

**DURHAM HOMELESS SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JOINT MEETING OF THE DURHAM CONTINUUM OF CARE**

Wednesday, June 24, 2015

3:00 p.m.

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

A joint meeting of the Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) and the Durham Continuum of Care was held on the above date and time.

Committee Members Present: Chair John Bowman, Vice-Chair Mayme Webb-Bledsoe, Secretary Stephanie Williams, City Manager Tom Bonfield, Edward Abdullah, Director Michael Becketts, Durham County Social Services, Meredith Daye, Development Director, Durham Housing Authority, Minnie Forte-Brown, DPS School Board, Lois Harvin-Ravin, Durham County Veterans Services Officer, Reverend Warren Herndon, Michelle Jordan, Assistant for Community Relations, Continuing Education, Durham Technical Community College, Pam Karriker, Christian Assembly, Charita McCollers, MSW, Lincoln Community Health Center and Fred Stoppelkamp, Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD).

Excused Committee Members: Mayor Pro Tempore Cole-McFadden and Lindsey Jordan Arledge, VA Medical Center.

Absent Committee Members: County Commissioner Michael Page, Assistant County Manager Drew Cummings, Angela Holmes, Jackie Love, DPS Homeless and at Risk Liaison, Reverend Chris Tuttle, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Latasha Wilson (SAVE) and Jason Wimmer, OEWD.

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

Also Present: Katie Crowe (Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church/Structure Committee), Edythe Thompson (Rebuild Durham, Inc.), Darryl P. Hicklen (CAARE, Inc./USA Veterans Help), Emanuel Kearney (SEEDS), Alma Davis (Durham Crisis Response Center), Richard Carew (Citizen), Katrina McCormack (Women's House of Hope), Tiana Terry (Volunteers of America Carolinas), Micah Jones, Intern (UNC-CH), Glyndola Beasley (DRFC), Alex Protzman (Life Skills Foundation), Sandra Lassister, Jackie Ward (Stick & Stay Prevention), Christopher Jackson, Nigel Brown, Tara Glasper, DeMar Glasper, Seaeria Hinnant, Gretchen Senez, (Housing for New Hope (HNH), Ryan Ferhman, Rebia M. Terpl (Genesis Home), Holly Hogarth (TROSA), Jeremy Richards (VOA), Jen Robinson, Drew Johnson (LCHC), Erin Bristow, Alex Harris, Laura Wiederhoft, Donna Biederman (Duke University School of Nursing), Janet Xios, Ayonei Saeller (Community Empowerment Fund (CEF), Spencer Bradford (DCIA), Joy Hager (VOA-C), Carolyn Schuldt (Open Table Ministry), Portia Ganpot, Maruka Rivers, Patrice Nelson, Nekoba Mutima, Tracy Rauscukolb (Urban Ministries of Durham UMD), Ashly Spikes (DERC), Catherine Pliel (Durham Inter Faith Hospitality Network (IHN) and Dr. Sharon Elliott-Bynum and Thomas B. Jones (CAARE, Inc.).

Subject: Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Bowman called the meeting to order at 3:11 p.m.

Subject: Minutes Review & Approval – May 27, 2015

Committee Member Daye commented that in regards to an item discussed at the May 27, 2015 HSAC meeting entitled *2015-16 CoC & ESG Funding Priorities*, she wanted it noted for the record that she needed to abstain from voting on this item.

Motion by Committee Member Herndon, seconded by Committee Member McCollers to approve the HSAC minutes of May 27, 2015 with the noted revisions was approved unanimously at 3:12 p.m.

Subject: Public Comment Period

Veteran Thomas B. Jones (CAARE, Inc.), shared his experiences with the VA transitional housing program offered through CAARE, Inc.

Mr. Jones entered the VA transitional housing program through CAARE on December 29th and received his voucher about a month ago. He expressed his gratitude to the VA and to CAARE for all they have done for him and he noted because of this he wanted to give back. Once into the CAARE housing program, Mr. Jones now volunteers at CAARE's front desk and he also is featured on a PBS documentary.

Mr. Jones thanked Dr. Sharon Elliott-Bynum for being an advocate for him as well as encouraging him to be his own advocate.

