

DURHAM HOMELESS SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

3:00 p.m.

**Durham County Human Services Building
414 E. Main Street – 2nd Floor Conference Room**

The Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) met on the above date and time.

Committee Members Present: Chair John Bowman, Vice-Chair Webb-Bledsoe, Secretary Stephanie Williams, Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden, City Manager Tom Bonfield, Assistant County Manager Drew Cummings, Lindsey Jordan Arledge, VA Medical Center, Dr. Janice Harper, Assistant Vice-Chancellor, University Programs, NCCU, Captain Stan Harris, Durham County Sheriff's Department, Lois Harvin-Ravin, Durham County Veterans Services Officer, Reverend Warren Herndon, Angela Holmes, Pam Karriker, Christian Assembly, Charita McCollers, MSW, Lincoln Community Health Center, Reverend Chris Tuttle, Westminster Presbyterian and Latasha Wilson (SAVE).

Excused Committee Members: Fred Stoppelkamp, Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD)

Absent Committee Members: County Commissioner Michael Page, Director Michael Becketts, Durham County Social Services, Minnie Forte-Brown, Durham Public School (DPS) Board, Michelle Jordan, Assistant for Community Relations, Durham Technical Community College, Jackie Love, Durham Public Schools Homeless and at Risk Liaison and Jason Wimmer, OEWD.

Staff Present: Director Reginald Johnson, Project Managers Lloyd Schmeidler and Matthew Schnars, Administrative Analyst Keshia Barnette, Department of Community Development and Sheila Bullock, Office of the City Clerk.

Also Present: Nigel Brown, Martin Friedman, Beverly Ford, Cynthia Harris, Seaira Hinnant, Christopher Jackson, Gretchen Senez, Joi Stepney (Housing for New Hope (HNN), Ryan Fehrman (Genesis Home), Reverend Ernie C. Mills (Durham Rescue Mission (DRM), Patrice Nelson (Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD) and Catherine Pleil (Durham Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN).

Subject: Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Bowman called the meeting to order at 3:12 p.m. and welcomed everyone. He noted that since there was not a quorum at this time the approval of the minutes would be delayed until later in the meeting when the Clerk has notified him of a quorum.

Subject: Public Comment Period

No comments were made.

Subject: HSAC Public Comment Procedure

A process for the public comment procedure of the HSAC has been drafted that is similar to the process used by the Durham City Council at their Work Sessions. Individuals desiring to make public comments would need to inform the Department of Community Development by 5:00 p.m. the day

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before the HSAC meeting, complete the public comment form appropriately and indicate if the subject they are speaking on requires any public action from the HSAC.

Assistant County Manager Cummings stated that he does not want to discourage public comments and he feels that it is beneficial. However, the public may not know that there is a policy in place for registering to speak before the HSAC.

Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden pointed out that the policy would provide some order and help move things along.

Committee Member Karriker asked if the policy could be sent to homeless providers and other organizations to post on their bulletin boards making people aware of the process.

Project Manager Matthew Schnars, Community Development Department, agreed that this could be done and staff will also work with the City and County Clerk to make sure the information gets to those websites.

It was moved and properly seconded that the HSAC's public comment policy be approved in its intended format.

Subject: Minutes Review & Approval – January 21, 2015 and February 25, 2015

Motion by Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden, seconded by Committee Member Herndon to approve the HSAC minutes of February 25, 2015 was approved at 3:22 p.m.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden, seconded by Committee Member Herndon to approve the HSAC minutes of January 21, 2015 with any necessary changes was approved at 3:23 p.m.

Subject: Announcements

Committee Member Herndon announced that there are approximately 23,500 young people in Durham Public Schools. He pointed out that there was an incident where a 15 year-old lost his life. Committee Member Herndon stated that he is making appeals to any committee and at meetings that he attends in order that everything possible can be done to protect the young people.

