



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

Monday December 1, 2016
MEETING MINUTES

I. BUSINESS

A. Roll Call:

Members present: Chair of Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum, Councilor James Crocker Jr.; Councilor Frederick Chirigotis; Councilor James Tinsley; Councilor Debra Dagwan.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Paul MacDonald; LT. J. Challies; SGT. J. Ellis, Barnstable Police; Mark S. Ells, Town Manager; Ruth Weil, Town Attorney, Rose Evans, Deputy Undersecretary, for the Division of Housing Stabilization at Department of Housing and Community Development; Arlene McNamee, LCSW, Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Social Services: **ABSENT:** Deb Krau

Chair of the Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum opened up the meeting at 6:05 with public comment, seeing none the Chair of the Committee closed Public comment, and introduced Arlene McNamee, LCSW, Chief Executive Officer, Catholic Social Services who introduced herself to the Committee and explained the transition of the NOAH Shelter to St. Joseph's House and the day to day life of an individual who utilizes the shelter from day to day.

Ms. McNamee explained to the committee they took over the managing on November 1, 2016; a lot of anxiety with the guest and the staff; there have been some changes in the shelter, 5 have been moved into housing, the guests all take part in chores, they clean the shelter just like they would if it was their permanent home, which it is not, but they do the chores assigned to them. The guests are also required to save 30% of their income and it goes into a savings account they can't touch, this was met with a lot of resilience in the beginning, however they have come around and are all doing now, it is explained to them in order for you to move on from here, you need money to do this, without it you can't get the basic essentials. 6 more guests have gotten jobs and there are three more looking, the 20 year guest has left, and they all are aware of the goals, they all have a 90 day window to which they need to meet their goal in order to move on, those with more barriers will be longer, they have been working with Duffy Health Center and hope to build on that relationship as well. The guests all are mandated to take showers, and have clean clothes on. The guests are no longer allowed to leave the building carrying those green trash bags, the belongings stay inside if they are leaving for the day; replaced all the mattresses and bedding in the shelter; when we first moved in there was a 4 page list of violations given to us to fix and are working with the Housing Assistance Corporation to fix those issues. In the beginning of conversations the shelter was going to do their own cooking and meals, and not rely on the Salvation Army to do this, however in those talks with the Salvation Army it would result in 5 jobs lost if we no longer needed them to feed the population, so those talks have been tabled for now until we can come up with a solution for the loss of jobs. They also have an agreement with the Salvation Army that if some of our guests come for the meals, they are to be inside the building and being served, and not hanging around on the street corners or loitering.

They have some staff that remained on that was employed by the Housing Assistance Corporation, and some of the staff came with the Catholic Social Services, there was a staff member that was fired for stealing. Ms. McNamee explained that they shelter is a capacity right now, they are full.

The fence is going up with a small area designated for smoking area, so the guests are not on the sidewalk smoking in the public eye.

Chair of the Committee complimented the efforts being done at St. Joseph's house and also wanted Ms. McNamee to know she asked for the report from the Board of Health on the violations as well so that she could understand all of it, and strikes her in a bad way that she has been left with the 4

pages of violations, and how they were allowed to operate with these violations clearly in place but not made to do anything about it when the other management team was in place, and now you have inherited the issues and problems., these folks are now your landlords, so be careful and hold their feet to the fire and make sure they fix these problems. Ms. McNamee said the Housing Assistance Corporation is helping with the list and fixing the major problems right now, however we are not at the end of the list, but we are making progress with their assistance.

Chair of the Committee asked about the relationship the Catholic Social Services has with the Salvation Army, Ms. McNamee said we have a relationship with them because of the nature of what we do, they are very cordial in the sharing of food and clothing, and with resources they know about and sharing lists with us, they have been very nice since we have been here. Chair of the Committee stated that she hopes that the relationship will strengthen with the Town now that Catholic Social Services is here and working on the same issue. Chair of the Committee said there have been some contentious remarks in the past, but she hopes that the Town can be part of the conversations going forward with all of the agencies involved in helping. The Chair of the Committee also mentioned that she had a conversation with Pastor Steve from the Faith Assembly on Bearer's Way who also feeds the population of homeless, and they now have staggered times for certain individuals eat, families and their children come between 4:30 and 5:30 to eat as a family, then there is another seating of single individuals, and so on. This seems to be working for them as before the families would not come because of the atmosphere they had to eat in, but since this has been implemented there are more and more families coming back there to eat as families. We want everyone to have food, but the human contact is so important.

Councilor James Crocker thanked Arlene McNamee for her presentation and said that she is exactly the type of manager that he was looking for to manage this type of facility.

