

Steering Committee for Concord's Plan to End Homelessness

Meeting Notes April 21, 2020

Held Via Zoom 2:00 3:30 pm

Steering Committee Members Present: Karen Emis-Williams, Lew Feldstein, Ellen Fries, Byron Champlin, Tim Sink, Ruth Perencevich, Claudia Walker, Jason Wells

Absent: Kara Wyman, Rosemary Heard

Additional: Ellen Groh, CCEH; Greg Lessard, CCEH; Tenley Callahan, CCEH; Meghan Farrell, Guest – New Futures and CCEH Board

Call to Order: Ellen Groh introduced all present.

Presentation from Rebecca Perkins (Portsmouth City Councilor and Governor's Task Force on Housing Crisis): postponed until June meeting

Overview: There has been a huge scramble figure out the best response to the COVID-19 pandemic by local, state, and national groups and government entities. "Waiting for the storm to hit." So far in NH very few experiencing homelessness have been identified as being ill with COVID.

Notes on Terminology:

- Decompression: spread out current shelters to limit possibility of contagion
- Isolation: deliberate process to separate sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.
- Quarantine: deliberately separate AND restrict the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious person to see if they become sick.

See the document provided by email previously: Concord Area COVID-19 Response Plan

Below are updates on that plan:

The Salvation Army McKenna House: not currently full (42). 36 guests. "Decompressed" by spreading out into basement meeting room.

Friends Emergency Program – have taken some hotel rooms at Residence Inn for Decompression – some families at their shelter were not taking situation seriously. Those in Hotel were the most concerned and following all rules. Got funding from NHCF, who have been very responsive without our even asking for assistance. CCEH was given funding and passed it on to Friends because they were in immediate need.

Family Promise of Greater Concord: one family only, not using churches, but housing them in their day center.

CCEH Resource Center: now open M-W-F 9 am to 11 am, using a large tent canopy in the back parking lot. Restroom available.

BM-CAP and Concord Fire Department Project First Director, Jeffrey Stewart, are doing much outreach, especially to those with SUD.

Concord Emergency Winter Shelter closed on schedule March 30. It seemed more likely for spreading COVID than encampments because of the very close quarters.

Providers seeking showers and space for quarantining - this is a huge need:

Brainstorming....

YMCA? They are understandably concerned about infection in building. Ellen G seeking a letter from the State asking YMCA to consider assisting in this way.

CCEH has 2 showers in the basement – not great, but maybe possible? Usually we use a shower on main floor of Resource Center, but we don't want to allow public access to the space that staff is using so we can limit chance of staff becoming sick.

Have arranged for 2 porta-Johns/sink at CenterPoint parking lot; handwashing station set up at FK por-a-johns already there)

NHTI - already set up for use as Isolation space for covid (+) if a person does not have a place to isolate. They have not activated it yet but it is ready to go.

Police Academy space? Not currently in use.

SCHOOLS? (Showers) Ask Frank Bass, Interim Superintendent. CHS, Rundlett?

St. John's?(no showers)

NHTI dorms being held for elderly at risk with nowhere safe to quarantine.

Concord hospital only at 30 – 50% capacity right now.

Kara: Big increase in outreach to Welfare from people experiencing homelessness. Several individuals being tested, nowhere to quarantine. They were put in a hotel. Test was negative. Hotel not happy to be known as "COVID" place. Some guests didn't follow the rules. Hotel not wanting to be part. Only 2 hotels still cooperating (Fairfield Inn, Hampton Inn). Some have had property damage.

1 burial.

Panic in HL community – going to Welfare. Can't find alternatives for pending cases.

Laconia (quarantine or isolation, must have medical referral; up to 19 total). Space in Nashua for positive tests. Nowhere for **pending** cases.

EG – concern about use of hotels – it seems you must have 24/7 supervision or people might not remain isolated, ruin the whole purpose. Ideas?

Byron: how did Portsmouth work out a hotel, and no supervision?? EG thinks Crossroads worked out for \$79/night. May just be elderly and vulnerable, people who are less likely to have others over. Daytime check-ins. General population of their shelters may be more compliant

due to having more shelter rules. People from winter shelter and encampments may have more underlying issues and less more likely to not comply with social distancing rules.

Leslie: other states using congregate settings with 24/7 oversight.

Tenley: schools – gyms, large spaces. Concord Community Centers (showers)

Tim: where are folks hanging out during the day? All businesses closed.

EG: true. Hanging out at encampments. Mental health plummeting, no showers, ...

Ruth: 65-70/night at FK for take-out meals.

Byron: seeing uptick in calls about homelessness as City Councilor. Messy encampments near the river.

Kara: Tents ransacked and destroyed behind Market Basket yesterday. Referred people affected to CAP.

EG: seeking to put johns near encampments – difficult to get port-a-john companies to agree.

Kara: cleaning afterwards, who responsible – must know ahead.

Tenley: ServPro set aside \$ for cleaning? St. Paul's Church has showers.

Greg: Planet Fitness? showers National Guard field showers?

Too hard to run anything with volunteers – volunteers generally all older and at risk anyway.

Everett arena for a space?? (no showers- under renovation)

Whoever is approached for space/showers, we MUST have answers about cleaning and staffing ahead of time.

Friends Program willing to be the lead on staffing - supplemental ESG funds released today.

Explore all options now.

Hard to get clear communication from EOC (State)

Hospital very low on tests.

Leslie: make general request to City about needs, type of space?? (all to go through Jeff)

Byron: City facing huge deficits (parking, water/sewage already) Malls, hotels not making money, people unemployed – taxes??? Budget year begins 7/1

Tim: showers, yes. Possibility of sickness, what to do? Why different for homeless population than population at large? EG – they have nowhere to isolate. Not sick yet.

EG – go to City with all requests? Need, space suggestions, \$ for staffing, cleaning, etc.

Other news:

Loan CLOSING occurred! 10 Green St. HOORAY!!! 9/21 certificate of occupancy hoped for.

Think about new members for Steering Committee?

Governance Plan – all must go through City Council – process. Takes time.

All please think of someone to suggest for membership. Different sectors of community.

Michael Simchik? Byron will contact him. (Lew willing to help)

Greg: Linda Lorden! (or someone else from MCSB) Claudia will reach out.

EG send copy of Plan and current members and Governance Document to ALL

Mark Ciborowski – Tim ask him (long experience with CATCH)

Rlverbend, mental health world?

As a reminder, the Steering Committee is now meeting quarterly. The meetings for 2020 are from 2 to 3:30 pm. Currently scheduled:

Tuesday, June 16, 2020; Tuesday, September 15, 2020; Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Meetings will be held by Zoom or in person, depending on the state of Covid 19 at the time.

For questions, contact:

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