

DURHAM HOMELESS SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, April 25, 2018

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 Angela Holmes Former Homeless Representative for Durham County; Vice-Chair Charita McCollers, MSW (Lincoln Community Health Center/Federal Health Care for Homeless); Secretary Ellecia M. Thompson (Durham VA Medical Center); City Manager Thomas J. Bonfield; Reverend Dr. B. Angelo Burch, Sr. (Corporate Private Sector Representative For Durham County/Executive Director, African American Dance Ensemble); Jonathan Crooms, Durham County Veteran Services (*Proxy for Lois Harvin-Ravin*); Drew Cummings, Chief of Staff, Durham County Manager's Office; Janeen Gordon, (Durham County Social Services and *Proxy for Commissioner Ellen Reckhow*); Captain Stan Harris Durham County Sheriff's Department); Calleen Herbert, (NCCU Office of Community Engagement and Service); Reverend Dr. Warren Herndon (Faith Community Representative for City of Durham/Greater Joy International Ministries); Emanuel Kearney (Former Homeless Representative, City of Durham); Melody Marshall, Homeless Liaison (Durham Public Schools; Council Member Mark Anthony Middleton (*Proxy for Mayor Steve Schewel*); Alex Protzman, LIFE Skills Foundation; Tracy-Stone-Dino (Alliance Behavioral Healthcare); Chris Toenes, Non-Profit Representative (City of Durham); Helen Tripp (Durham County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Mayme Webb-Bledsoe (Duke University).

Excused Committee Members: Meredith Daye, Development Director (Durham Housing Authority); Pam Karriker, Christian Academy (Faith Community Representative, Durham County) and Ve'ga Swepson, Resource Specialist (Durham Technical Community College).

Committee Members Absent: Alma Davis, (Durham Crisis Response Center, *Proxy*); Jennifer Jones (OEWD); Durham County Commissioner Ellen W. Reckhow; Mayor Steve Schewel; Fred Stoppelkamp (Non-Profit Representative for Durham County/Urban Ministries of Durham) and Tony Tosh (Corporate Private Sector Representative for City of Durham/Prosperity Recovery Services).

Staff Present: Project Managers Lloyd Schmeidler and Matthew Walker; Assistant Director of Strategy Karen Lado (Department of Community Development); Administrative Analyst Keshia Barnette (Department of Community Development) and Senior Administrative Assistant Macio Carlton (County Clerk to the Board's Office)

Excused Staff: Director Reginald Johnson

Also Present: Tomesia Barnes (Durham VA Medical Center); Joyce Caesar (WakeUpReachUp, Inc.); Tiffany Chairs (Durham VA Medical Center); Jonathon Crooms (Durham County Veteran Services); Rikki Gardner (Housing for New Hope); Peter Gilbert (Legal Aid of NC); Charles Holton and Jesse McCoy (Duke Civil Justice Center) and Erica Wilkerson (Durham VA Medical Center).

Subject: Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.; thanked everyone for attending and read the goals of the HSAC aloud.

Subject: Minutes Review and Approval

March 28, 2018 HSAC Meeting – **Motion** by Committee Member Burch, seconded by Committee Member Herndon to approve the minutes. The motion was approved unanimously at 3:11 p.m.

Subject: Public Comment Period

Dr. Warren Herndon, Faith Community Representative, City of Durham, expressed his concerns about families needing assistance in the community not being addressed. He explained with funding being cut in Washington D.C. and Raleigh, NC, it was important to be transparent in supporting as many people as possible. Committee Member Herndon added the focus should be on young people because they were the next generation.

Subject: CoC Funding Application Process Update

Karen Lado, Assistant Director of Strategy, Department of Community Development, informed the Committee on the new Continuum of Care (CoC) Funding Grant application kick-off. She added the applicants were able to apply for 1.2 million dollars of funding. Ms. Lado stated the first phase included the pre-application for projection and organizational thresholds. She added once those requirements were met phase two (2) would be begin, which included the full application. Ms. Lado continued to say the pre-application deadline was May 15th and the committee would be informed of qualified applicants by the end of May 2018. She mentioned the HSAC would review and discuss the draft evaluation criteria in June.

Committee Member Herndon asked if the information was available for applicants whom applied during the first phase. Ms. Lado responded the information would not be available until after the May 15th deadline. Committee Member Herndon asked if any technical assistance was available to the applicants. Ms. Lado answered applicants could ask any questions or ask for assistance if needed. She added no applicant had asked for assistance or questions.

Subject: Eviction Diversion Program Presentation

Peter Gilbert, Staff Attorney, Legal Aid of NC and Charles Holton, Clinical Professor of Law, Duke Civil Justice Clinic, shared a presentation titled “*Durham Evictions and the Eviction Diversion Program*” which discussed the following:

- Eviction Crisis
- What Happens Once Cases are Filed?
- Results of Eviction Filings
- The Consequences of Eviction
- Evictions Also Affect Landlords
- Eviction Diversion Program
- Diversion First; Litigation Only Where Necessary
- Durham Eviction Diversion Program
- Durham Program Outreach and Referrals
- Durham Program Screening and Issue - spotting
- Durham Program Outcomes Sought for Tenants
- Results of the Program
- Community Resources for Eviction Diversion Program
- Lowering Evictions Preserves Affordable Housing and Prevents Homelessness
- Landlords More Likely to Have Lawyer
- Tenants with Legal Representation are Less Likely to Receive Eviction Judgements Against Them
- Other Municipalities Taking Action
- What Will Durham Do?

