

City of Lawrence, Kansas
COMMUNITY COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS
October 14, 2008 Minutes (City Commission Room, City Hall)

Members present: Jeanette Collier, Hubbard Collingsworth, Katherine Dinsdale, Jane Faubion, Loring Henderson, Shannon Murphy, Mike Monroe, Shirley Martin-Smith,

Members absent: Wes Dalberg, Charlotte Knoche, Phil Hemphill, Robert Mosely

Staff present: Margene Swarts, Joseph Rexwinkle, Lori Parker

ITEM NO. 1 INTRODUCTION

There was no public present so no introductions were given.

ITEM NO. 2 AGENDA/MINUTES

ACTION TAKEN

Motioned by Collingsworth seconded by Henderson to approve the September 9, 2008 Community Commission on Homelessness minutes.

Motion carried unanimously, 6-0, Collier and Faubion not present for vote.

ITEM NO. 3 Homeless Shelter/Day Center Text Amendment Update – Joe Rexwinkle

Collier arrived at the meeting

Rexwinkle stated there were three changes to the text amendment. He said restriction to fifteen nights per calendar quarter along with the Family Promise program and there had been no objection at the Planning Commission meeting. He said there would be a requirement for management plans to be approved administratively and they would be appealable to the City Commission. Rexwinkle stated the definition of family would consist of anyone with children.

Henderson stated some of the recommendations were specific to Family Promise. He said in the future a different variation or version could be recommended and the entire code would have to be changed. Henderson said churches had more freedom in society but they had to meet the code and the standards. He said it was their task in life to shelter people. He asked what would happen if churches in the area began sheltering sanctuary posts without asking to do so.

Martin-Smith stated she disagreed it was a narrow focus. She said the Commission had worked on this for almost six years and should not spend more time on it. She said the community had not moved along with the Commission as much as it was hoped they would. She said children needed to be in a safe and warm environment with a meal so they would excel in school.

Dinsdale said she shared the above thoughts. She said churches in the area should fight the decision rather than the Community Commission on Homelessness. Dinsdale stated the Management Plan described was very burdensome and the charge was to help the City of Lawrence go forward. She said the Management Plan could be moderated to Family Promise having the authority over the day center which was obligated to abide by the City Code. She asked Staff what would happen if a church participated in the network and did not submit a Management Plan.

Rexwinkle stated the Planning Director would not be able to approve the registration or permit without a Management Plan. He said the applicant could appeal the decision.

Dinsdale asked Staff if a church would be able to decide to go forward without the City's permission.

Swartz stated without the approval of the registration or permit, and a church chose to go forward, there would be a code violation and an investigation.

Faubion arrived at the meeting

Dinsdale said she questioned why the appeal process would go to the City Commission.

Rexwinkle said the reason was for the operator to conform to the Management Plan. He said it may vary from the operator and from church to church.

Henderson asked if there would be a Management Plan from each church and Family Promise.

Rexwinkle stated there would be a Management Plan from each church and each church would have a Management Plan.

Henderson asked if there were thirteen churches would there also be thirteen Management Plans.

Rexwinkle stated that each church may start with a template and fine tune it, as necessary, to address neighborhood concerns or particular site conditions

Martin-Smith said if Family Promise had a template the difference would be that each church would have to look at their own specific neighborhood to see if there were different concerns.

Dinsdale said Family Promise was a team of volunteers. She said this was regarding housing and children. She said a Management Plan was very burdensome.

Rexwinkle said Staff did not believe there was a need for a Special Use Permit and this was the best compromise. Rexwinkle said there was a standard template for the application. He said the first few places Family Promise registered would be a learning process. He said after the City Commission approved the item there would be an application created. Rexwinkle stated there were other codes that came into play such as fire codes.

Monroe asked if the application process was required to be renewed every year.

Rexwinkle stated the application would be renewed every year.

Dinsdale suggested a clause that the application automatically renewed every year if there were no complaints or concerns.

