

Steering Committee for Concord's Plan to End Homelessness

Meeting Notes

March 15, 2022

Meeting held at Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce

and on Zoom

2:00-3:30 pm

Draft

Steering Committee Members Present: Byron Champlin, Tim Sink, Karen Emis-Williams, Ellen Fries, Greg Lessard, Deputy Chief Steve Smagula, Claudia Walker, Kara Wyman, Linda Lorden, Lisa Madden

On Zoom:

Absent: Lew Feldstein, Ruth Perencevich,

Additional: Ellen Groh, CCEH Executive Director

Guests: Jim Schlosser, VA, CCEH BOD; Roseanne Haggerty, Community Solutions; Gwen Whitney-Gill, Concord Hospital

Call to Order: Meeting called to order by Byron Champlin, Chair, at 2:04 pm

Guests welcomed and all introduced.

New Committee Member, Lisa Madden, President and CEO of Riverbend Community Mental Health

Approval of December Meeting Minutes: Moved by Tim and Seconded by Karen, Unanimous

Changes – Linda Lorden was present at December meeting. Minutes to be changed to reflect that.

Review and Discussion of *Community System to End Homelessness* document

Steering Committee members Byron, Linda and Greg worked on this, along with Ellen Groh and guest Jim Schlosser. It is intended as an overview of all services in the community contributing in some way needed towards ending homelessness, and how well they coordinate. What are the pressure points and choke points, and what can this Steering Committee do to help alleviate them? It was felt that the system is somewhat confusing, especially to the outsider. We need it clarified in order for us to know what needs to be done to make this committee as effective as possible in moving forward on the goals in Concord's Plan to End Homelessness.

Ellen Groh went over the document and explained it. Group discussion on two specific areas of the chart.

Discussion of issues around people being released from Concord Hospital, NH Hospital, jail, prison, residential rehab, into precarious housing or sometimes homelessness. People with medical needs released from hospital with nowhere to go. Or from jail or prison at 4pm Friday and shelter season over. Concord Human Services can place in motel very briefly. Try to divert. Very few options. Can the Steering Committee use its influence to help find solutions for this issue.

- Where to divert if no shelter? (Or if medical needs make someone inappropriate for shelter.) What about the lack of available housing?
- Organizations need manpower to keep all info updated on all resources so they can reach out to all in an emergency. Gaps and lack of coordination, even though they want to coordinate.
- Funding sources all have different rules.
- Improved collaboration would help a lot, but funding sources make it more complex. HIIPA, other regulations create barriers to immediate collaboration.
- Emergency needs are very hard to meet in the moment.

Discussion on land use regulations that make affordable housing development challenging: Zoning ordinances need to change to help with the creation of more housing opportunities. The City of Concord has been working on adopting a new form-based code, but this has been slowed by Covid. The idea is to encourage more dense development, accessory dwelling units, etc. Those interested are encouraged to attend next month's City Council Meeting, April 11, or watch on Concord TV.

It was noted that we need to know what developments are in the pipeline, in order to do any outreach ahead of time to developers to see if they will set aside units for people exiting homelessness. Byron will get a list.

As we all know, there is a severe housing crisis, and a serious need for workforce housing as well.

How should this Steering Committee be engaged?

On Land use/zoning:

- Pay attention to the zoning ordinance proposed changes.
- An organization can only apply for funding once a year – it takes forever to move forward on purchasing property. Can this be expedited? Can this committee help with this?
- Keep the committee conversant on what proposals are before the zoning board. Could the Planning Director give us an update?
- There are tons of projects in the pipeline – can we reach out to seek something like Dakota Properties did? Set aside a certain number of apartments for people coming from homelessness? Get Project Based Vouchers?
- Ask if the City would be willing to make it a routine protocol to ask developers to **discuss** making some of their apartments available for lower income/Sec. 8/etc.?
- Find ways to make more land available? Change density regulations? Size of units? Remove barriers to developers.

How can this committee help with discharges from institutions? There is a great need for more funding for creating more housing for people ready to be discharged from Mental Health institutions. Cannot compete with private developers. There is nowhere for folks to be discharged to, and there is very low staffing for institutions right now. There is not just a need for beds right now, but for support systems for people in need of help upon discharge from the hospital, etc. Some short term, some long term.

The group is willing to meet sooner to discuss creating some action steps.

April 19 2:00 pm EXTRA MEETING - Byron will ask Heather Shank, City Planner, to come make a presentation.

Motion to Adjourn: Moved and Seconded. Unanimous.

Meeting Adjourned 3:30 pm

Reminder: Dates for upcoming quarterly meetings: (Third Tuesdays, 2:00-3:30 pm)

- June 21, 2022
- September 20, 2022
- December 20, 2022
- **Plus EXTRA MEETING APRIL 19, 2022**

For questions, contact: Ellen Groh

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