Committee Member Herndon noted that on Saturday, April 11, 2015 the 2nd annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Prayer Breakfast will be held at First Presbyterian Church from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The theme for this event is "The Good Neighbor Breakfast." Committee Member Herndon commented that this is an opportunity for Clergy and concerned citizens to come together.

Committee Member Harris announced that on Monday, March 23, 2015 while attending a meeting at Southern High School, he was approached by administrators who shared their concerns regarding the homelessness of some of their students. He mentioned that these students are in great need of toiletries and some don't have means of getting haircuts. Committee Member Harris noted that the Sheriff's Office deals with a gentleman who offers free haircuts and as an agency they make contributions to him. He stated they will put the administrators at Southern High School in touch with this gentleman so the students can benefit from this service. Ms. Cynthia (Terresa) Mangum, School Social Worker, is the contact person at Southern High School.

Committee Member Williams also suggested that Committee Member Jackie Love, DPS Homeless and at Risk Liaison be contacted as well.

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Committee Member McCollers added that she has been very successful in getting hair care services for some of her patients at the hair school in the Holton Career & Resource Center.

Committee Member Herndon reminded everyone that some months ago he addressed the subject of youth by cleverly stating “We make sure that our efforts get to the lowest common denominator. The lowest common denominator is our kids.” He noted that at some point in time there were probably at least 100+ DPS kids or families living homeless and as everyone works together he asked that our kids not be forgotten.

Subject: ZERO: 2016 Update

In following up to discussions held a few months ago during a HSAC meeting, Mr. Schnars addressed questions that Committee Members had concerning discrepancies in numbers with the ZERO: 2016 framework. He reviewed the March 2015 update and provided information on Durham’s progress.

Mr. Schnars noted that in speaking with Chair Bowman, he would like to have this update given each month at the beginning of each meeting so Durham’s progress can be tracked.

Committee Member Karriker and Patrice Nelson, Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD) had additional questions regarding the numbers from the report.

City Manager Bonfield referred to Salt Lake City and how they calculate functional zero. He stated that the report was good information, however, moving forward it might be helpful to translate the report into the functional zero calculation.

Comments were received by Committee Member McCollers concerning the HUD VASH Vouchers.

Subject: 2015-16 City ESG Funding Recommendation

Mr. Schnars summarized a memo outlining staff’s recommendations for the 2015-2016 City Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Funding.

The following three applications for funding were received:

- Housing for New Hope - Rapid Re-Housing - \$109,554
- Genesis Hone, Inc. - Shelter/Operations - \$17,000
- Durham Interfaith Hospitality Network - Shelter/Operations - \$21,000

Mr. Schnars explained that the Community Development Department uses what HUD allows for administration, the amount of \$12,004 and the total actual requested amount is below what Durham is being allotted in 2015-2016. After scoring and ranking of the applicants, Durham Interfaith Hospitality Network had the highest score and was therefore awarded an additional \$488 that was available.

In response to Chair Bowman’s question about the request for Housing for New Hope (HNH) which includes \$200,000 in Dedicated Housing Funds (DHF) for Rapid Re-Housing, Mr. Schnars explained that the City has dedicated housing funds for Rapid Re-housing. Since Housing for New Hope was the only organization that applied for this they would receive the \$200,000 as well.

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Committee Herndon asked how much was given to HNH last year to which Mr. Schnars responded \$279,554.

Assistant County Manager Cummings wanted to know how the requests and recommendations changed from last year. Were the changes significant?

Mr. Schnars pointed out the amount available has increased and there were no substantial changes. He noted that there was an applicant last year that did not apply this year. Fewer applications were received this year than last year for all of the funding.

Motion by Assistant County Manager Cummings, seconded by Committee Member Tuttle to approve the recommendations for the 2015-2016 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funding was approved at 3:55 p.m.

Subject: Progress Update Rapid Rehousing

Gretchen Senez, Executive Director, Housing for New Hope, gave background about HNH and its Rapid Rehousing Program.

