

CITY OF ANAHEIM
HOMELESS POLICY WORKING GROUP

MINUTES
October 3, 2017

Agenda Posting: A complete copy of the Homeless Policy Working Group Agenda was posted on Friday, September 29, 2017 at 3:30 p.m. at Anaheim City Hall.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 3, 2017 at South Jr. High School, 2320 E. South St., Anaheim, California, 92806.

The following Policy Group Members were present:

1. Mike Robbins, People's Taskforce
2. Eve Garrow, ACLU
3. Linda Lehnkering, Poverty Taskforce
4. Eric Carter, City of Anaheim
5. Matt Bates, CityNet
6. Helen Myers in place of 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. Sebastian Calderon, State Senate
11. Nancy Wells in place of Jay Burress, Visit Anaheim
12. Esther Wallace, West Anaheim Development Council
13. Kevin George Sorkin, Central Anaheim Resident
14. Natalie Wieckert, County of Orange
15. Norma Campos Kurtz, State Assembly

The following Policy Member were absent:

Mayor Pro Tem James Vanderbilt, City of Anaheim
Jay Burress, Visit Anaheim

The following staff members were present:

Kristine Ridge, Assistant City Manager
Jackie Rodarte, Senior Policy Aide

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Jose Moreno explained this is the third and final evening meeting to assure the working group receives public input in the process as the group looks to develop a policy framework and policy recommendations to the City Council. They had the west side and central meetings in the recent weeks and this week they are on the east side. 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.

Isabel Garcia representing the Division of Continued Education at Santiago Canyon College put together a small packet on the programs that they offer and gave a copy to the working group. They offer an adult education program. Through the program students learn and/or improve computer skills. They also offer a career technical education that will help students obtain a vocational certificate in seven different areas. Classes are offered in the morning, afternoon, evenings and on Saturdays. Along with vocational certificates, they offer high school diploma program for those students who want to obtain a GED. The classes are free; students do not pay for tuition, books or parking. They also have a new program for people with special disabilities. Finally, they have three locations in Orange.

Bill Taormina thanked the working group for committing themselves to set a policy for a permanent solution to homelessness in Anaheim. This subject is one of the most important matters to our community because it has touched every sector of our population. As they seek solutions, they are also making a major effort to address the negative impacts that this issue has on the residents, tourists and businesses. He gave two updates from the business community standpoint. First, with regard to the design competition at CalState Fullerton, they have fifty students engaged and working on the design competition and the project is receiving major support from the university and caught the interest of Orange County Register Reporter Wendy Fawthrop. Wendy is planning to do a major story in early December when the project comes to conclusion. The website is up and running at www.pushhumanityforward.com. Finally, he is continuing to brainstorm with his business peers about developing a nonprofit regional life rebuilding campus that would provide 1,000 beds, drug rehabilitation, mental health support, medical support, job training and a host of other services.

Chad Hoffman reported he had an issue listening to the audio of the meetings and was not able to access the meeting notes on the City's website. He would like staff to look into that issue.

Kristine Ridge will look into that and advised the minutes of the meetings are not posted until the working group approves them.

Matthew Skaggs said he is a community development support advocate volunteer and a team member of Alfresco Gardens, a proposed low-cost outdoor community. He would like to promote health and education programs to compliment the temporary living condition proposal of Alfresco Gardens. It is their mission to have this available so that when permanent housing does become available, people will be able to begin over again. Only with a healthy mind, body and spirit can a true success be achieved, plus an ability to be self-supportive.

An unidentified speaker asked the working group that in their efforts to resolve homelessness in the best way possible, to keep in mind that history is written daily. He would hate for this group to be recognized later as doing the wrong thing, making mistakes that critically affects many of the transients.

Mark R. Daniels applauded the previous speakers. He would like to see the working group join hands and show the world that Anaheim has recognized this man-made disaster and they are going to make something out of it and they will be a shining example for the rest of the world.

