

CITY OF ANAHEIM
HOMELESS POLICY WORKING GROUP

MINUTES
September 5, 2017

Agenda Posting: A complete copy of the Homeless Policy Working Group Agenda was posted on Friday, September 1, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. at Anaheim City Hall.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 5, 2017 at Magnolia Baptist Church, 720 S. Magnolia Avenue, Anaheim, California, 92804.

The following Policy Group Members were present:

1. Mike Robbins, People's Taskforce
2. Eve Garrow, ACLU
3. Linda Lehnkering, Poverty Taskforce
4. Captain Eric Carter, City of Anaheim
5. Matt Bates, CityNet
6. Mayor Pro Tem James Vanderbilt, City of Anaheim
7. Council Member Jose Moreno, City of Anaheim
8. Council Member Denise Barnes, City of Anaheim
9. Jesse Ben-Ron, State Assembly
10. Norma Campos Kurtz, State Assembly
11. Sebastian Calderon replacing Calvin Sung, State Senate
12. Jay Burress, Visit Anaheim
13. Esther Wallace, West Anaheim Development Council

The following Policy Member was absent:
Natalie Wieckert, County of Orange

The following staff members were present:
Kristine Ridge, Assistant City Manager
Jackie Rodarte, Senior Policy Aide
Sal Figueroa, Council Aide to Council Member Moreno

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Jose Moreno thanked Mr. Nathan Zug for the use of the facility and thanked the people present at the meeting for being there that evening. Chair Moreno further explained that the purpose of the meeting was to take public comment and input. Chair Moreno read the Purpose and Objectives of the Homeless Policy Working Group and opened the public comment portion of the meeting.

The public comments were open for 3 minutes.

Dale Vernholt lives across the street from Maxwell School. She is concerned that other cities are importing homeless to the City of Anaheim, Irvine being one of them. She sees money wasted on needless projects around the city including the project on Brookhurst where the City took property by eminent domain to beautify the street. She would like to see the City give dignity back to the homeless that want it and for the City to enforce the law on the people that are into drugs and other illegal activity. They City should spend its money wisely.

Mark R. Daniels shared he was born in Anaheim and is a lifelong resident. He supports projects such as the Alfresco Gardens type plan that could be implemented within a couple of months. The Bridge at Kraemer does not cover for all the homeless in the area. He encouraged the working group to meet with Nancy West and consider her proposal.

Carol R. Rice said she also is a lifelong resident of Anaheim. She walks her dog every day and every single day she is in some way affected by homeless people along her route. It is beyond her comprehension why she has to feel unsafe in her own neighborhood. There is compassion to be had, but she pays taxes. She asked the working group to do something constructive for the people that pay taxes.

Halley Strickland stated people in the riverbed have been using the water faucets to clean themselves and as a result, there has been pools that have developed that are filled with slime and mosquitos. People have been getting staph infections due to mosquito bites. The day before the meeting, a group of activists went to the riverbed to create a drainage system; however, police stopped them in their efforts half way through. This example shows the ineffectiveness of the money that has been allocated to provide basic services. She heard the homeless population in San Diego are seeing Hepatitis A outbreaks that is becoming more widespread among that area and it would be so sad to see that spread in our population and have a much bigger issue on hand. She encourages the working group members to see where the money is being spent and to start providing basic sanitary services.

Tim Houchen announced an event he is sponsoring, Homeless Persons Memorial Day on December 21. They are conducting the event at two venues at downtown Santa Ana and in Anaheim. He would appreciate the support.

R. Joshua Collins stated he is the founder of the Facebook Group Homeless Advocates for Christ. The current laws in Anaheim are very discriminatory and targeting the poor. They outlaw sleeping bags and carts at public spaces. The laws that criminalize poverty need to change. We need more affordable housing. The laws are not targeting criminal activity; they are targeting status. As part of his ministry, he became homeless by choice; he films and has a You Tube channel at r.josh.collins. He has dealt with and filmed tons of harassment. He asked the working group to do the right thing, to put an end to discrimination against the poor and the homeless and target criminal activity. Do not target noncriminal activity, life-sustaining activity.

Benita Gagne does not see there is going to be a long-term, one hundred percent solution to homelessness in Anaheim, in Orange County or in the United States. They will not be able to fund governmental solutions through taxpayers' funds to solve the problem, but it has to be solved. It hurts to see individuals struggling and not being able to help themselves. Though they can propose solutions such as temporary shelters like Alfresco Gardens, her fear is that as soon as they are able to move all the homeless from Anaheim into a temporary shelter facility they will soon find homeless back on the streets due to other nearby cities dropping them off. She expressed that that though it is unfortunate, the only possible way to be able to solve homelessness is to be able to have people camp in their backyards.

