

Ventura Social Services Task Force

Minutes of Meeting May 6, 2009

Attending - total of 44 -

Karl Keller, John Jones, Robin Davis, Adele Fergusson, Jill Forman, Kate Mills, Lynn Bullock, David Deutsch, Jeffrey Howard, Neal Andrews, Michele Pecora, Joan Gartlan, Sherry Cash, Jerry Breiner, Carolyn Briggs, Fran Reijerse, Daniel Zapata, Paul Bramson, Neal Ortenberg, Mark Stadler, Rick Pearson, Loretta McCarty, Ken Finning, Marilyn Scott, Jan Christian, Sam Gallucci, RoseAnn Morrisey, William Finley, Peter Brown, Jonell McLain, Shelli Locklear, Donna Mason, Cindy Cantle, Laura Swenson, Debora Schreiber, Mary Stewart, Les Goldberg, Karol Schulkin, Clyde Reynolds, Jill Martinez, Jeanette Duncan, Al Ruiz, Michael Sullivan, Ken Porter

Meeting called to order by chair Karl Keller at 3:03 PM

Raylene Villalpando from Affinity Bank spoke. Because VSSTF opened an account there, they will donate \$75 to VSSTF for each new account anyone opens who requests this donation.

Self-introductions performed.

I. Report on City council items by Councilman Neal Andrews

The four recommendations from the Task Force were presented from the Council subcommittee to the full council on May 4th. The Council adopted a motion made by Council member Andrews including:

1. Directive to staff to modify the municipal code to de-criminalize sleeping in cars
2. \$22,000 to be allocated for the Safe Sleep Parking Program or an alternative to meet the same goals. City staff to meet with a VSSTF committee of Faith Based and Steering Committee representatives
3. Mandate site(s) to be in the Housing Element making it legal to have transitional and permanent shelter locations
4. Direct staff to begin trying to find operating funds for a permanent shelter.
5. Memorandum of Understanding with the county as to responsibilities and accountability will be pursued on a case by case basis.
6. Discussion of allocation of housing burden within the County, including issue of repatriation i.e. if a person from elsewhere in the County comes out of jail or the hospital, they should be returned to their city of origin, not left in Ventura
7. Staff to look into documenting costs and savings of homeless services i.e. are services provided by the city saving money for the County. The interdependence between court system, police, medical care etc, make it difficult to document financial savings.

8. No closure of social service agencies because of code enforcement issues. This has not been done and will not be done except in the unlikely event of life threatening violations which can't be abated.

Staff report recommendations:

Amnesty program for property not compliant with current codes.

Owner must self-report violation and identify a correction plan.

Possibility of a lending program. Currently loans only available for the owner occupied unit. This plan would extend a loan in order to bring tenant occupied unit into compliance. Would be based on means testing and possibly include help to finance the fees owed.

If another agency besides the City sets the fees, the City cannot alter or affect. Two other suggestions being considered:

1. Look at the requirement to have covered garages
2. If set back was not required for original use, modify the set back requirement

A big thank you was extended to Neal for pushing so forcefully on these issues at Council, as well as to the UU Church for organizing the rally, and to all who attended the rally and the Council Meeting.

Subcommittee reports (meeting times and locations at end)

A. Faith Communities by Bill Finley

1. Safe Sleep Program: members will continue to work with the City to develop a program that can work
2. Rick Pearson is heading up a group to look at site selection for a permanent shelter.
3. Work on One City Thanksgiving is getting underway
4. Lift Up Your Voice from UU Church has a photo project highlighting homeless individuals and telling their story. The photos are currently at Foster Library and at City Hall. If you have suggestions for locations for display contact Marilyn Scott: mescotte8@gmail.com 630-7812
5. The rally on May 4 was great. Approximately 130 people were there and a wide variety of faith traditions were represented. It was very helpful for getting our issues passed at the Council meeting.
6. Kingdom Center at old City Center Motel site. Sam Gallucci of Harbor Church reported that a lease had been signed. The concept involves a faith-based sober transitional living center. Twelve pastors/priests are committed to the adopt a family model. Ultimately there will be 30 rooms; women and children given first priorities and then others. A professional organization will be running the center. Operation Embrace is a separate program operating 8:30-1:30 as a day time ministry. Before a CUP

(conditional use permit) will be granted by the City, public meetings will be held.

B. Homeless Prevention by Cindy Cattle

Cindy commented that in the 9 years she has been involved with the Task force, this is the most exciting period of progress she has seen.