Cynthia Harris, Program Coordinator for the Rapid Rehousing program, shared a homeless family's story which ended in a happy ending through the efforts of HNH. A power point presentation was given where she also provided some facts and statistics about HNH.

Chris Jackson, Housing Stability Case Manager, gave a brief explanation of the Rapid Rehousing process and how individuals are moved from being homeless to becoming housed. The process included steps such as landlord outreach, financial assistance, housing stabilization services and assessment.

Nigel Brown, HNH talked about misconceptions and some of the things that do and don't occur with Rapid Rehousing. His discussion emphasized the fact that:

- HNH does not have a cure for poverty but they do stabilize some of the symptoms of poverty by housing families;
- HNH maximizes the housing that they do have for individuals with vouchers;
- HNH provides long-term supportive case management;
- HNH reduces the length of time people are homeless; and
- HNH increases the affordable housing stock.

Further discussion took place regarding the total budget of Rapid Rehousing.

In response to Committee Member Herndon's question regarding what the average minimal monthly salary is for a person who seeks services through HNH, Ms. Harris stated approximately \$1,200.00. He also asked staff what the minimum poverty rate was in Durham City, Durham County and across the country.

Mr. Schnars answered that in Durham he thinks the poverty rate is \$14,000, which is the low end for a single person. Additional discussion followed regarding income.

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Project Manager Lloyd Schmeidler, Department of Community Development added that one of the key things that Mr. Brown reminded everyone of is that Rapid Rehousing does not cure poverty. He pointed out that the good news about poverty and its circumstance is that most poor people do not become homeless. Mr. Schmeidler went on to say that they are trying to focus on what are the causes of homelessness and address those specific causes through Rapid Rehousing. People are still going to be poor more than likely after they exit from the Rapid Rehousing program but their housing is becoming stabilized. Mr. Schmeidler referenced Ms. Harris' story that she shared and stated that it helps people understand, how even on a very limited budget, they can continue to maintain housing which is a wonderful thing. He concluded with pointing out that they are not focusing necessarily on living wages but on Rapid Rehousing and the work of this Committee which is focusing specifically on helping to do better in assisting people, to reduce the length of time they are homeless and to reduce overall homelessness in our community.

Committee Member Holmes wanted to know why did the prevention part of housing stop and will it start up again and what needs to be done to start it back up.

Mr. Schmeidler explained that it was mostly driven by national data that shows that it is very difficult to use public funds as well as private funds to prevent homelessness. Research that was done as part of the 2009 Recovery Act, where HUD invested substantial amounts of money in homeless prevention, revealed that 85% of the households that were given homeless prevention dollars would not have become homeless anyway. Also, another 10% indicated even though they were given money they still became homeless. It was concluded that if you are investing prevention dollars and a household becomes homeless anyway, then that money didn't prevent homelessness. Therefore, it wasn't an effective use of homeless prevention dollars. Mr. Schmeidler added that is why a lot of communities across the county including Durham have moved away from using public funding for homeless prevention assistance.

Further discussion followed concerning homelessness prevention. Comments were also received from Ms. Nelson about the Rehousing Program and having enough funding in the budget to help people.

Committee Member Herndon talked about an article that he read which reported that 42 million people in the United States make less than \$10,000 annually. He encouraged everyone to view a special on the internet that told the story of Detroit's comeback where there were two cities in one. He pointed out that he has traveled 37 states and they don't want Durham to become those two cities – one for the "Haves" and one for the "Have-Nots." Committee Member Herndon suggested that folks may want to review this information and use it as a guide as they move forward.

Subject: Adjourn

With no further business to come before the body, Chair Bowman adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the HSAC will be Wednesday, April 22, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. in the Durham County Human Services Building located at 414 E. Main Street in the 2nd floor conference room.

Respectfully Submitted

Sheila Bullock
Office of the City Clerk