

Steering Committee for Concord's Plan to End Homelessness

Meeting Notes

December 21, 2021

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, Lew Feldstein

On Zoom: **Ruth Perencevich** (alone in kitchen at home), **Claudia Walker** (alone in office at Premier Properties), Roseanne Haggerty (guest), Mayor Jim Bouley (guest)

Absent: Kara Wyman

Additional: Ellen Groh, CCEH Executive Director

Guests: Katy Easterly Martey, Executive Director, NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA)

Jim Schlosser, Dept. Veterans Affairs, Tilton

Gwen Whitney-Gill, Concord Hospital

Call to Order: Meeting called to order by Byron Champlin, Chair, at 2:03 pm

Approval of September Meeting Minutes: Moved by Tim Sink and Seconded by Chief Smagula, Unanimous

Visitor Introduced: Katy Easterly Martey, Executive Director, NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA)

Brief update from City of Concord Human Services (Karen Emis-Williams)

- Rent/30 days to apply to ERAP from court evictions for other things than non-payment of rent
- Unable to get to apps, due to various reasons - have been able to assist
- Non-payment - offer to pay rent, but people refuse. Can't do anything about it. Bad to have on record.
- No utility payment - see client right away if they come in, get them assistance.
- Affordable housing is too hard to find - may have vouchers but no housing is available.
- There is a list of places, but they are not necessarily affordable or accessible location-wise

Brief update from CPD (Deputy Chief Steve Smagula)

PD struggles with calculating how much time is spent on homeless issues. When he searched the word "homeless" in the call records, 138 calls for service for since Sept. 22, 2021 were identified as "homeless". He used this to estimate what percentage of total calls in a year are related to homelessness. Police get about 50,000 calls a year, which equates to about 12,500 calls over a 3 month period (50,000 divided by 12 x 3) So calls related to homelessness are not a large percentage of all calls, (138/12,500 = just over 1%) though there may be more, but they just did not have the word "homeless" in the call record.

Usually the issues are trespass, disorderly conduct, illegal dumping, drug and alcohol issues, fights.

Encampment breakup at old drive-in. Police struggle with doing this. Many living there had been there for years, and the landowner didn't mind before, but now there are development opportunities for that land. Notice was given, warnings, none heeded. When the PD arrived there were 9 folks rather than the original 8. Very patient officers and CCEH staff dealt with this.

Re-habitation of previously cleared out areas is occurring: Kimball Jenkins area, behind Market Basket area . . .

PD is thankful that the Emergency Winter Shelter is open - big help. No other options.

Question: #officers on duty at one time? About 45 maintained # during Covid. But, new officers can't handle as much as experienced officers. Average experience now on patrol is 5 years.

Presentation by Katy Easterly Martey, Executive Director, NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) one of 3 co-leads of the New Hampshire Council on Housing Stability [2021-2024 Strategic Plan](#)

NH Council on Housing Stability was established by executive order, and given 14 days to create an initial report. Living strategic plan - 3 years, work groups

41 members of the council - the mission is to create housing stability for all.

Data is important for seeing what and where the issues are and where to focus.

Low income wages have increased the least, housing costs have increased the most, giving folks a .01 chance of finding housing if they have low income wages.

There is a dashboard online with data, as well as where state funding has gone, as well as NHHFA and CDFA.

The work groups brought in huge amounts of info, then did surveys for even more info.

They hope to ensure ongoing feedback.

Conclusions:

We must build more housing, as well as provide services, etc.

This helps bring in a workforce for the NH economy, which is necessary.

Housing is the only way to deal with SUD (substance use disorder).

Services need to be within the community of those in need.

There was a 21% increase in the Point in Time count from 2019 to 2020.

HMIS - 4,400 people were served with homeless services of some kind in NH

Big Picture Goals - see [2021-2024 Strategic Plan](#)

70% of those experiencing homelessness in NH are doing so for the 1st time.

We need to increase housing units of all kinds by 13,500 units by 2024

We need to ID places to receive services for the person in need - Coordinated Entry

Avoid duplication as well as gaps. Solve.

Remove regulatory barriers - support local

Increase public financing/focus well

Tax incentives and other to get private developers to help

Housing Appeals Board very effective and timely - skip the court system.

Collaboration - encourage - investment data, need data

Housing supports billed through Medicaid. Working on getting this approved at the Federal level. NH is one of the 1st States to do so. It is very difficult to bill Medicaid – need to provide small non-profits with assistance and/or partners to be able to bill Medicaid for supportive services in permanent housing.

Discussion/Questions for Katy:

Q: \$45million - how real is that amount?

A: Not a done deal. Commitment to Case Management and landlord incentive program - coming out in small parts. Only \$6M committed to development of NEW units of housing. Need to advocate for much more for that purpose. The housing voucher program may be increased - We need it.

Q: Reduce regulatory barriers: what and how?

A: Zoning changes, mapping, technical assistance for communities - info on this available.

Comment: Connecticut zoning study is a great model. Locally - In Jan. the City council surplus fees will be eliminated for water/sewer hookups on the heights. Reducing many fees. Community to review zoning ordinances.

Q: Who is carrying on the work of the CHS Strategic Plano?

A: The same group that was appointed to create the Plan will be continuing to carry it out.

Comment: A bill is in the legislature to codify the group, make it permanent.

Many thanks to Katy and the CDFA.

Brief update from CCEH (Ellen Groh)

a.) Winter Shelter usage since 12/1/21 - going smoothly, average 30/night. 1 incident, nothing major.

b.) Isolation and quarantine at Concord shelters - Huge concern. Last year, the State ran an isolation center but will not do that again this year. Last year, CCEH had 0 test-positives, and we had a hotel that willing to isolate people in case of need. This year, hotels are being used again by the public and no local hotel is willing to be an isolation space.

Every region is finding its own solutions.

CCEH option is to use the Emergency Winter Shelter at 238 N. Main (since shelter is currently operating out of First Church) with a camera - hire staff for night - monitoring of the shelter space. No supervision directly in the building. Can probably serve 4-5 people max so no issues, hopefully. Personalities can clash, though.

Concord Hospital seeking a place to put people in isolation who test positive but need no medical care – this additional population (not typically needing the winter shelter) could overwhelm us. The hospital is currently stretched extremely thin.

Crossroads House and Strafford County CAP and CCEH have written a letter to the State asking for an isolation space.

Update on other potential Steering Committee Members

Byron: One in the pipeline - Lisa Madden of Riverbend is interested. City council vote in Jan. hopefully.

Concord Hospital - seeking a representative from them - Gwen is visiting today

Seeking a faith community member.

Next Meeting: Must have a quorum IN PERSON

Motion to Adjourn: Moved and Seconded. Roll call vote unanimous.

Meeting Adjourned 3:28pm

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

- March 15, 2022
- June 21, 2022

For questions, contact: Ellen Groh

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