

Minutes
Homeless Taskforce
MEETING DATE: February 21, 2007
United Way

Taskforce Members

Rev. Cheryl Jefferson Bell Sue Castile Gypsy Claar Connie Dietz
 Jack Focht Patrick Hanrahan Lou Heldman 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.

New Business

Where do we go from here?

Jack Focht opened discussion on submitted recommendations for where the taskforce should go from here. He noted the main things he saw from the recommendations:

1. The chronic population is the one that should be the taskforce's focus.
2. Accessible, adequate and affordable housing is critical.
3. Wichita needs a "place to be" for the homeless during the day (day shelter).
4. There are employment needs including training.
5. To a lesser degree, the lack of accessible, affordable transportation is an issue.

Next, conversation moved to who will write the report. Jack Focht volunteered, as did Commissioner Norton, who was interested in writing the portion about employment needs. It was decided that staff would begin writing about community needs for the next meeting (3/7).

Later, the plan will address funding sources. Public input will be gathered at some point before the plan is final and submitted to the City and County.

Discussion moved specifically to affordable housing. The taskforce wants to know the number of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units available and the cost to rent an SRO. Members felt that affordable housing is one thing they should really focus on in order to make a difference. Mary K. Vaughn will assist staff and Focht on this section.

Focht mentioned that if task members have time, they should go to the PBS website and watch "Home at Last," a documentary about providing housing first (direct link: <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/305/index.html>).

Discussion then moved to employment. It was discussed that the community itself has a low unemployment rate. It would be helpful to know how many of the homeless are employable and how many simply do not want to work. Related to these questions: who needs training? Special work shops were discussed as an option. This brought up the idea of subsidized versus private employment. The Cerebral Palsy Research

Foundation Employment Services program was discussed as a success story that could be duplicated for homeless purposes.

Adjourn

Having no other business the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 a.m.