stated that she had sent a rough draft of the Housing Vision. She stated that the Housing Vision has stood the test of time. However, she is reworking the chart so that it is more user friendly and she should have it ready next month.

Henderson provided a copy of the floor plan and Management Plan which were included with a Special Use Permit application for the Lawrence Community Shelter that was submitted to the Planning Department on September 14. He explained the floor plan and answered questions regarding same.

Henderson stated that there will be two levels of the shelter. The first will be the emergency sheltering level. He stated that those who decided not to opt into a program would be allowed to stay up to 120 days. He stated that most stays will be shorter if the person is not in a program. The second phase is for those in transition who are in a program with a case manager and plans and goals to get out of homelessness. He stated that the plan currently has room for five families, but he believes the need is greater. Another small building on the site will be for the jobs program. He stated that Good Dog! Biscuits and Treats (work training) is going fantastic. He stated that the land for the shelter is 2.5 acres.

Henderson stated that he estimates that 125 is a good number regarding how many people will use the shelter each night. He estimated that a sleeping space for 100 individuals and 25 for families is reasonable. He continued that on a freezing night last year the current shelter including the Salvation Army slept 120, and would turn away up to 30 persons a night.

Henderson stated that the Housing Vision is a living document and that the number in the emergency shelter should be 125 if the other parts work. He stated that Family Promise is limited regarding the number of people they can serve. Some from Family Promise come back. He stated that 75 persons was agreed to previously, but for planning purposes, 125 is more reasonable.

Martin-Smith expressed concern that that was not on the agenda for today and that the CCH should have more members present to discuss this matter.

Swarts stated that it would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Henderson stated that the Special Use Permit review is a lengthy process and in discussing the City Commission meeting dates he asked if there was a second reading required.

Swarts stated that she was unsure. Swarts stated there would probably not be a meeting on December 29, 2009 so that could have some bearing on the dates. It would be best to check with Planning regarding the process.

Henderson asked if there was a public comment section with the Planning Commission as there is with the City Commission.

Swarts stated that individuals need to check with Planning to find out what the process is. She noted that the process is not the same as the City Commission regarding the public comment.

Henderson asked that this item be included on the next CCH agenda for discussion. He also requested that everyone look at the floor plan and let him know if they had any comments. He added that Sabatini and Muller are the architects on the project; there is no neighborhood association, but there are businesses in the surrounding area. The business next door is very concerned so Henderson will start meeting with them and the other businesses in the area. He reiterated that he would like anyone to contact him if they have any comments. He stated that the closing on the property is scheduled for the first week of December.

Dalberg asked if there were any other Commission updates to discuss.

Martin-Smith stated that she and Swarts are working on a few changes to the resolution that established the CCH and will be ready to discuss them at the next meeting

Henderson stated that he will be meeting Friday with Carla Helms and Eunice Ruttinger from Bert Nash regarding the Outreach Team.

ITEM NO. 4 Homeless Families Update.

Swarts was unsure what this agenda item was regarding. She looked through the minutes from the last meeting and questioned if this was something from the last meeting that was not discussed due to public comment, or if this was something to address that was brought up during public comment.

Martin-Smith stated that Katherine said she wanted an update regarding Family Promise; however the meeting was adjourned when she made that statement.

Swarts stated that she would check with Katherine regarding this issue and add it to the next CCH agenda, if appropriate.

Collier stated that she did check the numbers this morning and that 29 families are homeless today. She stated that they have received 50 new applications for households facing past due rent or evictions, and that they have prevented those from becoming homeless.

ITEM NO. 5 Public Comment.

Sara Taliaferro requested that an update from the CCC be added to the next CCH agenda.

Swarts stated that it would.

Taliaferro stated that the CCC facilitation team will work with Henderson on the new shelter location if he would like.

Martin-Smith will get with Sara regarding same.

David Tucker, Homeless Outreach, discussed some disturbing news from those camping at Clinton Lake. He stated that the camping fees are changing from \$150 a year, to \$250 every month for anyone not recreationally camping. He stated that this fee will include utilities, but most homeless don't use the utilities. He stated that in his opinion that "smacks of targeting homeless". He is investigating further.

Tucker also expressed concerned regarding Women's Transitional Services. He has heard that a lot of those needing assistance are coming from other areas due to safety concerns, and that they do not meet the residency requirements. He stated that he wished we could get more family housing in the local shelter especially since we already have 29 here in town.

Dalberg asked where Tucker had gotten the information regarding Clinton Lake.

Tucker stated that two separate clients had told him that the changes were coming. He stated that the Park Rangers had gone around the campsites letting people know of the changes, and that the changes are coming in January. He confirmed he hadn't heard anything from officials but that he had heard this from two different persons that Park Rangers told clients of upcoming changes.

