

Ventura Social Services Task Force – Meeting Minutes from August 3, 2011

I. Introductions and Announcements

A. Self-Introductions

(28 present - Neal Andrews, Robin Boscarelli, Jerry Breiner, Peter Brown, Cathy Brudnicki, Cindy Cantle, Michael Darden, David Deutsch, Kathleen Erikson, Susan Everett, Bill Finley, Ken Finning, Jill Forman, Todd L. Goehner, Tim Hawkins, Keri Jaeger, John Jones, Tanya Kellam, Ron Kurlaender, Shelli Locklear, Donna Mason, Mike Merewether, Kate Mills, Rob Orth, Debora Schreiber, Karol Schulkin, Mary Stewart, Beth Sutherland)

II. Subcommittee and Other Reports

B. Peter Brown

- 1) The Ventura City Council adopted staff recommendations for the 10 year Strategy to End Homelessness. There were 7 areas identified in relation to the strategy. They are as follows: Homeless Prevention, Shelter, Transitional Housing, Dedicated Service of Funding, Mainstream Resources, Permanent Supportive Housing, and an Inclusionary Housing Policy.
- 2) The City of Ventura staff will write up action plans for achieving the above goals.
- 3) The City of Ventura staff will work with service providers on assessment tools and to discuss “good neighbor” practices. The staff will begin meeting with service providers starting in September.
- 4) The concerns about vagrancy in the City of Ventura are growing. There will be an attempt to address these concerns by first defining what vagrancy is and then to identify approaches to deal with this issue. Meetings will be arranged that will involve the police, service providers, business partners, etc.
- 5) The Homeless 2 Home program has been funded in the amount of \$44,000. As of now the partner agencies for the program are Salvation Army, Turning Point Foundation, and Project Understanding.

- 6) The Downtown Ventura Organization (DVO) and the City of Ventura are partnering to define a downtown district that will “tax itself” to generate funds to improve the conditions in the area. Anti-Panhandling will be a citywide campaign.
- 7) Common Ground is currently on hold for the time being; the Spring of 2012 is being looked at as the start date for this program. It may become a dual city project with both Ventura and Oxnard participating.
- 8) The Ventura City Council and the Council Subcommittee on Homelessness are looking at the 10 possible sites for the Gateway Project. The plan is to work with providers to hold community meetings about each possible site. At the meetings “stations” will be set up for each possible site so that people can voice their concerns and discuss details about how the program would operate at that specific site.

Questions, Answers, Comments, and Concerns:

- a) Neil Andrews – Inclusionary Housing Requirements
 - 1) Developers must currently provide affordable housing units at the rate of 15% for any housing development. There is an issue on the table to either reduce that 15% requirement or allow developers to pay out cash that would go into a pool of funds to provide affordable housing thus taking them out of the obligation to provide housing in order to meet the 15% requirement.
 - 2) Currently the rules on “affordable housing” are quite lenient. A tightening of the rules may be advisable.
- b) Karol Schulkin – Where cash payments into a pool of funds for affordable housing units to be built are allowed they rarely result in actual housing units being constructed.
- c) Cindy Cantle – Numerous studies point to the fact that there is a positive value to having a diverse population in the same housing development.
- d) Kate Mills – Are developers mandated to devote a certain amount of space for parks in a development?
- e) Neil Andrews – The guidelines are actually rather loose on that issue.
- f) Neil Andrews – The city has never actually adopted a “Good Neighbor” policy and the City Council has not formally adopted such a policy either.

- g) Neil Andrews – A property for the Gateway should be purchased first before it is publically known that it will be utilized for the project in order to head off public opposition that would be mounted against having a shelter on the property.
- h) Captain Bill Finley – If money is generated to buy the property for the Gateway the purchaser needs to know that the purpose of the purchase will be fulfilled.
- i) Peter Brown – The City of Ventura has complied with SB2 to exclude certain sites from consideration for being a shelter.
- j) Captain Bill Finley – The Gateway will not be a year round shelter model.
- k) Neil Andrews – Do not forget that this is an election year and that adds another layer to the entire process of issues being heard.
- l) Beth Sutherland – With regard to the Gateway, will the community be involved in discussions and planning about the project? Is there an outreach plan in place for the Gateway to dispel myths to the public?
- m) Peter Brown – On Tuesday August 30th there will be 600 students from California Lutheran University cleaning up the Ventura river bottom area. There will be a training on Tuesday August 23rd and the event on August 30th is from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

C. Cathy Brudnicki – Report on the National Conference for Ending Homelessness.

- 1) The conference was held in Washington DC in July. The concept of a holistic approach to ending homelessness is being embraced on the national level.
- 2) There will be a conference for ending family homelessness on February 9th-10th, 2012 in Los Angeles. The newly homeless population is now more frequently families and there is a recognition that this issue needs to be seriously addressed.

D. Rob Orth – Homeless 2 Home Update.

- 1) The change in the model of service at Project Understanding has resulted in 21 people being signed up for the new program.
- 2) Of the 21 people who have signed up some have been housed and there is good reason to believe the rates of achieving housing will continue to rise.

E. Captain Bill Finley – VSSTF Faith Community Subcommittee report.

- 1) The One City One Meal for Thanksgiving will hopefully be held at the fairgrounds this year.
- 2) There is a feeling that it is important to start a dialogue with churches about the issue of homelessness.
- 3) There will be a Candidates Forum on September 22nd at the Church of Christ on Telegraph and Bryn Mawr in Ventura. Issues of homelessness and poverty will be discussed. A group will be formed to organize this event. The event will begin at 6:30 pm.

F. Cindy Cante – Homeless Prevention Subcommittee report.

- 1) The homeless prevention fund assisted one family in July. To date 189 households have been helped. There was a total of \$831 in donations for the month of July.
- 2) Project Understanding has the fund for August.
- 3) There is a Facebook page for the Homeless Prevention Subcommittee.
- 4) Beth Sutherland, Debra Schreiber, and Cindy Cante all met with Kathryn Wertheim to discuss possible methods for fundraising.
- 5) On August 7th Cindy Cante will speak at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Ventura about the homeless fund.

G. Susan Everett – Housing Options Subcommittee report.

- 1) Homeshare has recently matched two people to move into homes.
- 2) There is a need for a volunteer driver for the Homeshare program.

H. Gateway Group subcommittee report.

Please review above notes and comments.

I. John Jones – VSSTF Steering Committee report.

Please review above notes and comments.

J. Ad hoc Committee report

- 1) The “Basic Human Rights” issues brought up at the July meeting will be formally addressed by a committee to be chaired by Kate Mills. The issues of emergency shelter and supportive housing will be primary concerns for this committee.

III. Business

Kate Mills – “One Stop” report

- 1) The most recent One Stop in Ventura served approximately 20 people.

- 2) More parolees are coming to One Stop; they have unique issues that need to be addressed.

IV. Networking

- 1) Job Fair on August 20th in Plaza Park from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.
- 2) City Council Candidate Forum – see above notes; September 22nd.
- 3) 2nd annual Black and White Dinner Dance – October 15, 2011. Sponsored by the City of Oxnard, St. Vincent de Paul, and the VSSTF.