Edythe Thompson (Rebuild Durham, Inc.) gave comments on the State Budget Appropriations regarding defunding the State Human Relations Commission. She was asked by the Chair of the State Housing Committee for the NAACP to make the HSAC aware of legislation that is moving through the state concerning HB 97. The bill was passed by the House but when it got to the Senate there was an amendment that defunded the Human Relations Commission. Ms. Thompson noted that they wanted to make sure that individuals understood how important it is to have Human Relations Commissions for the state level and pointed out that this does not defund the local municipalities but it defunds the state at the risk of losing about \$50 million dollars. She asked that if individuals knew someone on the House or Senate Committee that they encourage them not to cut the Human Relations Commissions because they are vital in protecting housing rights.

Subject: ZERO: 2016 Update

Project Manager Matt Schnars, Department of Community Development, provided a brief summary on a document entitled "Mayor's Challenge to End Veteran Homeless" and explained that this information was an update on the ZERO: 2016 Update efforts. Information provided included:

- Cumulative number of Veterans housed since June 1, 2014
- Number of Veterans becoming homeless for first time since June 1, 2014
- Veterans successfully housed during current month
- Number of Veterans entering shelter or Transitional Housing (TH) for first time during current month
- Number of Veterans currently in Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Housing
- Number of Veterans currently in Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing
- Number of Veterans currently in SSVF and HUD VASH
- Number of Veterans currently in HCHV and GPD

Committee Member Herndon commented that as they look across the state and especially on economic down-turns, what kinds of safeguards were in place as Durham grows to make sure that the fine job they are doing addressing homelessness will continue?

Mr. Schnars responded that the safeguards would be the HSAC and the broader community that will continue to work and stay focus looking at what resources are needed.

Subject: CoC Governance Charter

Committee Member Karriker representing the Structure Subcommittee gave a brief background on the Durham CoC Governance Charter and how it came about. Individuals present at the meeting that make up the full CoC were asked to sign the CoC Membership Agreement if they planned to vote on this item.

Motion by Committee Member Forte-Brown, seconded by Secretary Williams that the CoC Governance Charter be approved was unanimously approved at 3:30 p.m.

Committee Member Karriker also thanked Mr. Schnars, Mr. Schmeidler and Committee Member Tuttle for their hard work on the Governance Charter.

Subject: Shelter Transition Policy

Secretary Williams, representing the Performance Management Subcommittee, presented a draft policy for review which establishes guidelines for homeless persons who are transitioning from shelters. The presentation also led to a discussion concerning when “medically fragile” individuals are transitioned from the shelters.

Patrice Nelson, Urban Ministries of Durham pointed out that when they exit someone from the shelter in a very short period of time it is often because there has been a crisis at the shelter. She described an incident that recently occurred at Urban Ministries of Durham where a resident who has serious medical and mental health issues attacked the front desk staff person. The staff person had to go to the hospital and get stitches and the attacker is now banned indefinitely from staying in the shelter. Ms. Nelson shared another situation that also took place at the shelter where the police is constantly being called because of an individual who is trespassing. She commented that these are community wide problems and because there are no other places in the system for people to go, doesn't mean that they can live at Urban Ministries of Durham. Ms. Nelson noted that it is not fair to staff and others residing at the shelter by saying no these individuals can't leave the shelter because they are in crisis.

Ryan Fehrman, Executive Director, Genesis Home, commented that this is the kind of problem that needs to be discussed at the monthly Executive Directors' meetings which are held at the Community Development Department.

Chair Bowman stated that this issue came up as an urgent matter about two or three weeks ago and that it is being brought up at this meeting for informational purposes. It will be addressed further at other meetings where the group will continue to re-visit the matter.

Committee Member Forte-Brown noted that the Performance Management Committee took in consideration that there are times when people must leave the facility and must leave right at that time and not later. She added that the group's intention was to have some kind of protocol, and in the case of violence, other facilities could be suggested to the police where the person may be able to go but the person can't stay at that particular shelter. By no means is the intent to keep someone that is unsafe in a facility, not abiding by the rules of the facility and threatening the safety of others that are there.

Page 4 – Joint Meeting of the DHSAC & Durham Continuum of Care – June 24, 2015

Mr. Schnars talked about the specific wording in the policy and how it is meant to only apply to folks who are medically vulnerable and are being asked to leave because of their medical vulnerability.

