

Council to End Homelessness in Durham
October 18, 2018 Minutes

Attendance: Sheldon Mitchell (UMD), Valaria Brown (HNH), Evelyn Worthy (CASA), Melody Marshall (DPS), Malcolm White (Alliance BHC), Kevin McNamee (FMF), Charita McCollers (LCHC-HCH), Tasha Melvin (FMF), Catherine Pleil (FMF), Rikki Gardner (HNH), Ann Tropiano (FMF), Randy Oberrath (TFAHC) Valerie Haywood (UMD), Joyce Hicklen (CASA), Andrea Mikesell (DCRC), Shadrickon Dillard (Durham VA), Erica Wilkderson (Durham VA), Psiyina Davis (NDC)

The meeting was called to order at 10:05AM with welcomes and introductions by Chairman Sheldon Mitchell. Minutes from the September 2018 meeting were reviewed. Errors noted were the time the meeting started (10:06AM), with that correction the motion to approve the minutes was made by Catherine Pleil, seconded by Tasha Melvin, and unanimously approved.

1. Durham CAN– Ivan Parra gave a brief overview of Durham CAN and pointed out that they have spent about 4 years working on affordable housing. He shared some of the groups (and our community's recent successes) including: 1) a Jackson St. property where 25% of the 82 apartments are for folks at or below 30% AMI and the rest are at 60%, 2) that advocacy of Durham CAN helped persuade the City to purchase/invest in Old Fayette Place, and shared that Durham CAN is in negotiation with the County regarding properties and that because it is understood that the projects will include affordable housing, Durham CAN is advocating for the greatest number of units at the most affordable level.

Ivan also reinforced that we all know that housing is only one element of family success and that many things like having a criminal record, not being able to get a job impacts a family's opportunity to access housing. Ivan stated that the work of Durham CAN is incomplete if clients cannot access the housing that is created as a result of local advocacy and organizing work. Ivan stressed that another focus of Durham CAN is on job and issues within the criminal justice system. To that end, he invited all CEHD members and friends to the Durham CAN Assembly/meeting on Saturday, October 27th at First Presbyterian Church at 10:00 AM. Ivan further shared that 500-600 members and supporters of CAN will be meeting with professionals from the Criminal Justice system including the District Attorney and candidates for judge.

Ivan shared that the General Assembly has been trying to make it hard for local judges to dismiss or waive fees for folks in the system. He pointed out that reports are not focused on successes and that Criminal Justice budgets are cut so much that fees and costs are being assessed to those who are arrested and incarcerated and that these folks stay locked up because they do not have money to pay bail. It was agreed that oftentimes those charged with high crimes can pay the fee and are thus able to leave the day they are arrested, and that poor persons, who may be innocent, simply do not have resources and end up losing their job and plead guilty just to get out of jail. So, the action assembly is to advocate for judges and the DA to do the right thing and consult the criminal monetary obligation benchcard (to avoid debt for the folks affected). Durham CAN will be asking: 1) judges to commit publicly to use bail when constitutionally required, 2) for an increase in the number of interpreters in court thereby providing equal treatment, 3) that judges participate in Racial Equity training, 4) the DA to continue to host Driver License clinics, 5) ask that bail is used as a last resort and that defendants are not overcharged unless required by law.

Ivan stressed that it is most important for those community members directly affected by current practices within the criminal justice system and these issues to show up together. Ivan asked CEHD members to attend and bring clients to the 90-minute meeting and confirmed that the non-partisan event is translated in Spanish. Sheldon also encouraged members to attend and Ivan asked for an estimate of numbers. He shared his email address: kmparra@aol.com and stressed that the goal is to show decision makers the diversity and numbers of those who care and who are present. The following CEHD member agencies pledged the following: FMF 10-15, UMD 10, CEF 10, HCH 1+, CASA 1+, and Melody agreed to reach out to families of students and also share with the ESL Department. Ivan then shared that Legal Aid and the ReEntry Council have been invited and are expected to attend and that school board members are attending and that DPS made a commitment to improve services to immigrant and Spanish speaking students and communications to their families.

