



TOWN COUNCIL
Committee to Assess Homelessness in Hyannis
Selectmen's Conference Room

Tuesday August 4, 2016
MEETING MINUTES

I. BUSINESS

A. Roll Call:

Members present: Chair of Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum, Councilor Frederick Chirigotis, Councilor James Crocker Jr.; Councilor James Tinsley; Councilor Debra Dagwan
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Barnstable Police Chief, Paul MacDonald, Lt. J. Challies; Sgt. J. Ellis, Rose Evans, Director for the Division of Housing Stabilization at Department of Housing and Community Development; Town Manager, Mark S. Ells

Chair of the Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum opened up the meeting at 6:00pm. Roll call was done. Chair of the Committee introduced Rose Evans, Deputy Under Secretary for the Division of Housing Stabilization at Department of Housing and Community Development. Ms. Evans stated that her primary role is to assess and address State resources and other support systems to be able to address this issue at a local level. We are looking at 7-8 different initiatives that we report on to our delegates. We do this through the various committees and groups that meet, and it looks from what she has seen and participated in that Barnstable is trying to find a way to bring all those resources together to work in a more coordinated way, so there are two ways we need to do this, one way is to coordinate all the service agencies at the state level and departments that are involved with those agencies and combined with the local agencies that are contracted by the state and receiving funds for those services are providing the services to the individuals, and making sure that the contract they are under is how they are operating the agencies. Ms. Evans stated she has been fortunate enough to have been able to travel across the State to see other communities that also have this issue as well, and she is glad to see the agencies that are here and all the support services you have right in your area, these are not found elsewhere in the state, there are some, but not as many as you have here, she believes that these resources are coming around and are having a huge impact right here in your own community. We also work with the Cape and Islands Regional Network to end Homelessness has started to play a significant role in the efforts of a coordinated entry system and they are expanding the approach in a more regional way, which is what HUD is looking for when they fund the issue, they like to see a coordinated effort by all. The Lorusso Foundation has been an enormous financial contributor to this effort as well. Another side of the Department and Urban Development are also looking at the policies of the program, and they are meeting the rural poverty policy, and we are looking at other policies as well to see if they need to be cleaned up or just look at the see if they are addressing the issue as it sits today. One issue she is focusing on and working with HAC and the Town manager and the location of the shelter and possible relocation of that shelter and what is available to move the shelter, and then once that is done, we will have to look at the services that we can attach to the shelter so there is movement out instead of permanent housing.

Chair of the Committee wanted to touch base on the Coordinator position that has gone out again, Councilor Jennifer Cullum asked Ms. Evans to also let other know about the position and if she or anyone knew of anyone that may fit the position or a fit as far as what this town needs in order to move forward with the coordinated effort, the position is literally a black hole position because it is new and we have nothing to measure anything by. Someone from our administration should be at the table for these discussions when new agencies come right onto our Main Street and no one in the Town managers

office knew anything about it, or the Town Council members. Councilor Jennifer Cullum stated that when something like that happens and no one knows about it how does that happen, we should know what is coming into our neighborhoods so the residents and the tax payers are aware and they have a say in what goes on or what comes into their neighborhoods, it's our community. Councilor Jennifer Cullum said that the administration should be in the discussions that are happening with regards to relocating the shelter, we are not there and we should be. Chair of Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum asked Ms. Evans about the accountability of these agencies; in other words they are contracted under the state to perform a services and they receive monies based on delivering those services, what checks are done or what reporting is done to make sure that these agencies are receiving the monies and performing the way the contract in which they operate under is working properly. Ms. Evans stated that every contract has goals and performance goals, and if there are concerns in any of the areas they are addressed internally, these are the ones that are contracted by the State; Ms. Evans does not control the private contracts.

Chair of the Committee said hopefully going forward our Town manager has a seat at the table when these discussions that take place happen, because ultimately it's the taxpayer dime that is funding these agencies and we need to know if they are working.

Chair of the Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum had a questions regarding consolidation of any of the agencies here in Hyannis, she reported that at one of the meetings we had in the beginning there was a staggering 72 right in Hyannis alone, is there an appetite at the State level to look at consolidating any of these. Ms. Evans said she did not know of any however with that being said she realizes that Hyannis is the hub that everyone goes to so that is why the services are here. Councilor Jennifer Cullum said that there should be a limit to how many sober houses are allowed in a neighborhood. Or how many services can open up a business or something to that effect because Hyannis is tipping over with all of them.

Councilor James Crocker mentioned that he is interested in the conversations that are happening outside to the ones we know about. Councilor Crocker has concerns about the Transitional Living Center and whether or not that is ever going to happen. Rose stated that the plan was presented to us and we at the State asked for more clarification on the plan that was presented regarding the Joint Base location because there is an area now that was never allowed to be accessed by the public and now the space is going to be used to house homeless people, so there is a lot of laws that we have to look at. There is also a feasible study that has to be done on this area as well, meaning with the shelter possibly moving to the base, and then putting a transitional living center there as well as a stepping stone out of the shelter and into a house, there a lot of regulations that we need to look at before we just do it. Councilor Crocker said he had concerns because in one meeting we are a go and in another meeting it's going to be a slow process.