III. DISCUSSION ON POLICY FRAMEWORK

Council Member Denise Barnes recognized what one of the speakers said about education and the perception that people have regarding the homeless. She called on CityNet to help find a way to educate people, maybe something as simple as a short pamphlet. She shared we need to have sympathy, compassion, devotion and with education, she believes they can get to the heart of what our City can understand and embrace to help.

Matt Bates responded because CityNet has embraced this cause, a big part of what they consider their job to be is community education. Part of the challenge is that though there is a lot of good information on homelessness, people are not familiar with it. There are researches that communicate some of the complicated principles in ways that people can understand. One is Million Dollar Murray, an article written by Malcolm Gladwell that is available for free on Gladwell's website. The other is a video on John Stewart's Daily Show of a reporter that looked a Utah's Housing First Model. The other is the County's 10-year Plan to End Homelessness. The plan illustrates that there are people in this county that have been working on a plan for a long time.

Esther Wallace commented she likes the County's 10-year Plan but it needs to be broadened. She wishes it could be expanded more rapidly and spread to other cities because Anaheim cannot do it all. She is noticing that ever since the enforcement began at the riverbed that more homeless people are gathering in the parks, in between buildings and at school playground during the night.

Chair Moreno asked Captain Carter if the Police department is seeing an increase of homeless folks going back to the city parks.

Captain Carter explained that whenever there is a call on a homeless complaint, there are three things they look for (1) is there a medical emergency, (2) is there a crime or (3) do they want resources. When there is a crime, and the police act on it, it causes homeless to move from that location.

Chair Moreno stated the police has policies, rules and regulations in place on how they encounter a situation involving a homeless individual. One thing they may want to think about are those three things that Captain Carter referenced and if it is something that they

as a group want to reaffirm and say to the Council whether they recommend reaffirmation of the procedures or suggest an augmentation, expansion or restriction. Therefore, that is something to think about.

Mike Robbins stated the United Way study with UC Irvine found that the Housing First Model reduced the police calls to zero.

Kevin Sorkin would like to reaffirm the three concepts that the Police has in place. There has to be some type of enforcement component because with endless talk and compassion, they will be walked all over. They will become the hub of Orange County for this issue and it will just get worst and worst. That is something that he would not like for the City to go down that road.

Eve Garrow stated we have to be realistic about this issue; enforcement does not get people out of homelessness. When you look at places that have taken the Housing First Model seriously, you do not find people rejecting the housing. You find for example, the rate of crime homelessness going down to just about zero. Housing First is a model that actually works. ACLU very firmly believes that enforcement anti-camping or anti-sleeping ordinance where they make it a crime to sleep or camp in public violates people's constitutional right. It violates the constitution where people have no legal alternative.

Chair Moreno explained ACLU's long-term solution then is to find housing or services for everyone, and that you cannot enforce the law unless there is somewhere where they can go that is adequate and meets homeless individual's needs including any disabilities. He then asked Ms. Garrow what she recommends as a policy in the short-term to address homelessness between now and the time that we can get that housing built.

Ms. Garrow responded from her perspective, though shelter can take a long time, housing does not have to take a long time. You can provide people with other forms of housing that might meet their needs in the short term. Some cities use programs like motel vouchers. For some people, emergency shelter that exists is accessible to them. The ACLU is worried about people who are chronically homeless with disabilities and forced into emergency by threat of citation if they are sleeping outside. She says that for each person you would have to be very sensitive to what their needs are and what they can tolerate and come up with solutions that may be different for all depending on their needs. Permanent housing will take funding and though it feels like it is a heavy lift, it is not a heavy lift for this county to fund the amount of affordable permanent housing that it would take to end homelessness. She said it would be a tiny drop in the bucket for the County. The County is not spending any of its budget on permanent affordable housing to end homelessness even though it is on their 10-year Plan to End Homelessness. She thinks putting pressure on the County to fund its own 10-year plan and finding ways to collaborate with the county so that they can start to solve this problem on a regional basis.

Chair Moreno asked if motel vouchers are being offered and Matt Bates responded there are some vouchers, but they are limited and not sufficient to meet the current needs. Implementation of such a program would not be difficult but they require funding.