Martin-Smith stated that it would help to have official comment regarding this matter and asked if David worked with Sarah at WTCS, stating that she hoped Sara would come to the CCH if she needed help and was not sure where to go.

Martin-Smith stated that there was an understanding that many of the women who used the WTCS are not from Lawrence, and wondered if there was a change in the demographic that would make them want to stay in town instead of returning to their community.

Heather Hoy, LDCHA, stated that to get assistance from WTCS women must be able to confirm that they are employed or live in Lawrence. She stated that if the client could show that they had previously been on a lease, or are currently on a lease, that that would provide proof of residency. She recommended that questions for LDCHA be directed to Barbara Huppee.

Hilda Enoch asked the CCH how much effort is put into all the other housing programs which are part of the Housing Vision, other than the shelter. She stated that we have an emergency with families coming into town with no housing. She asked if we could bring together members from the construction and banking industries to see if people have other ideas, and to have an emergency housing forum. She stated that transitional housing needs to be multifaceted. She expressed concern that it is not treated as big an emergency as it is. She stated that pregnant women are sleeping in the street. She stated that it was bigger than the six people present on the CCH and that more people needed to be more aware. She asked how the churches are doing with Family Promise, and are there any churches downtown that can help with overflow from shelter?

Dalberg stated that all parts of the Housing Vision are important, but that we need to move people out of the shelter and into stable housing. He stated that from the beginning that no one wanted a big box shelter, but that many agencies were needed to make it work, and that is what we are trying to do. He stated that he did not know how it would work to get together a large group of people, but that he was not apposed to it.

Dalberg stated that two applications had been made to the State for Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Funds. The outcome of those applications should be known by October 1st.

Martin-Smith stated that while it may not seem like much we are moving forward and while supportive housing is the most difficult, it is coming along.

Collier stated that no new funds had been approved anywhere in the entire state and with no money there are no funds for new programs.

Henderson stated that emergency needs come first. First Methodist Church had offered their space for overflow; however the City is reluctant to approve that without the fire code being met. The City did not approve overnight sleeping in First Christian Church as they do not have fire sprinklers. He stated that no small churches have sprinklers as they are not required too.

Families come first and if a pregnant woman came in for shelter she would get in for the night. They are turning away people every night, but meeting safety standards is necessary.

Swarts stated that the City submitted an application for \$2.8 million for the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program which would help prevent homelessness, pay utilities, rent assistance and help homeless become housed with first months rent and deposits.

She stated that she anticipates hearing from the State this week. She clarified that the City and the LDCHA applied together.

Enoch asked if Swarts was tracking all the federal stimulus money.

Swarts stated that all funding, stimulus and other, is being tracked.

Hoy stated that there was recently a landlord summit and that of the 45 landlords that came, the Housing Authority we not familiar with approximately 40 of them. She stated that the Housing Authority had used the City rental registry list and made contact with many more landlords than they had in the past. Landlords that had been on the e-housing list since the beginning were slowly coming along to help. She stated that of the families she has on her list they can house 1/3 of the families, 1/3 are still on the waiting list, and 1/3 will likely not be assisted due to previous rental history or a criminal background that landlords will not deal with. She stated that she had talked to Homeless Outreach and Resident Services regarding wrap around services and can not figure out what to do.

Collier expressed concern that those people were being screened out.

Hoy stated that if they are on her list then they are not screened out. She stated that landlords won't work with them. She stated that it is unknown if this need is to be met by Transitional Housing or the E-Housing Connector, but she is accepting everyone they can. Hoy stated that they cannot accept those who are convicted sexual predators, or have been convicted of production/distribution of methamphetamines. In the past they were unable to accept anyone that had a debt to the Housing Authority, but they are working with those clients if they can indicate some kind of repayment plan.

Murphy asked if the sexual predator and methamphetamine restrictions were federal mandates, and Hoy stated that they are.

Martin-Smith stated that the CCH would not ask that those restrictions be set aside.

Hoy stated that they would not be set aside and reiterated that Douglas County residents and families are considered first.

Martin-Smith stated that it is why it is important to find E-Connections, and that it is great news to have housed five families and have that many new landlords at the summit. She noted that the Mayor was there and it is important to show that kind of support.

Hoy stated that they are planning another meeting to discuss lease agreements with landlords and service providers and that meeting will be September 29th.

Swarts noted that if the HPRP application is approved and the program was fully funded, (which she stated was unlikely) then over the three year period it is projected that it will help approximately 175 homeless individuals/families 350 individuals/families who are precariously housed.

Dalberg stated that EKCAN, WTCS and the Salvation Army partnered to submit an application for HPRP funds through the County. The funds are for Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing programs for which they are eagerly awaiting a response from the State.

Martin-Smith asked for clarification – were there applications for two county grants, or were there two applications?

Swarts stated that there were two applications, one through the City which included funding in the County and the other was through the County for funding in both the City and County.