Mr. Gilbert stated Durham County had the highest eviction rate per capita. He stated over 900 eviction court cases were filed in Durham each month with many tenants being displaced without going through the court process; especially immigrants and illegal citizens. Mr. Gilbert mentioned landlords used a computer system to share eviction filings and judgements on tenants. He added over half of the judgements in court were favored for the landlord and a quarter of the court judgements resulted with immediate padlocking of the residence.

Mr. Holton explained when a tenant received a summons to appear in court for an eviction case, they also received a brochure advising them to call Department of Social Services (DSS) if they have missed a rent payment or need financial assistance. He added DSS would then connect the tenant to various emergency financial assistance programs to help pay the rent owed and referred the case to Legal Aid to be resolved. Mr. Holton stated tenants needed to act quickly once the landlord filed for eviction with the courts. He added 79 percent of cases Legal Aid handled were closed with eviction being prevented and 66 percent of cases closed prevented move out. Mr. Holton mentioned the program was trying to expand by adding more social workers to process intake, but it would require more funding for DSS.

Thomas Bonfield, Durham City Manager, asked if the program was at a point to categorize how the eviction or move out was avoided. Mr. Gilbert responded not at this time. He added most cases were avoided by talking with the landlord and working to an agreement with negotiated solutions. Mr. Bonfield asked if the agreements were made with monetary solutions. Mr. Gilbert replied yes, each tenant paid an agreed amount to landlord or received assistance from DSS or another program.

Melody Marshall, Durham Public Schools, asked if every eviction notice served to a tenant was distributed with a flyer from Legal Aid. Mr. Holton responded yes. He added tenants could also come to the Housing Clinic at the Durham County Courthouse on every Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. where lawyers were present to assist. Ms. Marshall asked if Legal Aid helped with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) cases. Mr. Holton responded yes.

Committee Member Cummings asked if attorneys were required to handle negotiations and act on tenants' behalf prior to the case going to court. Mr. Holton responded not in every situation, some cases could be worked out without a lawyer or attorney.

Committee Member Herndon stated with 25-30 percent of Durham citizens living in poverty, would they consider a holistic approach. Mr. Holton responded yes but with problems such as a supply of affordable housing, problems of eviction and displacement.

Committee Member Thompson asked if tenants were given a 30-day period for eviction. Mr. Gilbert responded NC had the worst tenant protection of all other states. He added the landlord could give a minimum of a five (5) day notice after papers were served to the tenant, whereas most landlords give a ten-day notice. Mr. Gilbert stated the eviction process could happen in as quickly as two (2) weeks from the notice date. Ms. Thompson asked if Legal Aid could assist in negotiating more than two (2) weeks. Mr. Gilbert responded yes, Legal Aid could get the case continued for 60 days while negotiations were being agreed on or the tenant found a new place to live.

Committee Member Birch asked if the Judges were aware that Magistrates were not being considerate of the tenants' concerns. Mr. Holton responded the Magistrates made decisions based upon the law.

Subject: Rick Mitigation Fund Update

Presenter Ryan Ferhman, Families Moving Forward, had a family emergency and could not attend the meeting. The Risk Mitigation Fund Update would be rescheduled.

Subject: The HUB: Young Adult Resource Center Update

Alex Protzman, Lifeskills Foundation, shared a presentation on the titled "*HUB Durham – Young Adult Resource Center*" discussing the following:

- Overview
- Spectrum of Services
- Current Opportunities to Serve in Establishing the Young Adult Resource Center (YARC)

Mr. Protzman stated if the Department of Social Services was not able to provide any assistance to young adults, the young adults were given a phone number and address of a provider that may be able to assist. Mr. Protzman mentioned "*The HUB*" would be one location to provide hot meals, an opportunity to meet with a social worker and a wide array of other services. He added

former homeless young people would also be available to talk and help navigate the other young adults entering for service. Mr. Protzman added the plan was to open with two (2) young navigators and later add a Director and other positions.

Vice-Chair McCollers asked for an opening timeline. Mr. Protzman responded he hoped by the end of summer 2018, but due to asbestos problems the opening date would be pushed back. Vice-Chair McCollers inquired if she be able to send a young person to Mr. Protzman for help today. Mr. Protzman replied he could only provide help over the phone for now. Vice-Chair McCollers asked if the location was on the bus line. Mr. Protzman answered yes, adding there was a bus stop outside the location.

Tracy Stone-Dino asked did the youth have to be a resident of Durham County to be referenced to “*The HUB*”. Mr. Protzman replied no, “*The Hub*” would not ask for identification. Mr. Protzman added if a young adult walked in the door, they would be offered assistance up to three (3) times.

Committee Member Birch asked for more details about staffing for “*The Hub*”. Mr. Protzman responded staffing would be from many different organizations. He added some training would be required, but not a degree. Committee Member Birch asked if “*The Hub*” would provide help with finding employment. Mr. Protzman replied “*The HUB*” would have regular job groups and provide help with resumes.

Subject: Announcements

Chair Holmes asked if there were any announcements.

Karen Lado mentioned the Developer Partnership meeting on Thursday, May 17, 2018 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at 807 East Main Street, Building 2/Suite 300 in the Neighborhood Improvement Services Main Conference Room.

Committee Member Burch announced he would be running for State House 30. He inquired about speaking in the community to learn about concerns and matters that he should advocate for.

Jonathon Crooms, Durham County Veterans Services Office, announced the Durham County Veterans Services would host a Veteran Benefits Fair on Saturday, April 28, 2018 from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the Bahama Ruritan Club at 8202 Stagville Road.

Subject: Reminders

Chair Holmes reminded everyone of the next HSAC meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 23, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. at the Durham County Human Services Building, 414 E. Main Street in the 2nd Floor Conference Room.

Subject: Adjourn

With no further business to come before the body, Chair Holmes adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Macio Carlton
Senior Administrative Assistant
County Clerk's Office