Mike Robbins would like to find a way to change the symptom of fear that homeless people experience due to lack of trust. He would like to stop criminalizing the homeless. He would like to find a way to move homeless in groups so that they retain the friendships they have developed for several years.

Chair Moreno elaborated on the symptoms fear. On one hand, you have the fear the people in the condition of homelessness have of either police, systems, and institutions; and, on the other hand you have the fear that residents have of their kids stepping on needles, the concern of having adults they don't recognize right next to a school staring at kids, fear of going to public restroom not knowing who might be in there. He asked Mike how the working group could attack that fear.

Mike suggested addressing the rhetoric. Studies show that California is number one in attacks on homeless people. That 1/3 of all the people in the United States have a drug addiction. It is part of informing the public about the truth. Also cleaning up the areas more often and providing more trashcans so that needles can be placed there.

Esther Wallace asked what ACLU is doing to convince other cities that they need to do their share in addressing homelessness because Anaheim cannot do it all. She would like to see ACLU helping Anaheim in doing that. She knows that homeless people's rights should not be stepped on; they are human people and they deserve the same as everybody else. If you are going to be fair to them, we have to be fair to the community too. She asked they do not take her remarks as being negative, she is just as interested in helping find places for the homeless, but they are running out of space in West and Central Anaheim.

Eve Garrow agreed homelessness is a regional problem. She would like the group to think about recommending to the City Council that they reach out to other cities to start the dialogue and to reach out to the County. There are 34 cities in this County and one board of supervisors. The discretionary funds that the County has which is about \$800,000,000 is enough to build affordable housing and permanent supportive housing for every single person who is homeless in this county right now. She thinks it is a matter of cities getting together and of the County getting involved. Part of what Anaheim can do is to start that dialogue with the rest of the county and make it a regional problem, not just an Anaheim problem.

Chair Moreno asked Natalie Wieckert what she is hearing from the Board of Supervisors from other cities, are they having real conversations and what she sees in terms of budgets.

Natalie stated everyone has his or her view on the budget and this is just her speaking. She says the County gets the lowest property tax back for any county in the state. She would like to talk about the \$800,000,000 and the funding Eve is talking about. Some of that funding is tied up with their required matches that they have to meet to pull down state and federal funding. She is not a budget expert, but she would certainly be happy to provide information or engagement conversation with Eve on exactly what kind of funding she is referring to. As far as engaging other cities, they are always looking for an opportunity to partner, but they need cities to site places for them to potentially put housing, that is not part of the County's jurisdiction. She knows that Susan Price has been pushing that and that is potentially an area that they can explore here as the working group. She can only speak to the area that they represent which is the 4th District.

Chair Moreno asked as the 4th District that encompasses Anaheim, on this group, what would be some solutions that Natalie would like for the group to think about from a policy standpoint.

Natalie would like the group to think about siting locations within Anaheim that they can potentially put permanent supportive housing and to encourage the City Council to engage with other cities to find solutions.

Chair Moreno agrees with Esther Wallace that they need to think about ways to better distribute affordable housing across the city.

Eve Garrow added because municipalities have an obligation under the Fair Housing Act to affirmatively further fair housing that a part of that has to do with not contributing to the concentration of poverty. To make sure, that when they are able to site permanent supportive housing they do not just continue to put it in areas where there is already affordable housing and a high concentration of people with very low incomes. In addition, she thought Natalie's comment was very encouraging about collaborating with cities like Anaheim to build permanent supportive housing if the city were to be able to site it. They should definitely keep track of that recommendation.

Council Member Barnes would like to recommend as a policy that they continue to site locations for mental health facilities as a priority and then they can work with the other population.

Eve Garrow stated they have a shortage of mental health facilities in the County. The County has received funding for crisis centers, but she believes they are having difficulty siting them. That will help alleviate part of the problem, but she is not an expert in the mental health fields, so she is not certain how much they need and what the shortage is.

