

Minutes
Homeless Taskforce
MEETING DATE: April 4, 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

Focht started the meeting by discussing a recent mayoral candidate debate that focused on homelessness. All candidates discussed the importance of non-profit and faith-based agencies working with government to find a solution.

Discussion of Affordable Housing Section

Rachelle Moody, the County staff person who created the first draft of the affordable housing section, led the group through this document. Discussion covered pieces that are missing, errors and changes in wording. Some of the items discussed follow:

1. Better definitions throughout section, i.e. affordable housing options.
2. Adding poverty guidelines and the Point-In-Time results to the appendix.
3. Including a paragraph or section on low-income housing available via private foundations or companies.
4. Verifying numbers are correct.
5. A potential funding option for whatever recommendations are made may be increasing the amount of CDBG money that is to given to homeless purposes. Currently \$269,033 is provided for this purpose from this grant, however the full grant is for nearly \$3 million. While there is a cap on what can be spent on "Public Services," more than the current allotment is believed to be available.

Focht asked Mary K. Vaughn to discuss Section 8 and Entitlement funds. Vaughn explained that Section 8 is not part of the Entitlement funds program. She also addressed the fact that Section 8 is an Equal Opportunity program and is based solely on income level. Therefore college students who meet the income criteria are eligible for assistance. The intent of Section 8 is not to help only the homeless, but those with low-income. In summation, there are not enough housing assistance funds and what does exist currently is decreasing over time.

Focht asked Bill Buchanan to discuss the prison re-entry program, the City's Drug Court and the Sedgwick County Offender Assessment Program (SCOAP). Prison re-entry works with prisoners a year prior to their release to ensure they have a plan for housing when they re-enter the community. Drug Court is a special court for drug offenders who are willing to seek treatment in exchange for jail time. SCOAP is a program ran though Sedgwick County COMCARE that aims to get the mentally ill out of jail. Most of the clients who go through the SCOAP program are individuals who are regularly arrested for nuisance crimes, not violent or property crimes. Although this program was not started with the intent of aiding the homeless, indirectly it has had that affect. 55 of the 104 served so far have been homeless individuals.

Focht commented that one of his recommendations is going to be to have the managers of all of these programs retreat and meet to discuss big picture solutions.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Grant

Debbie Donaldson, Director of Human Services, told the group of a grant that is available to agencies which will pay up to \$375,000/year for wrap-around services for the homeless. This is a unique opportunity because usually grants for the homeless are for physical structures such as building low-income housing or shelters; this grant is for the supportive services for those facilities. Donaldson stated that COMCARE would like to apply for the grant but if another community agency was planning on it, she would prefer they work together and not compete against one another.

Adjourn

Due to time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 a.m. At the next meeting, discussion will pick up with recommendations related to affordable housing. If anyone has ideas they would like included, please email them to Rachelle Moody (rmood@sedgwick.gov), Jenni Gluszek (jgluszek@sedgwick.gov) or Jack Focht (jfocht@foulston.com). At the next meeting, the detailed results of the Point-In-Time survey will also be shared.