

Minutes
Homeless Taskforce
MEETING DATE: December 13, 2006
United Way
7:00 – 8:30 am

Taskforce Members

Rev. Cheryl Jefferson Bell Sue Castile Gypsy Claar Connie Dietz
Jack Focht Patrick Hanrahan Lou Heldman Bernie Hudspeth
Bishop Michael Jackels Bishop Scott Jones Steve Martens Janet L. Miller
Tim Norton Marsha Stanyer Mary K. Vaughn

Ex officio members: Winston Brooks Bill Buchanan George Kolb Ron Holt

Welcome

Jack Focht called the meeting to order at 7 a.m.

Minutes

Focht asked if any changes to the minutes were necessary. The minutes from the November 15 meeting were approved as presented.

New Business

Report of Meeting with Jack DeBoer

Jack Focht and Lou Heldman delivered a recap of a meeting with Jack DeBoer, the Chairman of the Value Place hotel chain. DeBoer has developed a number of extended stay hotels and rental units over the past 30 years. DeBoer feels there is an abundance of affordable housing options in the community, though much of it is substandard. In many instances the affordable housing in the community has problems with electrical, plumbing, or structural systems. Placing people in such housing would not be proper without improvement, which DeBoer feels is not cost effective.

DeBoer feels there are obstacles to creating affordable housing in the community. DeBoer cited amenities like paved streets, which add significant cost to projects as a barrier to creating affordable housing. DeBoer also feels the financial community acts as a barrier to home ownership allowing people to borrow more than they can afford for a home. To address some of the problems DeBoer is working to create a home that sells for \$50,000; these homes will have limited amenities and financing restrictions. DeBoer feels solutions to address affordable housing and homelessness need to be addressed by partnerships between the private and public sectors.

Deboer also discussed his Value Place extended stay economy hotel model. Value Place was created as an alternative to more expensive lodging and is based on Deboer's years of experience in the hospitality industry. Lou Heldman stated the concept was akin to a college dormitory with a number of rooms sharing a common corridor. DeBoer feels the limited amenities concept works for staying in the hotel. By limiting the services offered to residents of the hotel the structure can be built for approximately \$30,000 a unit.

Mary K. Vaughn shared information about programs in the Neighborhood Revitalization Area which can be used to address some of the problems with substandard housing, and emergency repairs. The process for this assistance can be cumbersome due to restrictions placed on Community Development Block Grant funds.

Community Engagement

Bill Buchanan spoke to the members about options for gathering community feedback on homelessness and intervention possibilities. Part of the process of engaging the community involves education. Any option would involve an educational tool being placed in *The Wichita Eagle* and possibly other area newspapers. After the educational materials have been distributed there is the possibility to use online public forums to gather general sentiments from the community. There are two options for gaining more specific feedback from the community. As was mentioned at the previous meeting a survey could be employed. Researchers contacted from Wichita State University feel such a complicated issue would require a great deal of lead time for education before a survey could be distributed. Another option would be to convene a series of focus groups to capture the sentiments of a cross section of the community.

Bill Buchanan stated before the taskforce can begin soliciting public input there is a need to agree on facts and definitions. The taskforce also needs to decide whether to focus on homelessness in the global sense or to target the chronically homeless subset.

Point in Time Survey

During the retreat in October a question arose about the Point in Time Count and what information was gathered. Luella Sanders stated each year HUD designates a week during which the homeless population is counted in communities nationwide. Each community is allowed to pick a day for the point in time count. In 2007 the Point in Time survey will be conducted over a 24 hr period starting at 7:00 pm on January 23, 2007 and continuing through 7:00 pm on January 24, 2007. The Continuum of Care Committee has approved the 2007 form, and has asked if the taskforce has any questions they would like added to the survey.

Adjourn

Having no other business the meeting was adjourned