Councilor Jennifer Cullum also mentioned that the meetings that have been had with regards to the Transitional Living Center there was never an invite until most recently, but that committee has been meeting for over a year and a half and no one from the Council had been invited, or even told up until recently that you were meeting. Councilor Crocker also mentioned that moving the shelter is really not going to solve the problem if you do not move the social service agencies with them. He believes that the flood of camps will pop up again because the Salvation Army is still going to provide meals, but now there is no shelter for them to go to; we must provide the services to them if the shelter is relocated.

Councilor Chirigotis asked how we are going to coordinate the efforts together so that we are not duplicating work. There are 72 agencies just in Hyannis, so how are we going to coordinate all of the care and services that need to be provided. Ms. Evans stated that the State has to make sure and it is important to all that the process goes forward with a tighter coordination of meetings and make sure that those that need to be at the table are at the table for any of the discussions that take place regarding your community.

Councilor Debra Dagwan is concerned that the mental state of some of these individuals need to be addressed and she is not hearing anyone address the issue, why are these individuals homeless, and for those that are not because of a mental illness or they lost their home, do we really understand who we

are dealing with and why, obviously the homeless in the woods are not ready to be put in a home, but what are we doing to address their problems. We need to identify these folks and their needs; there may be some places over the bridge that we may be able to send individuals to; a facility over the bridge that may have room or services for help if we do not have the ability to treat here. Ms. Evans stated that you are already doing this with your boots on the ground and interacting with these individuals to identify what their needs are. Boston is taking the approach of when an individual reports to anyone of their shelters, they have a coordinated effort upon arrival that does a needs assessment of that person and then gets that person in touch with the proper services that person may need. You absolutely need to set up a coordinated entry system, and if that is done by the person who fills that position you have posted, or you get an agency to do the coordinated entry system. Ms. Evans has met with others to introduce this type of assessment entry process and in your community there are about 90 people being assessed.

Sgt. J. Ellis stated that their street team already does this process when we encounter an individual, we are the triage person so this is already done, and her question was who is the person that the police reach out to after we have done the assessment, who does the assessment for the regional team, Ms. Rose stated that is what is in the works right now because they have to work within the HIPPA laws, but once an individual is assessed, that gives an agency the right under the HIPPA laws that allow treatment facilities to share information.

Councilor James Tinsley asked about the vouchers for housing, the 12 that were handed out were from the Barnstable area. Councilor Tinsley asked about the process in which to receive a voucher, how does an individual start that process? Ms. Evans stated that the State releases vouchers to the Housing Assistance Corp, and they go through a very stringent application process where there are goals for the recipient to meet and expectations that are explained.

Mr. Rick Presbrey stated that there may be vouchers available, but there are no houses available. The lack of landlord's is a huge issue, it's a trusting factor. Some landlord's do not want to rent to these individuals for a variety of reasons, so it takes us a little more explaining on our part and a little more reassuring on our part in order for a landlord to say okay.

Chair of the Committee would like to see an extra meeting a month possibly for the Council so that we are kept informed somehow of what is happening in and around town. The Council has a lot of questions and we would like the answers to them, possibly a workshop so that we know what is going on.

Councilor Frederick Chirigotis believes that this committee should be the venue that everything travels through, as this committee meets and the others meet, there should be information given to us on the discussions that take place and other resolutions that are discussed at these meetings.

Rose suggested that this committee get a hold of the presentation that was made by one of your own Councilors and Anthony Schiavi to the Transitional Living Steering Committee so that you can see the plan.

Chair of the Committee asked for an update from the police regarding the efforts put forward. Sgt. J. Ellis can't thank this Committee and its members for all the efforts you have done because you have brought the agencies together for the first time, and she enjoys now working with the other outreach workers in getting these individuals the help they need and to get them started on the right track, so she wanted to thank this Committee for doing this. There was also an update on the camps in and around the Hyannis area, she has seen a significant drop in them and not re-established, so there is a real change in that and a drop in the numbers for them, we also were able to clean up Bo Chu's camp and he is now in the shelter in Hyannis, and we are providing him with some of the services he needs and getting him set up for success. There are two camps that we are dealing with on private property and we are working with the legal team and the homeowners to remove them and get them the services they need, but we need legal clarification before we enter private property and remove them.

Chair of the Committee wanted to ask a question that was given to her by a committee member that could not attend; Deb Krau asked if the police go out at night to look at the camp areas because she

has heard that they return at night to camp, but not during the day. Chief Paul MacDonald said yes they do go out. The area that Ms. Krau is referring to, the police are patrolling that area.

ADJOURNED: 7:05pm

NEXT MEETING: August 22, 2016 6PM