Larry Honeybourne lives in West Anaheim and he is constantly being awakened by homeless scavenging through his neighborhood's trashcans at two or three in the morning. They leave a mess. Though he and his family are being affected personally with this issue, he would like to focus on the bigger issues. West Anaheim has been tremendously affected by the homeless. The police department responded to over 15,000 calls last year, the parks are a mess and crime rate is up 68%. Large portions of the homeless have substance abuse problems. In order to solve a large portion of this problem, they need to get the substance abuse problem addressed.

Bob Cerince lives near Loara High School. He encouraged the homeless working group to focus on a housing solution. There is simply not enough housing. Anything that the group can recommend that increases primitive housing opportunities, they know from national research, will work towards the goal of solving the homeless issues.

Wes Jones is member of the Anaheim People's Homeless Task Force. His task force originally called for the formation of this policy group to address the issue of police taking the items of the homeless and that is yet to be addressed. The contract with City Net is not working. The homeless problem has only gotten worst under their leadership.

Robert B. Sanchez thanked the working group for setting up the evening meetings for those who work during the day. He is a 50-year Anaheim resident and he has never seen Anaheim in more shade than he sees it today. Mr. Sanchez is involved in the community; he is part of the Anaheim Historical Society, Green Birds of Anaheim and works with the parade committee. His observations indicate that 80% of Anaheim's homeless are felons and drug addicts. Those people make the biggest impact on their community. Those people need the biggest area of focus from elected officials. Once that problem is addressed and cleaned up, they will be able to move forward and take a closer look at those that truly need it, those who have mental issues and those who are down on their luck. If they take care of that 80%, they can help themselves significantly.

Carmen Westberg lives in Anaheim and is concerned about the safety of the children in the area. They have an elementary school a couple of blocks away, Fairmont High School and a junior high school. They do not want to see people that are hurting or sleeping on the streets that do not have enough food. It is heart breaking to see that, but they also feel that they want their children and their community safe. They are seeing the

same type of thing, such as break-ins, bikes stolen from the children. It is not that the compassion is missing, what is missing is that they need to address the criminal element because it is not legal to shoot up on the railroad tracks; and, it is not legal to defecate in public. Homelessness is something that needs to be addressed because not only is it unsanitary, it is a safety concern for the kids.

Mohammad Aly appreciated the initiative that everyone took to express their concerns on the issue of homelessness. He is very passionate about this issue. When the County started displacing people from the riverbed encampment in February, he protested and went to jail. He cares about homeless people. He fundraised for portable restrooms and placed them on the riverbed. Then the County and the City both had them removed. The City considered placing the portable restrooms on City property at a recent Council meeting, and the item was derailed because the City does not have jurisdiction over that property, but eventually they have to provide restrooms. He is happy that the people are there sharing their perspectives. It is not that he is not sympathetic to folks that signed the 12,000-signature petition, but he feels that there is an opportunity for those folks that are concerned about their property and their safety to join the advocates and ask the County for solutions. Asking the County to start dedicating the resources that it gets from the federal government towards providing an alternative for the riverbed. An alternative is necessary, because it is unconstitutional to enforce the camping ordinance until an alternative exists. He asked everyone to understand that the City's, the County's and the advocates' hands are tied, no one is getting rid of the riverbed population, no one is getting rid of the encampments until an alternative is provided, so please let's get a consensus.

Chad Hoffman has lived in Anaheim almost all his life. He is raising his kids here and he loves this City. He respects Mr. Noble, Mr. Collins and Mr. Aly for the help they are trying to bring the homeless. He came to the meeting to listen and learn. He is guilty of thinking that this is someone else's problem, thinking that this would be resolved by the City or the County, of thinking that something is going to happen and of thinking that all homeless want to stay homeless. He believes there are a percentage of people that are mentally and physically ill that need help as soon as possible to get off the streets. However, he feels that there is a greater problem at hand. His fear is that the word is out, that not only are other cities in Orange County and Los Angeles sending the group of people that they don't want to help here, other states are now suddenly announcing that now Orange County is officially a land grab. He speaks with many of the new young people moving here. Jay moved here three months ago with four of his friends from Washington State, he worked in the lumberyards there for many years. Another woman just moved here from Florida, another 3 from Vegas and four from Phoenix. There are hundreds or thousands of abled twenty to fifty-year-old men and women who want to live on the streets that are coming to Orange County. His fear is that all the efforts that the advocates and supporters are going to go in vain because the new crowd is going to bury the chances of helping those who really do want help off the streets. His fear is that the new incomers are organized, connected, they are networked and they have a system. He came to the meeting to listen and learn and will continue with that attitude, but his fear is that the short-term solution like new bathrooms and showers and services are a short-term

solution but not a long term solution and are only sending a message to come, come more, we will enable and help you. He is there to listen and he is still open on the topic, but please they need to support the State of Emergency called ACTION and push the county to help them act.