Rexwinkle said the language that had been established was what would go to the City Commission. He said the recommendation would not be changed at this point.

Dinsdale asked if anyone in the City could lodge a complaint.

Rexwinkle said, as written, yes and noted that this process is the same process that is used for other types of applications.

Motioned by Martin-Smith, seconded by Henderson, to change the language in the application process stating 'complaints could only come from neighbors within a 200 foot area of the shelter or church'.

Motion carried unanimously, 8-0

Rexwinkle read the basic template for a Management Plan.

Collier asked if there was a threshold to neighborhood complaints.

Swarts stated complaints would be appealable to the City Commission.

Henderson said he wanted one process for Family Promise and a way for neighbors to protest or to be heard. He said there should not be a process for each church and a permit should be given to Family Promise until there was a complaint. Henderson said there should not be a compliance committee.

Martin-Smith said the Commission needed to move forward. She said there was a message to Family Promise to do the best they could do and keep the Community Commission on Homelessness posted on what improvements could be made in the future.

Rexwinkle said Planning Staff had experience in the application process and would guide the applicants through it.

Martin-Smith said Family Promise would be able to establish the most efficient way to move forward.

Dinsdale said there were people upset just on principle. She asked what the involvement was of the Community Cooperation Committee and stated they had put together an excellent web site that had resources listed.

Collier asked if the Community Cooperation Committee could be the first phase of the appeal process.

Swarts stated the Community Cooperation Committee was a volunteer organization and the Community Commission on Homelessness was appointed by the Mayor of the City of Lawrence.

Martin-Smith said the idea had merit and needed to let Family Promise move forward and let the Community Cooperation Committee attend the next Community Commission on Homelessness meeting to discuss issues.

Henderson said the Community Cooperation Committee should have a representative at the public meeting.

Henderson asked how many volunteers were on the Community Cooperation Committee.

Dinsdale said there were eleven volunteer members.

ITEM NO. 4 Discuss November 11, 2008 meeting location – Shannon Murphy

Murphy stated she would offer to have a meeting at the correctional facility if the CCH was willing to change the location.

ACTION TAKEN

Motioned by Martin-Smith, seconded by Dinsdale to move the November CCH meeting to the Corrections Facility at 3601 East 25th street.

Swarts asked how long the tour would last.

Murphy stated the tour would last thirty minutes.

Swarts noted the tour could begin at 8:30am and the meeting would begin at 9:00am in Correctional Facility meeting room.

Swarts stated she would post notification on the web site regarding the November meeting.

ITEM NO. 5 **Re-entry Model Program Update – Shannon Murphy**

Dinsdale said Item 5 would be tabled until the November meeting.

ITEM NO. 6 **LCS Update – Loring Henderson**

Henderson read parts of the Semi-Annual Activities Report. He said there were four programs at the shelter which were outlined in the Report.

Dinsdale said it was exciting and encouraging that the housing vision was being used and it fit with the plan mandated. She said the Community Commission on Homelessness was the body that helped shape the public face of all the Social Service agencies.

Martin-Smith stated the entire package should be sent to the City Commission.

ITEM NO. 7 **Coalition on Homeless Concerns Rehabilitation House Update – Loring Henderson**

Henderson stated there would be a meeting held at the Salvation Army on Friday October 17th at 10:00am. He gave the Commission a copy of the Lawrence Re-Entry program.

Murphy stated there was not a community based reintegration program and it was needed. She said the First Step House supported women and children but there was not a reintegration program for men.

Faubion asked what the terms three quarter and one quarter meant and if they were common terms.

Murphy said 1.0 was full independence with all the skills and accessing the services out there. She said three quarters meant a person was in the community but provided with services. Murphy said one quarter was like the First Step House and provided internal services and was more intense. She said the next transition would be the Oxford House and then full transition to independent living.

Faubion asked if one quarter was residential service.