Councilor Crocker asked about the 90 day goal setting period, what happens at the end of the 90 day period and the guest has not yet completed what needs to be completed before being placed somewhere. Ms. McNamee said we will work with the client to get them there, but if the housing is not there to support the 90 day discharge then we are going to have a problem. Councilor Crocker asked how we can help or assist in this now that we are heading into the winter. Ms. McNamee stated it all boils down to affordability, and it is very expensive to live here on Cape Cod, your rental market is very high. It will be our job to talk to the person about the affordability; there are also some ways of getting people into homes if they have more than one person living with them, and we can group individuals together to share the cost because one person's income may not be enough, but combined with another's and it is. The other is affordable housing or projects for affordable housing, there are not enough of these homes going up that become affordable, there may be a lot of homes vacant in your area, however these individuals income can't pay the rent, let alone any other bills associated with the home. Ms. McNamee also said that her organization if the person has roots outside of Hyannis, they make every attempt to relocate that person closer to the support group they have there, however she stated that right now approximately 92% of her guests are from the Cape Cod Area, there are very few here that have ties somewhere else. Each individual's story is so different from the last, so it depends on what the story is before we can fix or mend the problem. Councilor Crocker asked if there was an end game or a collective group of activists that chase housing, chase the monies, chase these options for you. Ms. Evans and Ms. McNamee stated that would be the Housing Assistance Corporation that does this for us. Councilor Crocker said that agency is the only one here that is doing it for you, are your other shelters that The Catholic Social Service Agency manage other with only one reference, or are there other sources at your disposal for this. Ms. McNamee stated she also manages a housing corporation that has built these homes that she is talking about in the other areas, she also stated that they have looked at Cape Cod to do this type of building as well here, Cape Cod is not exempt from this type of building, and it may be looked at in the future, however we are not looking at it right now, our focus is in other areas at the moment. Ms. McNamee said at the moment they need to deal with the cards they have been dealt and solve that first. We need more landlords' that are willing to rent. Councilor James Crocker also wanted to know if landlords approach you, is that okay? Ms. McNamee stated absolutely, have them come see us.

Chair of the Committee asked that when the agency is looking for homes to house these individuals that you also try and look outside the Village of Hyannis. Councilor James Crocker also needed to remind the Committee that looking elsewhere should be an option, but when you have a hub such as Hyannis and everything is here for services as well as the transportation to get to those services is here, that is why the homes are located in Hyannis. When you start to spread out those homes, then we have to figure out how these individuals are going to get transported to the appointments or to whatever day program they are participating in.

Councilor Dagwan asked about private houses, and if these landlords have in-law apartments are the individuals put through a CORI check. Ms. McNamee stated that would be up to the landlord to ask for a CORI to be done.

Councilor James Crocker said that if the property is owner occupied where the in-law apartments is located and to be rented, the homeowner has the right to decide who rents from them if its owner occupied.

Chair of the Committee asked about the day program and where that stands. Ms. McNamee sated it is inside the St. Joseph's house for now until we can find another location for it. There was a location slated but it did not work out, so we are actively looking for another venue for this to happen. Chair of the Committee asked where they are looking, Ms. McNamee said we do not have anything right now; we want to make sure that the space is big enough to handle the programs we want to run and it has to be in close proximity of the shelter.

Town Manager Mark Ells asked if there was anything that the town may have as far as locations or be able to help with locating a facility they may use, Mr. Ells reiterated that the Town would like to help in anyway and be involved in the conversation for planning. Ms. Evans wants to make sure that we do not jump the gun on this subject, we need not to be reactive to this situation, we will be looking at properties, but we are not going to rush into any decisions, Ms. Evans stated we are not even looking at a funding source for this, it is all preliminary, and we need to really slow down and look at everything that needs to be looked at, we do not have any programs lined up, Catholic Social Services just started the managing of this, we are getting way ahead of ourselves, and it is alarming.

Chair of the Committee said that Hyannis is reactive because we are saturated with issues and we ae trying to get out from underneath them. Ms. Evans said we have made great strides in our progress, and she does not want to go backwards, we are all still new in this and we need to slow down. We need 3 million dollars right now to help with this across the Commonwealth, and we do not have that either. We are heading into the winter looking for \$3 million from a State budget at a time that is not a good time for funding. Chair of the Committee wants to make sure that at the very least a seat at the table for discussions is what we are looking for; we want to be in the loop of information and the thought process going forward. Ms. Evans needs to focus on the list of violations before we look for another building for a day program. Ms. Evans stated that she wants the committees and others to talk again and have those stakeholders at the table as well.

SGT J. Ellis stated that she has seen a huge improvement in the last month, she has conversations with the workers now on a regular basis, the lace is very clean, and the guests were playing games sitting down watching TV. It is very professionally run, and the guests are on board with all this. Karen who is at the shelter is very good with the tough love; she puts up with nothing and expects everything to be done that is assigned to the guests. The guests are very excited that this has happened and are cooperating.

ADJOURN: 7:11pm

NEXT MEETING: December 5, 2016 at 6pm Selectmen's Conference Room