The question was asked in reference to “medically fragile or vulnerable people” could the idea of medical respite be considered or included in the policy.

Committee Member Abdullah pointed out that the group should also be concerned about the demographics that are coming into the shelter. He commented there a lot of young men who are coming in that are angry and a lot of them are just coming to the shelter just to be with people that they know. Mr. Abdullah feels that when talking about collaboration, he believes that the group should also take a real serious look at the demographics because this issue is just not going to end because of policy.

Subject: Reminders

Mr. Schnars reminded HSAC members that there will not be a scheduled meeting in July but the committee will resume meeting in August. He explained that the CoC process is underway but depending on the deadline, they don't know what the timeline for those applications will be. Therefore, the Committee may need to have a meeting before the August meeting.

Subject: Housing First Model Discussion

In the absence of Committee Member Tuttle, Pastor Katie Crowe, Trinity Avenue Presbyterian Church, presented a brief introduction of the Housing First Model. Afterwards, a family whose life was impacted by Housing First shared their experience.

Gretchen Senez (Housing for New Hope) provided a power point presentation on the Housing First approach.

In response to questions asked by Committee Member Herndon concerning how many families affected by homelessness have children in the schools; what kind of documentation is available; how are the numbers tracked and are we getting better or worse or are we standing steady, Committee Member Forte-Brown stated that Durham Public Schools (DPS) is doing a great job of tracking those families. However, she explained the definition of homeless is defined in so many different ways. She noted that what DPS considers homeless and what the federal government considers homeless is different. Committee Member Forte-Brown added that it also depends on whether or not families want to make it evident that they are homeless. For the families that DPS is aware of and they can tract and for the teachers who can identify these families, DPS has an excellent system.

Project Manager Lloyd Schmeidler, Department of Community Development, noted that the DPS Homeless and at Risk Liaison office identifies 800 to 900 students during the school year that experience homelessness.

Committee Member Forte–Brown added that there is an extensive public report prepared by Supportive Services. She encourages people to ask for this report and down load it to access the information.

Mr. Schmeidler reported that facilities and programs using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) suggest between 100 and 125 families per year enter those facilities.

Mr. Schmeidler also pointed out that during the Point-in-Time Count held annually in January for the last several years, no families in unsheltered situations were found on the night of the count. He explained that they may have been living in a car or a van and may have been moving around many times to avoid detection by law enforcement or others. Therefore, because these individuals were not found, no numbers are available.

Discussion followed regarding the subject of Housing First and how resources can be strategically invested to effectively address the housing needs of people to quickly move them from homelessness into permanent housing.

Other topics briefly mentioned during Mr. Schmeidler's presentation included the following:

- 63 unsheltered people moved from homelessness into permanent housing between August 2012 and May 2015.
- Prioritizing chronically homeless Veterans for HUD VASH Vouchers. It was noted that the Veterans don't have to enter into the emergency shelters to access a HUD VASH Voucher.
- Since October 2014 the VISPDAT is being used to develop a priority list of the medically most fragile vulnerable individuals in the community.
- Rapid Rehousing work funded by the City Council through the dedicated housing fund along with some federal funds between June 2014 and May 2015 has provided support to a total of 283 people according to HMIS.
- Genesis Home has decided to phase out transitional housing allowing the CoC to reallocate the \$158,000 of CoC funds to Rapid Rehousing for homeless families.
- The merger taking place of Genesis Home with Durham Interfaith Hospitality Network has plans to work on expanding capacity to provide additional emergency shelter spaces but will move families directly from emergency shelter into rapid rehousing.
- Urban Ministries is working on implementing a pilot to divert families and others from emergency shelters as much as possible.

Mr. Schmeidler also identified the following gaps:

- More permanent supportive housing is needed.
- More landlords are needed in the community to make housing stock available for formerly homeless people to get them back into permanent housing situations.
- More coordination of care is needed using mainstream as well as health care resources.
- Need increased competencies in our provider communities around motivational interviewing.
- Community needs to erase more harm reduction models.

Committee Member Karriker asked everyone to break out in small groups to further discuss the Housing First process. It was suggested that each group have someone take notes so that all notes will be compiled into one report and later distributed to everyone in attendance.

Subject: Adjourn

With no further business to come before the body, Chair Bowman adjourned the meeting at 4:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sheila Bullock
Office of the City Clerk