



TOWN COUNCIL
Committee to Assess Homelessness in Hyannis
Selectmen's Conference Room

Monday October 24, 2016
MEETING MINUTES

I. BUSINESS

A. Roll Call:

Members present: Chair of Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum, Councilor James Crocker Jr.; Deb Krau; Councilor Frederick Chirigotis; Councilor Debra Dagwan. **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Chief Paul MacDonald; LT. J. Challies; SGT. J. Ellis, Barnstable Police; Mark S. Ells, Town Manager; Warren Rutherford; Ruth Weil, Town Attorney.
ABSENT: Councilor James Tinsley;

Chair of the Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum opened up the meeting at 6:05 with public comment. Seeing no public comment, Chair closed public comment.

Chair of the Committee asked Mark S. Ells, Town Manager to update the committee on the meeting he attended with Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, and Rose Evans, Department of Housing and Urban Development. Town Manager Ells commented on the excellent job that SGT. J. Ellis from the Barnstable Police Department, on the work that the police had done over the summer and the improvement in made on Main Street, Hyannis as well as in and around Hyannis. Town Manager Ells said the conversation shifted to the County and the work they were doing, the coordinated entry system, so that information was shared. Rose Evans spoke about the NOAH Shelter and the shift in management that was going to occur. The feasibility study relevant to housing was discussed, and Town Manager Ells had the opportunity to discuss with the help of Representative Timothy Whelan of what the next steps were with the feasibility study, he was able to introduce the subject of the voucher program and the fact that the voucher amounts are not enough for the housing on the Cape and was also able to mention the lack of beds for the mental illness, he spoke about having those beds open up for those that need them, and looked for a longer term of working with us on the transitional living model. He made it clear that once we identify the needs of these individuals, then what? We need a plan moving forward regarding what to do after the individuals have housing or a bed somewhere there are no real plans after that, so we need one, and he stressed that in the conversation with them. We have no control over the agencies or any of the social service programs, Town Manager Ells said he believes the governor understands our needs, however was looking for some sort of commitment from the Town of Barnstable to continue to play a lead role in this and coordinate our efforts with Rose Evans and the different agencies. Town Manager Ells had asked that Warren Rutherford also talk to him regarding this because he has never done this before and needs input. Town Manager Ells has met since the Lt. Governor meeting with Rose Evans and has discussed the feasibility study with her, and Rose Evans will also include Susan Connolly from Housing to also attend these meetings so that we can also look at supportive housing models, and funding sources, and how it would occur. Town Manager Ells is going to continue to meet with both Rose Evans and Susan Connolly, but also stressed to both of them that before anything comes into the Town of Barnstable that we be informed before it happens so that we are not reading it in the paper and finding out later it is a done deal. He stressed the Town of Barnstable needs to be at the table at all these types of discussion. Hopeless not Homeless has a home that the Hyannis Yacht Club owns, the home has 6 beds that has been modeled after the Sheriffs' Department program, they have come in and spoke to us and explained to us what they plan on doing with the property as well as the tenants that will occupy this home. Town Manager Ells spoke to them regarding the concern we have a village of Hyannis that may be saturated with these types of homes. Town Manager Ells was thankful at least that they came in to speak to us to let us know that this may happen, because no one ever has.

Chair of the Committee asked if these homes are run by the Catholic Diocese as well, or who is running this one, Attorney Ruth Weil commented there is not a formal name but is a new 501C. Town Manager Ells said the name of the home will be the Francis House. Chief Paul MacDonald said that usually when house is named such as these, the Fall River Catholic Diocese is involved in some way; when they announced they were taking over the NOAH Shelter, they are going to name it Joseph's House, there is also a home on Pitchers Way called Claire's House. Faith based naming, but we do not know if it is actually the Catholic Diocese is going to run it, we do not know for sure.

Deb Krau mentioned that one of the premises of the transitional living center was that the services would come to the people living there, however after speaking to the leader at the Catholic Social Services, it's their belief that the people should go to a different building to receive services, their belief is the person gets up gets dressed and goes to wherever for their services, they do not receive services in the same place they sleep. Deb Krau mentioned much like you and I get up get dressed and go to work, this they feel gives them a sense of purpose.

Chair of the Committee stated this more recent home that popped up in our town is a prisoner release program, after they have served their term; the Sheriff has grant money that he puts into these programs for these individuals. Councilor James Crocker stated that these homes are declaring non-denominational, however they are faith based. Ms. Krau also stated that the home that is called Pilot House run by the CHAMP Homes is going to be converted to a prisoner release program and are all linked to the Duffy Center for case management.

Chair Jennifer Cullum stated that it seems like a lot of these types of programs and homes are coming into our town and we don't know about it. Town Manager Ells is unclear as to how much these programs do have to tell us, he is not sure they have to report to us that they are going to do this. Chair of the Committee said it falls under the responsibilities of an entire Community and what is safe for its residents that alone should be considered when these homes pop up because of the population that is going to be living there. Chair of the Committee said all she wants is to be good neighbors, be a good neighbor and talk to us.

