



HOMELESS TASK FORCE Committee Meeting Notes

Wednesday, October 14, 2015
5:00 PM
2000 Main Street
Lower Level Meeting Room B-8

In Attendance

City Staff: Kellee Fritzal, Chief Robert Handy, Teri Baker, Stephanie Beverage, Captain David Bunetta, Lt. Kelly Rodriguez, Simone Slifman; Muriel Ullman; Bill Nelson

Task Force Members: Vicki Boatman, Dave Moses, Ron Kupferstein, Joseph Sullivan, Bill Blair

1. **Public Comments (Limited to 3 minutes/person):** None

2. Approval of Minutes from the Meeting of September 9, 2015

Member Kupferstein requested that the names of the consultants working with the Task Force be included on the list of staff attendees. A motion was made by Member Bill Blair, seconded by Member Ron Kupferstein to approve the minutes of the September 9th meeting and to include the names of consultants as Task Force staff attendees. Passed unanimously.

3. Presentation by Muriel Ullman, Housing and Homeless Consultant Regarding Macro Issues of Homelessness and Costa Mesa's Task Force Recommendations

Rick Francis, Assistant City Administrator of Costa Mesa began the presentation with comments regarding issues faced in Costa Mesa pertaining to the homeless: food sharing, the prevalence of homeless living in motels, and clients leaving sober living homes. Cities are very limited in their regulatory ability of sober living homes.

Muriel Ullman provided an outline of best practices implemented by the Costa Mesa Homeless Task Force. This included the nine goals and action items developed by the Task Force which she described individually. The main findings of the Costa Mesa Task Force were that mental illness and substance abuse play a major role in homelessness as does difficulty navigating services; that there was no teamwork between the government and various service organizations; and that there were opportunities to improve the relationship with the faith community to partner with them in creating solutions. Costa Mesa created a definition of a Costa Mesa homeless citizen so that they could prioritize who receives services with city funding, and those who were exceptions to the definition. They reviewed a variety of ordinances related to overnight parking, food sharing, camping, storage and other issues

commonly associated with the homeless in their community. Examples of actions taken include:

- A Task Force recommendation to adopt a storage ordinance and work with the faith-based community and nonprofits to provide storage and retrieval for personal property of the homeless was adopted and a program put into place.
- An ordinance prohibiting smoking in public parks was also amended to be more current. A ban on sex offenders was overturned in State and Federal court so is no longer enforceable.
- A bicycle rack ordinance was adopted to prevent individuals from using multiple bicycle racks as storage locations.
- Costa Mesa implemented centralized homeless services coordination, including Muriel Ullman to oversee services, 2 community outreach workers, and a dedicated Code Enforcement Officer. They developed a Network for Homeless Solutions, consisting of staff, consultants, various departments, government agencies, private sector partners, and faith-based and nonprofit organizations. A dedicated Homeless Outreach Police Officer has not yet been implemented due to resource constraints but is slated for 2016.
- Costa Mesa is working on formalizing a legal strategy to remove homeless individuals from the community who commit repeated offenses and refuse assistance.
- A program was implemented to provide emergency motel and transportation vouchers.
- A review of possible future supportive housing has been placed on hold due to community opposition to the site.
- Costa Mesa implemented an information management system which tracks clients and their various service-related activities.

Ullman described various lessons learned from the process including the need for coordination with the faith community and nonprofits, targeting services to residents, balancing the needs of all members of the community, and having a centralized system, among other lessons and recommendations.

4. Presentation by Stacey Bowler of the City of Costa Mesa, Providing a Primer on Community Outreach

Stacey Bowler described her role as one of the two part-time community outreach workers servicing Costa Mesa. They are scheduled Monday through Saturday but their work often occurs outside of business hours and on Sundays. Their primary role is to form relationships with the homeless issues on the vulnerability list and connect them to services. The outreach workers collaborate and coordinate with all of the various agencies and organizations that can provide the needed services to those they are assisting. Costa Mesa has invested \$245,000 in resources, but this has enabled staff to be in place. As a result they have housed 105 individuals in the past three years, connected more than 600 to services, provided \$60,000 in grants to non-profits that targeted Costa Mesa homeless, and connected those in need to the coordinated entry program.

Rick Francis commented that this approach was taken by the City in an effort to reach the long-term goal to keep people off of the streets.

Lieutenant Kelly Rodriguez asked for the definition of "linked." Bowler said that includes taking them to appointments, interviews, transitional housing, and providing taxi vouchers for transportation to and from appointments. They don't include missed appointments in their collection of data, only when the actual appointments occur.

Member Sullivan asked how funding works for their Police Department. Rick Francis said there was mass attrition in the Police Department, and they lost about 40 officers in 3 years. They are currently 103-104 currently vs. 127+ previously and what they will hope to get back to; they had to disband the former community resource unit to fill patrol positions, but the potential for a dedicated officer to work with the homeless is on track for 2016.

Member Blair asked how they manage competing nonprofits. Muriel stated that they started focusing on their clients – picking the one that was best for their clients' individual needs. The biggest need for their clients is emergency shelter, as there is not enough in the county.

Councilmember Delgleize asked if they need more people or if what they have is sufficient. Francis said that PD support is badly needed – both dedicated officers and code enforcement. Delgleize asked if officers can call outreach workers and if the focus is first on Costa Mesa residents. Bowler said that yes, they can and will call them out when appropriate and that the focus is on their residents. Francis said outreach workers attend police briefings and that has increased the number of contacts.

