



TOWN COUNCIL
Committee to Assess Homelessness in the Town of Barnstable

Selectmen's Conference Room

September 18, 2017

6:00pm

MEETING MINUTES

I. BUSINESS

A. Roll Call:

Members present: Chair of Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum, Vice President of the Council, James H. Crocker Jr.; Councilor Debra Dagwan; Councilor Frederick Chirigotis; Councilor Will Crocker Jr. **Others in attendance:** Town Manager Mark Ells, Chief Paul MacDonald; SGT. J. Ellis, Barnstable Police; Mark S. Ells, Town Manager; **ABSENT:** Member at Large, Deb Krau

Elizabeth Wurfbain attended a conference on the Homeless, the main speaker at this convention was to collaborate together, which Elizabeth said Barnstable has been doing all along, so she feels great about the fact that Barnstable was ahead of this idea and concept on how to combat this issue; Elizabeth stated that Barnstable is not alone in this it is happening all around the Commonwealth, so we are not the only ones dealing with this issue, the other communities that attended and spoke all had the same concerns and we are all doing the same.

Chair of the Committee asked that Councilor Will Crocker put on his State Representative hat for a moment and explain where House Bill 3881 is right now in the legislative process. Representative Will Crocker Jr. said that it is in the Joint Committee on Municipalities and local government, Representative Will Crocker and Councilor Jennifer Cullum spoke in favor of the bill, Representative Will Crocker introduced two support letters as well, one from the Hyannis Civic Association and the Town Council letter, so there was great support, there was another person who spoke in favor after Representative Crocker left, he was not sure who it was but can find out. The next step is it will be given to the Committee, and he will ask that it get reported out favorable. Hopefully it will, from there it will go to the House Floor, then it goes to the Committee of Bills for a third reading where it gets bounced around, so he will ask that it gets sent with approval from that Committee, then it goes back to the house for another debate, then it will go to the Senate to make amendments, or not make amendments, then it will go to the Governor for his signature, Representative Crocker said he hopes that it will be passed by the Spring. Vice President James Crocker Jr. asked about Senator Cyr and how he felt about the bill, Councilor Will Crocker said that he has some issues with it, however I do not think he understands it right now, I do not believe he has been given a full explanation as to why this is here, Chair of the Committee had a conversation regarding the bill with Senator Cyr, and she too believes he needs to understand the intent behind it. There is a lot of discussion right now over the Dover Amendment, so he doesn't want anything to cloud those discussions. Senator Cyr would like a meeting and so would the Chair of the Committee to discuss this with the Senator so he can understand it in its entirety, and also be given the opportunity to ask questions about it. Chair of the Committee stated that it is a super sensitive subject right now, so that is why the meeting is going to happen with the Senator, and hopefully soon, and she hopes she is included. Town Manager Mark S. Ells asked who was coordinating the meeting; Chair of the Committee said that Leslie Sandburg from Senator Cyr's office will reach out to all of us. Chair of the Committee asked that the Town Manager keep the communications open with

Leslie and also include Attorney Ruth Weil in on that meeting. Town Council Administrator will coordinate the meeting with the Town Manager and others.

Chair of the Committee explained that the reasoning behind the House Bill 3881, part of the Dover Amendment (educational portion) allows certain group homes to be bought in residential areas under the educational wording of the amendment; it basically says that any nonprofit entity if being used as an educational facility under the Dover Amendment can reside in residential neighborhoods, this bill would give the neighborhoods a little bit more say in whether or not to allow this type of home in a R1 zoning area. This Committee is not saying we do not want these home in Hyannis or in Barnstable, what we are saying is our neighborhoods need to be filled with families and children. This portion of the Dover Amendment is interpreted so many different ways which is why we had to do the testimony in favor of the Bill. Chair of the Committee also explained that no one on the Committee asked any questions during the testimony, but we said what we had to say, and now we will see.

Chair of the Committee mentioned that we have been trying to get other Town Managers from around the Cape to come and speak with us about their homeless problem, and when we called Sandwich to talk to the Town Manager, he said about what, we do not have a homeless problem, so I do not know what I can offer to your Committee. Chair of the Committee, Councilor Jennifer Cullum asked if there was another way to ask the question, Vice President James Crocker Jr. suggested that we ask the towns about their commercial zoning, or the zoning they may have regarding residential neighborhoods.

Councilor Fred Chirigotis asked about the Cape Cod Commission and whether they have done a study on regional homelessness, we hear there isn't a problem, but yet there is.

Town Manager Mark Ells did reach out to Bud Dunham from Sandwich, and he stated again that he had nothing to add to our problem because they do not have any issues with it. Town Manager Ells was impressed with the conversation we had with Mr. Knapik from Yarmouth who had a total different experience in Westfield when he was there, he explained that he had so many resources available to him and here we do not, so the problem is handled a lot different. Vice President James Crocker Jr. said we should have Falmouth Town Manager come in and speak to us regarding his issues in Falmouth; they are similar in size and also have some of the same issues. Town Administrator will reach out to the Town Manager of Falmouth to ask them to come in and share their issues with us. Chair of the Committee wants one voice approach for the Cape which includes all the Towns.

Vice President James Crocker Jr. wanted to know from the police if there are any camps popping up now that the weather is getting cooler, Deputy Chief Sonnabend said that there are no new camps anywhere he has been told about, other than the Rt. 132 camp which was found and dismantled. There is a red car that has been bouncing around to different parking lots through the Town which we have tried to approach the couple in the car, they refuse help or assistance and just want to live out of their car. Town Manager Mark Ells said he believes that the CSO's around Hyannis have made a huge difference; just the presence of them walking around seems to deter people from gathering. Chair of the Committee mentioned that she has seen a little more foot traffic in and around the Oak Neck Cemetery. There seems to be a gathering more and more. Deputy Chief Sonnabend said he has noticed as well, and will send a patrol car through now and then. Chair of the Committee asked if there was a way to close the cemetery with a locked gate, Deputy Chief Sonnabend stated that closing it isn't an option, because if there is an emergency we can't get through if there is an emergency, and it may get an increase of activity because you have now locked it and the transients know now it is locked and the police can't get in if its locked.

Councilor Debra Dagwan mentioned maybe some lighting can be added to deter individuals to the area if it is lit up. Chair of the Committee would like to see a nature trail put into the area where Kalmus Beach is so that it deters camps being put up, if the public was allowed to access this as part of a nature trail walk, it would be used by our schools as well for science, there is a lot of nature out in this area, it's a shame we do not use it for this.

Chair of the Committee asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 17, 2017. Vice President James Crocker Jr. made the motion to accept the meeting minutes of July 17, 2017 as written, all members present with the exception of Councilor Debra Dagwan, who abstained, voted in favor of accepting the meeting minutes of July 17, 2017 as written. Chair of Committee Councilor

Jennifer Cullum asked for a motion to adjourn. Councilor Fred Chirigotis made the motion to adjourn; Councilor Debra Dagwan seconded the motion, all members present voted in favor of adjournment

ADJOURN: 7:00pm

NEXT MEETING: October 11, 2017 at 6pm Selectmen's Conference Room