Mark Strazicich has been a resident of Anaheim since 1960. He lives at Anaheim Shores, adjacent to John Marshal Park. About a year ago, about 20-25 motorhomes showed up in and around John Marshal Park. They park along Medical Center Drive, Hornet, and Falmouth and around John Marshal School. Currently they have a group of 20 motorhomes that are there every day. They are up all night, they party and are relieving themselves on the grass. Anaheim Shores is a private community and they have three pools. They jump in, break into their bathrooms, they vandalize, they take showers and they use the pools. They have had many cars and homes broken into and they have caused many problems. He is there to bring awareness of certain individuals who live in these motorhomes, invade their community and terrorize some people. He hopes there is something the City can do to not allow these people to camp overnight.

Lou Noble stated many people do not realize that they had a recession and that it has not yet gone away. They have brought solutions, like outdoor living to get these people back on their feet. It is a human right to live under sanitary conditions. When the restaurants deny them from using their restrooms, where are they supposed to go? Their dignity has gone down so much, that they have lost hope. He has seen the confiscation; the police have gone beyond what is required under that ordinance. He does not trust the liaison team.

A 20-year resident of Anaheim Shores stated the RV situation has been there for more than a decade, but it has gotten worst in the last couple of years. He understands the RVs are being rented. He recommended a 2-sided solution, low-incoming housing and different types of shelters. You need a family-type environment, the single-individual type and one that provides substance abuse help.

Kevin McCarthy stated he has lived at the freeway park neighborhood for 25 years. He believes Jesus helps those who want to help themselves. If the advocates want to help, perhaps they can help clean up some of the debris, mess, and trash that they so call poor people create. Homeless may not be illegal, but littering, dumping, loitering, defecating in public and drug using is. That is what our residents see. The working group should reach out and help the families and veterans that need help, but there are far too many that want to live a life with no rules and no regulations. He would like to see more residents on the committee and one entity for them to call.

A person who did not identify himself shared a personal experience in trying to assist a group of 20 homeless men who refused the help. He is convinced that a big share of the homeless population do not want help or take it temporarily, but then walk away from it.

Anna Bailey moved to Anaheim 9 months ago from LA and it's not as bad as there. She believes in helping people, but she also looks at this issue from the law enforcement side.

There is a lot of crime. Many people do not want the help that they are trying to provide. Part of it is because in order to get temporary shelter there are rules to be followed such as curfews, no drugs, no animals, and other guidelines. In order not to follow those guidelines, they prefer to be on the street. So how do you help people like that who do not want the assistance? For the people who they can help, let's give them all the help they can get. She is more than happy for her tax dollars to go to help people. However, for those who they cannot help, then we just need to enforce the laws. She did not agree with the benches being removed from around the Disneyland area so that homeless would not sleep there. She hopes the issue of homelessness is addressed and would like to help anyway she can.

Ryan Balius an almost 20-year resident of Anaheim thanked the working group for setting the evening meetings. He thinks the working group is in the right track in forming a task force. We need to help the homeless that are out there. However, as an Anaheim resident he believe that there also have to be consequences for people who break the law.

Annie Talegas has lived in Anaheim for 41 years near Maxwell School. As a homeowner, she has seen many problems arising. Many homeless people are taking over the parks in the area. She sees a huge surplus of unaccompanied bags, luggage around bus stops and does not know if she should be reporting them because she feels that if she says something she may be regarded as a racist, but it can be a health hazard. She believes the individuals should be sent to the appropriate area whether it is veterans or mentally ill homeless.

Daniel Robbins is a 23-year resident and attends all the City Council meetings. He wants to clear the misconceptives that people have. He stated many of the activists live in Anaheim. According to United Way study at UCI, 4% of the entire homeless population, come from early release program. The bathroom issue got to him and cited how the leader of early civilization more than 4,000 years acknowledged that they needed a system of sanitation in order to continue building their civilizations.

Judi Gollette has been an Anaheim resident for more than 36 years. She understands that everyone can go through tough times. They know that they had an early release of prisoners. There are many things that could be addressed, but making the kids safe should be the number one priority. We do not allow alcohol, drugs and guns within certain footage of our schools, she does not see why an ordinance that meets or exceeds the boundaries for any drug and alcohol facility to be the boundary of the school. She would like the working group to consider an ordinance with a 350 to 500-foot boundary of the use of drugs or alcohol and of homeless people from schools and parks.

