

CITY OF ANAHEIM
HOMELESS POLICY WORKING GROUP

MINUTES
September 28, 2017

Agenda Posting: A complete copy of the Homeless Policy Working Group Agenda was posted on Monday, September 25, 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 Thursday, September 28, 2017 at the Downtown Community Center, 250 E. Center St., Anaheim, California, 92805.

The following Policy Group Members were present:

1. Mike Robbins, People's Taskforce
2. Eve Garrow, ACLU
3. Linda Lehnkering, Poverty Taskforce
4. Officer Daniel Lambaren in place of 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. Claudia Peña in place of Jesse Ben-Ron, State Assembly
10. Sebastian Calderon replacing Calvin Sung, State Senate
11. Nancy Wells in place of Jay Burress, Visit Anaheim
12. Esther Wallace, West Anaheim Development Council

The following Policy Member were absent:

Kevin George Sorkin, Central Anaheim Resident
Natalie Wieckert, County of Orange
Norma Campos Kurtz, State Assembly

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 explained that the focus of the evening meetings is to listen to the public, their ideas, concerns and suggestions as the working group looks to develop a policy framework and policy recommendations to the City Council. 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.

Tim Houchen shared a copy of the plan from the Federal Government labeled Revising and Strengthening the Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness published by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. This document fortifies Housing First as the model for leaving homelessness. It also offers strategies using the Best Practices as determined by HUD. He pointed out that nowhere in the document does it recommend to increase law enforcement as a best practice. He would like the working group to look at it.

Fred Brown is the General Manager of Dessert Palms Hotel at 631 W. Katella in Anaheim. Fred stated Anaheim flourishes with tourism and tourists fund nearly half of the City's services. Safety is the top concern for travelers. At the current time, his guests do not feel safe. If there is a decline in tourism, it will affect him and the City, financially. He read several guests' comments after their stay expressing they did not feel safe.

Chair Moreno asked Mr. Brown about how many comments like those they get per month and if they are seeing a dramatic increase.

Mr. Brown responded they received about sixteen for June, July and August, but that is just from one source of media. Trip Advisor and Expedia receive many others.

Chair Moreno assured Mr. Brown that the perspective of hotels and businesses is very important to them and that is one of the reasons why they have the President and CEO of Visit Anaheim, Mr. Jay Burress sitting on the panel.

Mathew S. indicated he appreciates all the efforts of the working group and trusts that this group is going to be able to find a solution to homelessness.

Wes Jones identified himself as a homeless advocate and a 30-year resident of Anaheim. He believes that every homeless person should be a good citizen. Being a homeless person is no excuse to commit a crime. He also believes that camping in the parks is not something that is going to work, however parts of the camping ordinance do need to be changed. The storage part of it is not working; many times the items that are seized are not easily retrieved. The working group needs to figure out a better way.

Mark Daniels shared Los Angeles has restrooms that clean themselves. He explained that in between persons using them, a wash cycle takes place automatically. Anaheim may want to consider something like that. He also pointed out the Alfresco Gardens plan and mentioned this would be a good option with the right kind of care for temporary housing.

David Duran stated he has focused in homelessness over the last 10 months, has attended various cities' City Council meetings, and has listened to residents and Chiefs of Police from other cities talk about homelessness. He wanted to make clear that not all homeless people are criminals and not all homeless people have an addiction of some sort. It is very important for a community that if they see a homeless commit a crime, that they do

not communicate to the rest of the community that all homeless people are criminals. That is not true and it is unethical.

Jeanine Robbins stated she agreed with Mr. Duran. She stated Housing First is the only true way to solve homelessness; it is the basis of the HUD Plan and County's 10-year Plan. She hopes that Housing First is the basis of the group's recommendation to the City Council. She recounted a story of her family and their interaction as kids with homeless people in San Francisco. She stated that to this day her daughter will walk the riverbed by herself with no fear and reiterated it is all how people deal with the other people. It is how you respect them and how you approach them.

Chair Jose Moreno thanked everyone who attended the meeting to share his or her thoughts about the topic.

III. DISCUSSION ON POLICY FRAMEWORK

Mike Robbins thinks they need to educate the public better on the subject of homelessness. He would like to direct the public to the facts as it relates to real crime and homeless statistics and federal government studies that talk about solutions for the problems that they are dealing with now. He also thinks they need to find a way to provide restrooms for the homeless. The rhetoric of crime is important; they need to change the rhetoric.

Council Member Barnes shared an article published in July that talks about what Los Angeles is doing regarding public restrooms on Skid Row. She made it clear she is not advocating one way or the other for restrooms, but she thinks they need to learn from their neighbors what works and what does not work.

Eve Garrow from ACLU echoed what Mr. Robbins said about public education. She also suggested that the working group consider that as part of the solution, they consider a Housing First model.

Matt Bates of City Net agrees with the education component for elected officials and the public. The question is how can we extend the current interest into the future for the City so that the City is not repeating the things of the past and not losing information that has been discovered before just based on turn over or things being lost. The other thing that he thinks is the question of what are adequate beds or the appropriateness of beds and what it means to offer services. That to him needs greater definition and be dependent on who the bed is being offered to.