1. The fund was at Salvation Army in April. For some unknown reason, it was a quiet month with few requests. In May it is at Project Understanding and calls have been coming in. Since June 2007, 64 households and 140 persons have been helped to stay housed. At the most recent 90 day check up, 4 of 6 families were fine. Two families couldn't be reached although there is reason to believe one of those families is housed but not with a phone.
2. The greeting card committee is meeting and plans are going forward.
3. McConnell's ice cream shop in the old Mission Bell Motel has great ice cream **and** a collection box for HPF! Stop by to donate.
4. Federal funds for homeless prevention are being tracked. There should be a significant amount of money available in October. It will be dispersed through the same agencies that we are now working with. The City and County are working together to apply.
5. The Borchard Foundation encouraged us to apply for \$10,000 grant which we expect to receive.

C. Housing Options by Loretta McCarty

1. Stimulus Funds being tracked; effort going in to designing County wide guidelines. A NOFA (notice of funding availability) was released on May 1 for foreclosure funding.
2. Home Share and Care program being set up. Efforts underway to locate office space. A desk, etc has been donated. Area Agency on Aging offered two spaces.
3. Discussions about 2nd units and on property units...possibility to grandfather some in or relax restrictions. (see item I)

D. Gateway Report

No one was present to give a report. It will be presented at the June meeting.

C. Community Education by John Jones

1. The first Street paper is out and was distributed at the rally May 4. It is also available as a PDF.
2. Karl Keller and Jeffrey Howard have spoken together 3 times and have received rave reviews. Jeffrey speaks as someone who was recently homeless and emphasizes that it can happen to any of us.
3. NAMI Walk on May 2, 2009
4. We will have a booth at the July 4 street fair, contact John or Debora to volunteer.

5. Sometime this summer, VSSTF will be featured at the downtown mini mall on Saturday.
6. A program for job skills and trades is being looked into.

E. Steering Committee Report by Karl Keller

At Karl's urging the group attempted to put together numbers of how many people have been housed or helped to stay housed. Numbers were in the well over 300 range including the eviction prevention done by Project Understanding. At the next meeting we will have some firmer numbers to look at. Karl emphasized that we have done a lot of good. On a personal note, he spoke about the several thousand hours he has devoted to the Task Force over the past years. Now his life is changing: he is getting married and moving to Camarillo as well as looking for a job. Although he will continue to be involved, he can no longer serve as chair.

Motion made by Neal Andrews and seconded by Jan Christian that John Jones be elected chair. Neal took over the chair to conduct the election. The list of voters was read and John was elected by unanimous voice vote.

Thanks was given to Karl for the great job he has done leading the Task Force. John emphasized that as we move forward in addressing issues the collaboration that was so evident at the May 2 rally must be encouraged and built on.

F. El Patio report by Jeanette Duncan

Jeanette from Peoples' Self Help Housing reported on the El Patio apartments at Palm and Thompson. This housing is for very low income persons and aimed toward the recently homeless. She thanked the Housing Authority, the City, Karol Schulkin, Carolyn Briggs and others for all their support. There has been a delay because of the state not paying on their commitments but it seems to be moving forward now. There will be 44 rooms and a mgr. apt: also a common kitchen and dining area. There will be a handicapped accessible unit. Current residents have been being moved around as the work gets done. There will be all new plumbing, new electrical and new roof.

G. One Stop by Kate Mills

People served averaging around 200 a month, with about half of them new clients. Need is for new socks and personal hygiene articles such as sun screen, deodorant, etc.

V. Announcements

A. Remember the web site OneCityVentura.org

B. Sherry asked for donations or suggestions to put an individual in motel room for one night four weeks in a row for lice treatment

C. HSA is developing a one stop job development and counseling center.
Kate will keep us posted.

Respectfully submitted,
Debora Schreiber
Next VSSTF Meeting June 3, 3-5 PM

Upcoming events:

Regular Meeting Schedules

The Faith Community Subcommittee meets every 1st Tuesday, 4:00-5:00 PM, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 5654 Ralston, Ventura 93003.

June 2

The Ventura Social Services Task Force meets every 1st Wednesday, 3:00-5:00 PM, at Family to Family, 303 N Ventura Ave # E, Ventura 93001.

The Community Education Subcommittee meets every 2nd Tuesday, 3:00-5:00 PM, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 5654 Ralston, Ventura 93003. June 9

The Housing Options Subcommittee meets every 2nd Wednesday, 6:00-8:00PM, in the Topping Room, immediately left of E.P. Foster Library, 651 East Main Street, Ventura 93001. June 10

The Homeless Prevention Subcommittee meets every 4th Wednesday, 4:00-5:00 PM, at Supervisor Bennett's offices, Government Center 4th Floor, Ventura 93003. May 27, June 24

Gateway, contact Nick Deitch nick@mainstreetarchitects.com 652-2115

<http://www.onecityventura.org>