Murphy said one quarter was residential service like the Oxford House.

Martin-Smith asked if the detoxification unit was needed if the one quarter house was available.

Dinsdale asked if the detoxification unit was for men or for women.

Murphy said this particular house was for woman.

Martin-Smith stated the detoxification services were hard for people in the community to accept. She said the City Commission should be educated regarding the service.

Faubion asked if a detoxification service fit into the City Code definition.

Henderson stated that First Step House existed.

Dinsdale asked if the CCH could do anything to help move forward.

Murphy stated there was nothing the CCH could do at this time. She said there were so many housing needs and populations. She said Hearthstone was a half way house and there was more oversight with the Board of Directors. She said the Oxford House was run by chapters and both utilize the community based programs.

Collier noted there was really nothing in the community to help people who need help with their rent.

Murphy said the Oxford House was all pay forward type of housing. She said Hearthstone was locally based and could help with support for two or three weeks.

Martin-Smith said there was money available from the churches for rental assistance.

ITEM NO. 8 Salvation Army Update – Wes Dalberg

Dalberg was absent so there was no report.

ITEM NO. 9 LDCHA Housing Connector Update – Charlotte Knoche

Knoche was absent but Dinsdale stated she received an email from Knoche who updated her on the Housing Connector which is now named the E-Housing Connection. She stated it would be a one year project that would begin early in 2009. Dinsdale said the Housing Authority was working with Social and Rehabilitation Services and the Kansas Housing Resources Commission. She said they had also applied for a grant through the Douglas County Community Foundation.

Murphy said there had been monthly meetings with the Housing Authority, Case Managers and potential residents.

ITEM NO. 10 Five Loaves/Homemakers Update – Katherine Dinsdale

Dinsdale stated there were two women and a newborn living at 500 Missouri street. She said there was volunteer support five days a week. She said one of the women had been dropped off at 10th and New Hampshire and was pregnant at the time. She said the referrals came from Bert Nash and they had been generous and helpful.

Dinsdale said the two women get along well. She said it was difficult to supervise the traffic and friends that come and go.

Faubion asked if the volunteers at the house were church members.

Dinsdale said the volunteers were from different churches and they were various ages. She said transportation and meals were also provided.

Collier stated both the women could draw disability and medical benefits and still be employed.

ITEM NO. 11 Future Agenda Items

a. Community Cooperation Committee Website and Information Update

Dinsdale stated Family Promise and the Community Cooperation Committee would give an update at the December meeting.

Collingsworth stated HUD was pushing hard for HMIS. He said money was being spent which could eventually affect funding sources.

Henderson said he was a coordinator for the local HMIS. He said each agency was basically doing their own individual thing but HMIS was supposed to be helping agencies get HUD funding.

Swarts said she had gone to training for the Emergency Shelter Grant and they discussed HMIS and the need for all ESG funded agencies to submit data.

Henderson said the whole state may change to a different program as MAAKLink has been problematic. It has tried to address every aspect and is cumbersome as a result.

Murphy said there was a discussion to do a homeless count annually even though it was required every other year.

Swarts said the next required Point in Time (PIT) count would be 2009.

Murphy said there was talk about including jail inmates. She said there were 26 inmates in 2008 that were using shelter addresses.

Martin-Smith said it should be publicized more so the count would be more accurate.

Martin-Smith asked for an update in December to the CCH regarding the PIT count.

Dinsdale asked if the CCCH would support a letter written in support of the T regarding the sales tax.

Martin-Smith said she did not think it would be appropriate for the CCH to write the letter; the group concurred.

ITEM NO. 12 Other Business

No other business

ITEM NO. 13 Miscellaneous/Calendar

None

ITEM NO. 14 ADJOURN – 10:00a.m.

ACTION TAKEN

Motioned by Martin-Smith, seconded by Murphy to adjourn the Community Commission on Homelessness meeting.

Motion carried unanimously, 8-0