Mayor Pro Tem Vanderbilt stated he came to this group with the belief that the solution is everyone's challenge. There are many facilities in place serving the homeless, yet they are so discreet nobody knows that they are there. Therefore, it is only the anticipation of these facilities that cause people to panic and then it seems that by virtue of how well they are operated, that they have not let to too much concern once they are in place. He firmly believes that the disbursement throughout the City of smaller facilities is

something he hopes the working group can strongly support so that there is a broad shouldering of the crisis and they have nice track record now that demonstrates that this is possible. This best serves the folks who are chronically homeless and who have issues with being in confined spaces with lots of people. Perhaps in the next couple of meetings if they explore this further they will be able to make it part of a strong policy statement that they recommend to the City Council with the small facility approach.

Esther Wallace also agrees smaller facilities throughout the City is a good option. They have several facilities in West Anaheim that are well managed and have worked out really well. Some people can live in these kind of situations, but others cannot. She would like to build a program where the homeless had a small space or they moved in with someone else. Everybody needs to be with his or her belongings and they need to have their own space.

Council Member Denise Barnes shared she has been interested in the Salt Lake City Program that has been in effect for many years. After much debate, Salt Lake City went from considering one large homeless shelter to building several shelters. They build a shelter across the street from the Catholic Charities Community Center and it became a magnet. She foresees success in establishing shelters close to nonprofit organizations and other associations that offer help to homeless. Salt Lake also passed a bill that gave the mayors of the city and county the power to designate sites and override zoning restrictions. She thinks Anaheim needs to reach to out to other cities in the County that could help shoulder a program and she would like to see that built into a policy recommendation.

Chair Jose Moreno stated that it is his understanding that there have been countywide conversations for years about homelessness and asked Assistant City Manager Kristine Ridge to elaborate on the discussions and if other cities are looking and willing to have shelters in their localities.

Kristine Ridges responded yes, the county has been discussing the issue of homelessness. ACCOC divided the county into three service plan areas. Anaheim is part of the North Planning Area and is far ahead of the other two because Anaheim collaborated with Fullerton, Brea and Yorba Linda to open the Kraemer Shelter. The conversations at the ACCOC meetings send around the message that every city needs to pay its fair share or house its fair share whether it is a shelter location or affordable housing units.

Kristine further clarified that California has regulations in place requiring all cities to establish a zoning area where shelters could be permitted by right without having to go through the conditional use permit process. The City has had zoning in place for a number of years and any nonprofit, church or private sector could open up a 50-bed shelter by right in that zone.

Chair Jose Moreno asked if other north Orange County cities such as Fullerton, Brea are open to having shelters.

Kristine responded they might be under the impression that the North Service Planning Area already has its 200-bed shelter. Now, they want to see a 200-bed shelters open in the Central and South Planning Areas. Therefore, it is her impression that the northern cities are under the belief that they have achieved that goal in their area. Certainly, the other things that needs to come along with it aside from emergency shelters, is the affordable housing and group homes and that is what she thinks needs to be pushed on the other cities within north Orange County.

Mike Robbins agreed with Esther Wallace that well managed shelters result in zero police calls. He thinks Anaheim needs to take the lead in this; they cannot wait for other cities. Shelters are important in the City and it is important to provide services to the people that need it so they can get back on their feet and return to society. He stated the County has so much money that the homeless issue can be resolved.

Chair Moreno stated it has been reported that Los Angeles spent hundreds of millions of dollars and the homeless problem just keeps growing. He asked Mr. Robbins to elaborate on the idea that money will help end or solve homelessness.

Mike Robbins replied thank goodness, Orange County is not in a situation like that where they let the issue get out of hand. Orange County still has the ability with the money that is available from the Board of Supervisors to resolve the issue. Statistically, if they move forward now there is still a chance and they also need to plan for affordable housing for the future. Los Angeles let the problem go on for too long and when they put in the money, it was too late. Orange County needs to move forward now.

Chair Moreno then turned to others on the panel for further comments.

Eve Garrow gave a couple of anecdotes from Los Angeles. Since 2011, the median rents in Inglewood have tripled. People who were paying \$1,000 a month in 2011 are paying \$3,000 a month now. In Anaheim, the rents have gone up by 50%, so that is not tripling, but rents are increasing. When they look at the cost of living and especially the cost of rent in Los Angeles, it is out of control. It is not that the Housing First Model fails; it is that too many people are becoming homeless too fast. If they had not invested those hundreds of millions of dollars, it just be that much worse. It is not that they tried and they failed, the response has not been adequate. Orange County is very fortunate that though the problem appears to be very difficult, it is so much smaller. It is such a wealthy county, and they have board of supervisors who so far have not contributed any county money. The County is sitting on this money because it is a matter of priorities. We are lucky we have these county resources; they just need a political will to prioritize this issue. The other window of opportunity that Orange County has is the early holding that is supported by the Illumination Foundation. It is a matter of whether or not they are going to go down a path that is cost and humanely effective.

Linda Lehnkering agreed with Eve's comments and added Orange County does not have a homeless issue as large as Los Angeles and San Diego. She thinks it is a solvable problem; they just need the County funds to do that. As far as policy, she prefers a

prevention approach where folks need to either have a living wage or perhaps rent stabilization.

