

Steering Committee for Concord's Plan to End Homelessness
Meeting Notes September 18, 2018
Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce

Steering Committee Members Present: Karen Emis-Williams, Peter Evers, Pamela Puleo, Byron Champlin, Claudia Walker, Rosemary Heard, Lew Feldstein, Steve Duprey

Absent: Kara Wyman, Ruth Perencevich, Ron White, Nicole Shultz-Price, Tim Sink

Additional: Ellen Groh, Ellen Fries (notetaker) from CCEH

Call to Order: EG called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm

Minutes of the June Meeting approved.

Updates:

- **Updates from Governance Committee:** They met just prior to this meeting. Came up with Executive Committee structure of chair, vice chair, secretary – balanced 3 person committee.
- Suggesting a three year term, subject to a one year break before serving another 3 year term.
- There may be a formal requirement by the City to submit a letter of resignation. Also, a way to get on the Steering Committee, subject to approval by City Council. Want a skills matrix for committee, see what skills sets needed. For meeting deliberations, Governance committee suggests a focus on Plan in collaboration with EG/CCEH.
- In addition to CCEH acting as the facilitator of the Steering Committee (through its Exec Director) should a CCEH representative be a member of the Steering Committee? Thinking further on that issue and the confusion it causes the general public.
- EG says purpose of the Steering Committee is to NOT be a group of providers, but to be up a level and include leaders in the community in various fields: mental health, developers, landlords, faith community, City leaders, business leaders...
- Supposed to oversee the Plan approved by the City Council.
- If someone expresses interest in serving on Committee, do we have a vetting process? Probably Exec .Committee should vet, full Steering Comm approve, then City Council gives final approval/appointment to Committee.
- One person has expressed interest – Byron will follow up.
- Committee will work towards a written proposal on workings.

- Steering Committee will meet every 2 months going forward.

State Institution/Prison Study Commission: (2 prisons, State Hospital) Tim, Ellen, Peter, Deputy Commissioner of DHS, Helen Hanks, women's Prison person, Sen. Reagan, Rep. Larry Gagne, Elliot Barry from NH Legal Assistance

Peter reports: it is felt that there's an undue burden on City because of prisons and State Hospital being located here. No actual studies. Lack of oversight.

Do not know impact of released prisoners on City of Concord services.

Transitional Housing on grounds of State Hospital, and 2 halfway houses in Concord.

Study ends in November.

What questions does the Steering Community want asked? What data?

Hospitals – how many waiting for acute mental health care in Concord vs. Other cities? But this is not really within the realm of this Study Commission.

Response to loss of family winter shelter space: EG

Lots of organizations attending meetings focused on this, and are very engaged. In the past a limited number of families have used the winter shelter – starting a new winter shelter just for families is not a good use of resources given how expensive it would be and the small number of families it served in the past 3 years.

There are distinct characteristics of families that were served in the past and need to be served: (1) those who meet the criteria for the existing year-round family shelters and who are just waiting on an opening; and families who have many challenging issues and have been asked to leave other programs due to drug use or other non-compliance with rules. Also, as part of City Welfare's overall diversion efforts, there are families who request assistance at City Welfare but when they are offered a shelter placement rather than a hotel, the family decides to make use of their own network of support instead.

Family Promise – family must be very high-functioning since staff is mostly volunteer. They can't change standards only for some.

Idea to use separate church space for low-barrier winter shelter and use it only as needed- still required paid staff and admin costs – total cost rapidly got up to \$250/night/family.

Rent an apartment for 6 mos. For this use – again, got very expensive to administer. And ideas for who might provide an apartment were not feasible; very low vacancy rates made it unlikely to find one.

Idea to lease a single motel room as a back-up in winter – had the same issues. Steve Duprey talked about issues they face at motels since no way to monitor who is there, innumerable problems. Many hotels will not take City Welfare clients because they've had trouble with noise, extra unauthorized guests and damages in the past.

Belknap House in Laconia – Shelter in Winter, Hostel in Summer. Can we send family there? Strong MAYBE.

Reasons for Family Homelessness: Karen – debt, illness, eviction, lack of understanding of how to manage finances. Most welfare clients are at risk of homelessness.

3pm Claudia, Pam, Peter had to depart.

CCEH Winter Shelter: Paving was held up because of site issues, has been resolved; Should be paved in the next 2 weeks. Maybe some last little things before CO is issued.

Committee will work to continue filling out workplan with dates and responsible parties.

Next Meeting November, 90 Minutes, 2:00 to 3:30 PM

Suggestion to have a Guest Speaker each meeting.

Rosemary making list of potential speakers.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM