

Community Education & Policy Committee Meeting

Minutes: August 14, 2017

Attendance: Amanda Wilkerson Damien Center, Megan Henderson Anthem, Cheryl Reed Anthem, Emmy Hildebrand HVAF, Sandy Jeffers Pathway, Don Sawyer Bigger Vision, William Bumphus Wheeler Mission, Caleb Sutton CHIP, Zach Alexander CHIP, Antonio Alexander, Danny Camacho, Michael Schwing, Brian Hope

Spirit in Place: Zach is working on a budget and project application for the festival.

Homeless Engagement: Zach explained the Blue Print Council Executive Committee would like this committee to develop a process to engage more homeless individuals with CoC activities. Rev. Alexander asked if there was a specific requirement issued for engagement. Zach explained there's been no specific request, so this committee could develop a proposal for better engagement to share. Ideas included interactive meetings, accessibility (location) issues, etc. Sandy would like to increase the number of seats for homeless/formerly homeless on the Blue Print Council. Rev. Alexander will email Gabie Benson to review the current Blue Print Council homeless/formerly homeless representation to ensure full participation.

Crisis Communication Plan: Rev. Alexander explained the committee began a template for communication plans for issues regarding homelessness. The emergency order issued this week to move 65 individuals from under bridges downtown provided less than 2 business days' notice, so we clearly need to address this issue. Amanda summarized the progress made last meeting. Amanda indicated this plan is needed to make the CoC more effective.

Caleb explained that PBSO and the Faith-based outreach group met recently for an overview and initial conversation about working together. Initially, communication and filling gaps on the weekend will be the initial partnerships. William added that one obstacle for coordination between PBSO and faith-based groups is access to HMIS. Sandy clarified that faith-based outreach groups cannot verify homeless status for HUD funding, but PBSO can. William responded that allowing faith-based groups to sign documentation was discussed. Amanda explained that Coordinated Entry has a new "self-attest" form for documentation of homelessness. She asked if faith-based groups are aware of the process for how to link services to potential clients. William responded that those initial conversations were beginning, but nothing is concrete yet. Rev. Alexander met with PBSO and asked for more coordination between the groups, but that he was told different philosophies make working together difficult. William explained that his impression is that PBSO is concerned about the religious aspect of outreach materials. It is a priority of faith-based groups to share religious materials. Don and Sandy expanded on the difference between PBSO and faith-based, and Sandy stressed it should be about client choice and serving homeless individuals. Rev. Alexander indicated that PBSO had a 2 week notice on the downtown order, so improved communication is imperative so the CoC can begin addressing the crisis for those being displaced.

Brian explained that he's interested in Tiny Houses as temporary and perhaps permanent housing options. He shared his ideas with Mayor Hogsett.

Amanda stressed that PBSO and faith-based have to be able to work together. Without that coordination any plan we draft will not be successful. Rev. Alexander asked who PBSO reports to? Caleb explained that PBSO is always going to be operating. In his opinion, faith-based and PBSO need to

work alongside each other. Amanda asked if CHIP could grant faith-based the same authority as PBSO? Don added that the main issue is that the CoC needs to be included when decisions to displace homeless camps are made.

Rev. Alexander would like the communication plan to be completed to share with the Blue Print Council so the CoC can be part of this process. Amanda explained the ad-hoc committee proposal discussed last month. The ad-hoc committee would be comprised of appropriate stake-holders and would be tasked with sharing information with the entire CoC. Caleb suggested we should have conversations with the City about our communication plan because the closures seem to be city decisions. Brian would like to take this issue straight to the Mayor. William explained that this plan needs to last beyond the current administration. Sandy advocates for receiving notices in writing. Amanda agrees, as trauma may affect individuals and need something in writing to refer back to.