Matt Bates agreed with what has been said. One of the conclusions of the United Way study is that homelessness is an economic problem, the amount of money that people have to pay for housing is too far from the cost of housing so they cannot afford the housing. When you compare Orange County to LA, the economic conditions are worst in Los Angeles relative to Orange County. The resources that Orange County has to address the problem are greater proportionally than what Los Angeles has to spend. The economics are better and the scale of the problem is less in Orange County.

Matt's professional career started in Los Angeles in 1994. From 1994-2000, he worked at the Los Angeles Mission, which is one of the largest homeless, rescue missions in the Country. To show how far things have progressed, in 1994 there was no mental health services available on Skid Row. None of the rescue missions had a mental health professional in their staff because homelessness was thought as a personal issue, a moral issue, a sin or a result of a person making bad choices. The solution then was you fix their addiction, you provide education and job training and if they make other choices they will be able to get a job and then you put them into housing and put an end to that process. In his opinion, Los Angeles is a case study for the failure of the transitional model and so much money was spent for so little transformational results. It worked for some people, usually the highest functioning homeless people. Nevertheless, sustainably it was a huge failure because the problem got worse and worse.

Matt added the other failure that LA has to recognize is that they centralized all the homeless services in the industrial part of town. There was a push in the 80's and 90's to move homeless and homeless services out of downtown from the business district. LA centralized all the homeless neighbors in one particular area, Skid Row, where people could get in, but they could not get out because there was no relational and community assets that they could leverage to integrate back into community. Therefore, even though it succeeded in the transitional housing model, they were not able to find longevity success.

Fortunately, the County has embraced the Housing First model more or less from the start. The other thing that is different in Orange County from Los Angeles County is that there is more of a willingness to collaborate internally with cities and across cities at the County level. There is a window of opportunity to align local solutions with regional solutions and there is a developing structure in place to accommodate the alignment of the strategies. That is the way to solve homelessness; you need local city level strategy, tied to a regional strategy, tied to a county strategy. The current Board of Supervisors has the potential to embrace these issues and move forward. In conclusion, he thinks Orange County can solve this problem. This problem should be solved from a moral and financial perspective and it makes sense to address it. If you look at the scale and the scope of this, there are many reasons to be optimistic.

Chair Moreno then referred to the Housing Bill Package that the California Legislature approved over this last term that address the housing crisis. Norma Kurtz sent this document to working group and copies were made available for the public. Chair Moreno gave the State representatives the opportunity to share their thoughts on how these bills dictate local policy.

Sebastian Calderon from Senator Josh Newman's Office gave a quick timeline related to the bills. He stated the bills will be going to the governor's desk within a couple of weeks and he will be signing off on them. Two of the big ones are SB2 and SB35. Those bills create a way where funding will go towards homelessness in local areas. It goes along very well with the discussion that evening and being able to house the homeless.

Sebastian also recommended, if it was not already in place, a collaborative with all the organizations and shelters in Anaheim and surrounding cities and for them to meet and discuss what they are doing so that everyone is on the same page. In addition, he echoed what other members of the group mentioned about education and not only educating people about homelessness, but also making sure that the kids in the K-12 education system who are homeless or are at risk of being homeless receive adequate resources in order to succeed in school and after graduation.

Chair Moreno noted Anaheim has a collaborative in place headed by City Net and asked if there a collaborative at the county level.

Matt Bates responded yes, the county's Continuum of Care is designed to be collaborative effort among the agencies. He added there are a few faults in the system, but there is hope that with the upcoming change in management and other proposed changes there will be more efficiency and it will strengthen the collaborative effort.

Claudia Peña from State Assembly added the Governor's deadline to sign the bills is October 13 and after that, they will know what bills pass and will be able to see how the bills will affect Anaheim.

Chair Jose asked the board members to begin to think about enforcement. What would be appropriate enforcement and should they enforce? In developing policy, you develop rules, regulations and parameters. Whatever policies they are considering and ultimately recommend to Council, they need to be prepared to think about methods, forms, resourcing and enforcement of those policies. He also asked if anyone is opposed to enforcement of policies. Are there concerns from the group as it relates to the philosophy of enforcement?

Eve Garrow shared from their perspective; policies can be enforced as long as they are not violating the rights of individuals. She sees no problem in housing ordinances that do not violate rights, but actually affirmatively make the communities better.

Chair Moreno agreed with Ms. Garrow that they need to be mindful as they recommend policies that good policies are policies designed not to inhibit people's rights. If they have policies that enforce the rights of people, they would want to enforce that.

Chair Jose Moreno announced the final evening meeting for public input would be on Tuesday, October 3 at 6:00 p.m. at South Jr. High. The next Friday mornings will be on October 6 and October 20 at 8:30 a.m. at the Anaheim West Tower. In the next three meetings, the expectation is to have a final draft on policy recommendations to present to City Council in early November.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m. to Tuesday, October 3, at 6:00 p.m. at the South Jr. High School located at 2320 E. South St., Anaheim, CA 92806.