Ivan was asked to repeat a Durham CAN RULE- "We don't do for others what they can do for themselves."

2. Psiyina gave an update of the partnership between Nehemiah Day Center and the County so that community members have a place to go while the library is being renovated. Psiyina shared that NDC

has security on-site, is a safe space for folks and that it is being used as a place to rest, a place to eat, place to use restrooms, and that there are tables and computers also for public use. Psiyina shared that on average the center serves 33 different people each week and about 35 different visits with folks coming in and out. It was also shared that it is typical to have new people each week. NDC also hosts Lunch & Learns where attendees enjoy a meal and information about services in the community. Lunch & Learns occur on the 4th Tuesday, from noon to 1 PM. December's session will be on the 3rd Tuesday. As a result of attending sessions, participants have received help from Housing for New Hope, CEF, and StepUp Durham. NDC hopes to continue to offer Lunch & Learn sessions after the library reopens. CEHD members were asked to expect an email about this coming Tuesday's session, respond and share with other community members.

Psiyina further shared that ABHC is sponsoring a lunch at NDC on Thursday of next week from 11:30 – 1 PM, flyers were handed out and folks were encouraged to attend and tell others about it.

Psiyina shared that since opening on January 23, 2017, they have learned that it's best when folks in need reach out to providers on their own, that connections take time, and that hearing about resources over and over again works. Psiyina further shared that the VA has representatives at NDC every Wednesday and Mike Kelly from HNH is also a regular community partner sharing resources with citizens. There is an office available for provider use.

It was also noted that NDC works Durham County hours and as such will be closed on Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving.

Sheldon observed that we want to encourage folks to take advantage of what is offered and Psiyina shared that there are 12 computers out daily and if needed, there are 19 that could be readily available for community members. She further explained that there is a 1-hour limit when all the computers are being used and in addition, that a printer was donated and that there is one computer designated for free printing for housing, court, job, etc. related things.

NDC currently receives funding through the County and hopes that future funding will allow the center to remain open as a resource and to provide the monthly Lunch & Learn sessions. Psiyina is on the Library Task Force, actively participates and is clear that NDC wants the library to continue to serve the entire Durham community.

3. Other Business: Sheldon reminded the group that in December there will be the need to elect new officers for CEHD. He shared that he is looking forward to new leadership and that positions include that of chair, vice-chair, and secretary.
4. Announcements: Early voting is now; encourage folks to vote. Reminder: directly after the CAN action assembly, attendees are encouraged to walk to vote at The Board of Elections with Souls to Polls.

Valeria shared that HNH has openings for single individuals at Andover/Williams Square. Eligibility requirements include: Durham resident, must meet HUD definition for Chronic Homelessness and be identified on the By Name List, have income or the ability to pursue benefits with a SOAR worker, no felony charges within the last year, ViSPDAT score of 10+, and a care review through Alliance BHC within the last 6 months. Contact Shanika Etheridge at 919-489-6593 or Shanika@housingfornewhope.org with any questions. There are 4 openings.

Joyce announced that there is a CASA 1-bedroom unit at Maplewood and Underwood available to rent (\$620 + utilities) for adults only. There is an income requirement; those interested can contact Sharon Marshall. www.casanc.org Joyce will send more information for CEHD secretary to send out.

On behalf of Carolyn who sent her apologies, Charita announced the Walk in Their Shoes fundraiser for Open Table Ministries on Saturday, November 3rd starting at 10 AM at Solite Park on Fayetteville Rd. CEHD members were encouraged to register to walk, contribute, and/or be part of a team. Register at: walkintheirshoes-2018-register

CEF is having their annual fundraiser on October 29th from 6-9 pm at GRUB. CEF's Advocacy choir will perform. Liz will send invite out to this group.

Adjourned- 10:58AM

Respectfully Submitted by Ann Tropiano, CEHD Secretary