Natalie Wieckert stated the County has allocated twenty million dollars for crisis stabilization units. They are currently expanding the one in Santa Ana to twenty-one beds and they are trying to site another one in Central, but the idea is that they will have one in North, Central and South. They have been very difficult to site, so the money is just sitting there.

Chair Moreno asked what the difficulty is in siting the mental health facilities.

Natalie Wieckert stated the County has been getting a lot of pushback. She does not participate in the Central and South meetings, but from what she has heard is the concerns raised. On the north side, they are in the very preliminary discussions.

Mike Robbins asked whether the working group is interested in recommending some area in Anaheim where mental health facilities could be located and stipulate certain amount of units for low-income housing in each area, spread throughout the City.

Council Member Barnes stated she would like to see Susan Price's assessment and why it is not being escalated.

Kevin Sorkin stated he understands Council Member Barnes' point but at the same time, we might have services available; but what do you do if the person does not want to take advantage of them. He goes out to the riverbed at least weekly and not once has anyone been interested in help, he has spoken to at least 30 people and they all refused.

Chair Moreno added on that point, what the working group has heard consistently from experts, is that when you are out there and talk to them briefly, they do not know who you are. Experts say when they go out there they are told no as well, and it takes 7 to 8 times. If we accept the presumption that it takes between 7 and 9 times, then yes they are going to see people say no to services.

Chair Moreno explained the way he is understanding the profiles of the type of conditions they are looking at is:

- Folks who may actually be employed and are there because they do not make enough wages to afford housing;
- Folks who are struggling with mental health issues and can't sustain a job;
- Folks who have an addiction problem;
- Folks who have had a stretch of bad luck, have given up on parts of their life and cannot find a job;
- Folks who are not interested in housing and want to be out there by choice; and
- Folks who are disabled

Chair Moreno would like the working group to think about the policy framework around those kind of profiles and the solutions that they would like to recommend for each of those profiles.

Matt Bates recommends linkages to prevention and diversion resources and organizations within the city and regionally. Linkages to health care. All statistics show that the healthcare industry is bearing the largest front of cost, even more than housing. Consider strategies for citing. His experience working with the city, he observed how the County tried to site the shelter in Santa Ana and then also in Anaheim and the big difference was that there was a much more mobilized and engaged civic population that was willing to

speak out for the Kraemer site that did not show up for the Santa Ana site. He observed how the value and how strategic proactive engagement response to try and look at those kind of facilities. His observation is that it does not just happen, because it is a good idea and a good project, even if the funding is there. Another consideration, there is merit in considering a similar proactive outreach to impacted neighborhoods. Though the City does a great job in engaging those neighbors, he thinks there may be more that can be done to have a proactive strategic response to communicate what is possible and what is not possible, what law enforcement is doing and what the city agencies are doing. Finally, to engage the faith community and other nonprofits to take a more holistic community response that will account for the pain felt by property and business owners that is being highly impacted by the crimes related to status.

Chair Moreno asked the working group to prepare a couple of policy-oriented solutions for Friday's meeting. Solutions that would be helpful to address homelessness across the different types of conditions of economics, mental health, addiction, victims of human trafficking and disabled people. In addition, how they want to frame the recommendations. At what level they want to go with policy recommendations, whether they want to recommend specific sites and capacity limits of each shelter or do they want recommend the number of sites that should be placed in Anaheim.

Mike Robbins read an excerpt from the County's 2016 Strategic Financial Plan from the Board of Supervisors where the county allocated zero dollars for Health Care Agencies, Psychiatric Stabilization Support Services, Social Service and Agent, In-home Supportive Services, Resource Family Approval, Continuum of Care Reform, Adult Protective Services. He believes that is part of the problem that put them in the position they are today. He provided a copy of the report to staff and it will be distributed to the working group.

Chair Jose Moreno stated the next Homeless Policy Working Group meeting would be on October 6 at the Anaheim West Tower.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m. to Friday, October 6, at 8:30 a.m. at the Anaheim West Tower, Gordon Hoyt Conference Room, 201 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, CA 92805.