Member Kupferstein asked for the percentage of homeless in Costa Mesa that are considered residents. Ullman stated that there are 122 residents and 78 non-residents. Francis added that it is hard to understand the changing numbers unless there are constant counts.

Kellee Fritzal asked if the \$245,000 includes supplies and other costs, and Ullman indicated that yes, about \$14,000 is used for supplies.

Lt. Rodriguez asked if outreach teams are alone or with PD. Bowler said that they are usually out with someone – PD, another outreach worker – and rarely approach alone unless their relationship with the individual is known. Follow up visits vary but are often in public.

Member Sullivan asked if the two outreach workers cover all hours of week when encounters are planned. Bowler said they cross shifts when needed.

Member Boatman said she is impressed with the good, solid process that helped to ID strong key needs, but there will always be a need.

5. Presentation by Rick Francis, Assistant City Manager, City of Costa Mesa, Regarding the Haven of Hope Model and Housing/Service Ideas for Orange County

Costa Mesa has more sober living than any other city in the county – the last known count was 207, but is likely 250-280 homes. The problem is that people get kicked out regularly so this becomes the biggest growth demographic in the homeless population. The primary rise in officers being injured on duty is from people that have left sober living homes.

Member Sullivan asked if the homeless can be housed there. Francis said that many are part of referral networks from other places and once people from other parts of the country come to Orange County and aren't inclined to leave once they get here, but the homes cannot be forced to have an exit strategy for their clients. AB109 and Proposition 47 have caused property crimes in Costa Mesa to rise by up to 40%. Member Blair asked about regulatory ability to reign in sober living. Francis said that Costa Mesa has an ordinance prohibiting sober living homes in R1 zones, but can't touch them if they are licensed by the state.

The County is on its third attempt to locate a shelter – for eight months of the year there is no shelter in Orange County after the emergency shelters close. Francis said there are an estimated 4,400 homeless in the County as of 2015. Costa Mesa does their own point in time count during another time of the year to try and ensure more accuracy.

Francis presented his experience visiting Haven for Hope in San Antonio, a privately run, housing-first facility that takes no federal funding. They are a nonprofit and receive money from NGOs and private donors.

Francis said it houses 1,500 people total – 800 in transformational, long-term living, segregated by gender. All services are provided only for people who want to change and they must be sober to participate. It has significant security. There is a courtyard that serves 700, who can sleep, eat, stay (including bringing in their possessions), so they don't hang out in the neighborhood. Weapons are not allowed and courtyard users do not have to arrive sober. If someone is ready to transition, they can get sober at the sobering center across the street and come back when a space is available. They co-locate with 78 other organizations, which provides for one database and service coordination without duplication. The operation is very systematic and organized and participants must meet benchmarks to move through the program. Option 2 for those interested in the long-term program is the prospects courtyard. Those who want to use this courtyard must have ID.

The 2011 goal was to place participants in 400 jobs, but they actually placed 525 in jobs with benefits. The facility cost \$103 million to build – funds came from the City, the County, the State, New Market Tax Credits, private donors and in-kind donations.

Chief Handy commented about his experiences in Phoenix and San Bernardino and cautioned that this approach requires us to be careful, because it can become a magnet.

Member Sullivan asked what is needed to do something like this in Orange County. Francis said that the County's original plan for a shelter was to place one in each supervisorial district. The county CEO is looking for another location, probably in South County. Land costs are high so it may be more than one location.

Council Member Delgleize asked about hospitals building a facility. Francis said that is a great idea and referenced the Illumination Foundation.

6. Presentation by Ian Stephenson, Executive Director of Trellis, Regarding Faith Community Partnerships

Stephenson described the history of how Trellis was created, it is based on the fact helping the homeless in Costa Mesa was uncoordinated. A churches consortium was formed and was represented on task force and then started getting together and working with the City. Stephenson said they meet weekly to talk about cases, have trained mentors, established a check in center, and service providers agreed upon a set of service standards to be enforced across the network and identified recommendations to help the faith community work better together.

Francis said that this relationship is very valuable and has reconnected more than 20 people back to their families.

Fritzal asked who is doing the point in time count for Costa Mesa. Francis said that Vanguard University under the direction of Ed Clark and Trellis will do the count on a Saturday morning and that volunteers have to be trained in order for it to be a consistent process.

7. Discussion Regarding City/Provider Homeless Surveys Developed by Member Kupferstein

Fritzal said that the survey as developed may present an issue because the way that data is collected by the City and various organizations differs so the information might not be consistent. She asked whether to delay until it can be refined or whether to distribute now. Member Kupferstein said he wanted it distributed now. Member Sullivan asked how it would be distributed and Fritzal indicated that she will distribute by mail or email as applicable. Fritzal said she would send the surveys out a second time to the members following the meeting, and invited any additional comments from Members over the coming two to three days.

8. Task Force and Staff Member Comments

Lieutenant Rodriguez said that the 6 months of data being requested through the survey represents very extensive labor. Member Kupferstein said that he wants to know to what the services are that are being supplied to the homeless by the Police Department. Chief Handy added that the data is

hand tabulated, so it is challenging. Member Kupferstein said he is open to receiving data on the most recent 30 days is an ample time period if it produces good data.

The Police Department will provide an update at the next meeting reading the steps they have taken regarding homelessness.

9. Adjourn to November 18, 2015 at 5:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM. The next meeting has been rescheduled due to the Veterans' Day holiday and will take place on November 18th instead of the 11th and at the Central Library in the Talbert Room, starting at 5:30 PM.