Dalberg reiterated that the three agencies partnered together for the funds in the application through the county.

Martin-Smith asked if the requests exceeded the amount of money available and how these will complement each other.

Dalberg stated that he was not sure.

Martin-Smith stated that she hopes both get funding and that she would like to see the partnerships continue, however she expressed disappointment in the lack of communication as she did not know a second application besides the one from the city had been submitted.

Dalberg stated that it went very quickly and that if either are funded it would be a great ability to help more people.

Enoch reiterated that she believes that there should be a gathering of developers, contractors and bankers. Bring them all together and have the City sit in to see if there is land that can be a part of this or if any housing can come from that in a creative way. She stated that the CCH should gather all diverse people and bring them together as important players to help in this emergency.

Dalberg asked Enoch if she was suggesting that something be built.

Henderson stated that he is already working with those people to get the most donated for this situation and for the new shelter and was hesitant to go back to the group for more.

Enoch stated that it had been done in Topeka and had been effective.

Martin-Smith stated that was along time ago and that we are dealing with a variety of different issues. She applauded Loring for reaching out for assistance in starting, and again in finishing, this project. She stated that she was impressed with the generosity of the community and was aware that that was how the Penn House had been funded many years ago and that that is how this needed to be done as well. She acknowledged that these are challenging economic times and that she is encouraged by the applications but, to organize a bunch of people must be well planned. The commission is representing the whole community. She acknowledged that Enoch has spent 25 years working on this and she wished the CCH could have done more in the last six years but she feels that things are coming along.

Enoch stated that recently there had been a meeting regarding housing and Heartland Mental Health to help people with mental illness get housed and asked how that was going.

Henderson stated that the discussion was regarding permanent supportive housing, not transitional housing. He stated that there is a Section 811 Housing Project for the mentally disabled and that application has not yet been approved or denied. That project would be funded through HUD outside of the super NOFA process.

Enoch asked how new projects were going.

Dalberg stated that there was no funding for new projects. He clarified by stating that if there is no existing project then it is very hard to get funding. Starting a new program is actually harder to get funding for than for an existing program. He stated that the time to apply for the new HUD grant is coming up again and he would apply for that and hopefully get some funding.

Henderson stated that renovation work at the LCS is basically done except for the HVAC air replacement for fresh air. He stated that they had to order a subsidiary system and that will come in at the end of the month. The current plan is to be open by October 1 for up to 82 total occupancy with 6 being staff and volunteers. He stated that September 16 is the 4th annual block party in front of shelter. The block party is sponsored by Oread and LINK. He stated that Joe Bickford's band will perform and that there will be hot dogs, hamburgers and soyburgers and that the party is from 5 to 8 p.m.

Saunney Scott asked Shannon Murphy where people convicted of sexual abuse and methamphetamines are supposed to go for help regarding housing.

Murphy stated that that is a real challenge as those people have to go to individual landlords to find someone to rent to them. She stated that the Department of Corrections used to have programs to help those about to be released get housing placements, but due to budget cuts as of July, they have no longer been able to do that. She was unsure if there were any programs to help with reentry. She stated that it is a smaller population than general population, but that they may have to go it alone.

Scott stated that some of those people do have families.

Murphy stated that was correct.

Diane Etzel-Wise, Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition, introduced herself as well as Barbara Balentine. She announced that the Homelessness Summit will be October 29 and 30. She will bring a program for the summit to next month's meeting. She stated that members from national organizations will be leading the training. Information will be available on the website soon.

ITEM NO. 6 Miscellaneous/Calendar.

Collinsworth asked for a status update on HMIS and if it was up and working. The last he had heard there was no access to the reports.

Margene noted that locally very few agencies were using it.

Henderson stated the LCS uses it to report bed nights. Previously, The Salvation Army did as well.

Etzel-Wise stated that not everyone was using HMIS statewide so her agency will be working with all communities to improve those numbers. She stated that to get funding that program must be used.

Enoch asked if ECKAN and Family Promise use HMIS.

Collier and Martin-Smith stated that they did not.

Dalberg stated that if HPRP funding is received, it will require the use of HMIS.

Collier stated that due to the fact they are required to use other programs, it is difficult to duplicate input of the information.

ITEM NO. 7 Adjourn.

ACTION TAKEN

Motion by Shirley Martin-Smith, seconded by Shannon Murphy to adjourn the meeting at 9:41 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	09/15	10/09	11/09	12/09
Jeanette Collier	+	+	+	+	E		+	+	+	+	+	+			
Hubbard Collinsworth	+	+	+	+	E	+	+		+	+	+	+			
Wes Dalberg	+	+	+	E	+	E	E	+	+		+	+			
Katherine Dinsdale	+	+	E	+	+	+	+	+	E	+	+	E			
Loring Henderson	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+			
Charlotte Knoche	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	E	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