John Machiaverna has lived in Anaheim for 55 years. He runs the Boys and Girls Club at Manzanita Park. They took over that park over a year ago and since they have been there the police calls are down and there are not as many homeless people. He has had to chase drug addicts out of the bathroom. He is of the opinion that the homeless have to be somewhere; they are going to have to be housed. They have to follow the laws and if they break the laws, they will be arrested. The working group needs to figure out a place

of where they are going to house them. The key is housing. The other issue is that there is no money in homelessness. It has to take the community to get together and we are going to have to spend some money on it. You cannot solve this problem without having funding, property and shelter.

Nancy West is a member of the Alfresco Gardens. They are listening and are trying hard to be part of the solution. Alfresco Gardens does not blame or defend the homeless, this is a community problem and the community needs to get together and solve it together regardless of whose fault it is.

Victoria Michaels is a 22-year resident of Anaheim. She shared that State Senator John Moorlach is trying to get the governor to open up Fairview Hospital, a large facility that is sitting empty. She encouraged the citizens to write or call the governor's office and to have him act on it now. She does not agree with the Alfresco Gardens project and does not think it is something that will work. City Net is doing a great job, they are trying to do the best they know how and they have placed people. On September 20, the Anaheim Republican Assembly is having a forum on alternatives to homelessness. Enough of these task forces, let's just act on it and get the Fairview Hospital opened up.

Wayne Roberts lives behind the Brookhurst and Ball shopping center. He has been in this area for 47 years and he has seen many changes in the community. He has seen growth explosion of the homeless population and he has also watched the battles between Anaheim Police Department and the homeless. The working group needs to start looking at the bigger picture, which is housing and jobs. We need more affordable housing and emergency shelters and they need programs to get people off drugs. To fund this locally, he would oppose to raising sales and property taxes, but he would be in favor of raising property taxes on those persons whose estates are more than a million dollars. Jobs are also needed to help resolve this issue.

Jeannine Robbins is a 26-year resident of Anaheim. She raised her two children in Anaheim and she is an advocate for the homeless. The acceptable solution for homelessness is housing. To keep the homeless on the street in 2015, it cost \$300M dollars. Susan Price has reported that the County has enough money to house every single homeless person, and yet it is not being done. When homeless people are housed, the physical and mental health become more stable and they have a greater chance of beating their addictions. Jobs are needed for the homeless. Mayor Tait stated at the State of the City address in February that he was going to have a homeless jobs program, as far as she knows she has not heard another word since February and she feels that is something that should be addressed. As far as having fear of the homeless, studies shows that homeless have more to fear from the housed than the housed from the homeless. Housing is the answer.

Helena DeCoro is a 27-year resident of Anaheim. She recounted the story of the assistance she provided to a pregnant, homeless woman and her children for nine weeks. For eight weeks, she paid for a motel for them and tried tirelessly to get them housing assistance. She was sorry to report that Anaheim Housing is not doing a good job, these

people applied for housing a year ago. The City Net people check on the homeless, but they do not do anything for them. For eight weeks she called the Illumination Foundation with no luck, she finally reached them and they told her that the homeless family was not high priority because they were in a motel. She then told them they would be on the street the following day, and immediately they got into the shelter. The shelter though does not provide food or toilet paper. Somehow, the City of Anaheim, the Illumination Foundation and the City Net are not doing a good job, and the taxpayers are paying for it. She thought they were volunteers, but no, they have a contract with the City of Anaheim. We need to do this better. For nine weeks, she followed along the homeless path of this family and it is not working.

Lance Miller is a 37-year citizen of Anaheim who lives by Maxwell Park. He would like the working group to help the homeless people that want the help, to process the people that do not want the help and to do what they can to open up new places for them to be respected.

Katherine Smith has been a resident of West Anaheim since 1964 and she sees a collapse of society. It is about disease, diseases that need to be dealt with. Diseases like MRSA and things that are not going to be solved by antibiotics. If these diseases get into our hospitals and we are under hospitalized for this community that will not be a good thing. She wishes that she would have some solutions. Mental institutions need to be reopened in California.

Chair Jose Moreno thanked the people who attended the meeting and either provided comments or listened to their neighbors who wanted to share their thoughts and perspectives. He opened it up to the working group members to provide any comments they like to share.

Mike Robbins stated they have received a lot of input at the meeting, they are going to put it together and they are going to do the best that they can to solve the problem. He thanked everyone for their input.

Jay Burress appreciated the people coming out and sharing with the group. The purpose of this working group is for them to hear from citizens so that they can take notes, address things, and as a group make recommendations.

Esther Wallace thanked those who came out from West Anaheim. She knows they have a big problem there. We need to stand up and solve this problem. There are solutions and she took many notes of the recommendation and ideas provided at the meeting.

Chair Jose Moreno announced the next regularly scheduled meeting would be on Friday, September 8 at 8:30 a.m. at the Anaheim West Tower.

III. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m. to Friday, September 8, at 8:30 a.m. at the Anaheim West Tower, Gordon Hoyt Conference Room.