Chair of the Committee would like to reach out to the Sheriff Department and invite him to our next meeting to learn about these programs and understand the funding. Chair of the Committee would also like to invite Heidi Nelson, CEO of the Duffy Center to have her explain the program since they are the ones involved in the Case Management side of things. Chair of the Committee has concerns about the grants that were issued to the NOAH Shelter, does Derek stay with the NOAH Shelter or does he know lose his job. Ms. Krau said she believed that the grant was given under the existing contract of NOAH, and now that the contract has changed, she believes the grant money dissolves with the old contract and they have to reapply again for those grants, but Ms. Rose Evans would be the one to clarify this process. Chair of the Committee stated it is important to chase those dollars. SGT. J. Ellis stated that Derek was 100% doing outreach, but she has noticed lately he is only out on the street may 2-3 days a week now, and the rest of the time he is in the office, SGT. J. Ellis said it is a shame because he had great relationships with some of the homeless, he was able to get them to trust him, and now it seems he is pulled into the office more and more, she does not want to lose him doing the outreach work because he is very good at it, and has gained the trust. SGT. J. Ellis believes that come November, he will be doing the outreach only half of the time, and the rest of the time he will be in the office.

Chair of the Committee, Jennifer Cullum asked how do we get these programs to come and talk to us, what do we need to do to get the conversation going that they need to talk to us before we read about these in the paper. Is this a regulatory issue, probably not, is there a mechanism in place to talk to our Town Manager that there are going to be a lot of these homes with prisoner release programs, why are they all coming to Barnstable. Town Manager Ells stated he did make that clear when the first group came in to talk to us regarding the location of the home, he told them he had concerns about Hyannis getting saturated with these homes. Deb Krau stated they may have come to talk to us, but it was after the article was in the paper, and this put the Hyannis residents on edge, and also in a defense mode. She believes that the Town needs to be included in the relationships and the discussions when these happen.

Town Manager Ells said that once a formal process is established that is when we hear of it; he does not know that there is a formal or a procedure that is followed when this happens. Chair of the

Committee is very discouraged to hear that the Sherriff department can just come in and do this with no discussion with the town or this committee. This Committee has not been secret, we have been meeting for months, so it's not like they don't know about us, why is there not a second thought to come and talk to us. It is very deliberate in not coming in to talk to us beforehand because they do not want to hear the word no. That is wrong.

Attorney Ruth Weil stated that it would be beneficial to invite the Sherriff, and the CHAMP House, and Homeless not Hopeless to come to one of your meetings so you can get a sense of the program and how it works and how it is funded.

Attorney Ruth Weil explained that the Sherriff works off of a grant, and he participates in this release program and houses these individuals after release from prison; the idea behind it is so that these individuals are not released to the streets.

Town Manager Mark Ells said we have to be careful when we reach out to these agencies and ask them to speak to us, he is not sure we have the right to demand it, however we could talk to them and tell them we expect to be included when programs like these are introduced to our community.

SGT. J. Ellis is frustrated at the court system for "slaps on the wrist" issues when we have individuals that are blatant when crimes are committed, so when there are crimes committed over and over again and we bring all the documentation needed, and then the individual is released, so there are no consequences to the behavior they exhibit.

Town Manager Ells would like to reach out to some of these agencies and ask them to talk to us first so that everyone is aware, Hyannis and Barnstable should not be the only area they should be looking at for these programs, there are other locations that should and could be looked. It seems that these programs are in Hyannis because it is centrally located, but we should not be the only area they look at.

LT. J. Challies expressed frustration over the Sherriff department not talking to us, but he may not know how to start those conversations, but the Duffy Center who is also involved in the case management side knows about this committee and what we have been discussing, so why didn't they come and talk to us, they clearly knew this was happening.

Chair of the Committee wanted to look at possibly combining the agencies or at least looking at them and seeing what could be combined for the feasibility study, also to look at other communities for this purpose. The whole coordinated entry system is going to change according to Deb Krau, anyone that is chronically homeless will be listed in a data base, and those at the top will be placed in open housing, and a town can only retain a certain percentage for their local people, HUD gives us 1.9 million a year for housing and they are the ones driving the coordinated entry system; so how many of these properties do we have in Barnstable that would fall into this criteria.

Councilor Debra Dagwan asked about modular housing, she has heard that these types of houses that are built elsewhere that can be brought here for a reduced cost, if we are trying to be cost wise.

Chair of the Committee stated that the feasibility study needs to cover a lot of areas, housing, homelessness, and Social Service agencies (72) to be exact. We have splintered services here, and we need to combine the efforts stated Chair of the Committee

Mr. Rutherford said that clearly we are looking at a moving target, and tell the Agencies that you are going to be putting together a feasibility study that this committee would be the ones writing the scope of services, and funding it and steering it but would like their involvement in this. If the agencies then say they do not want to talk to you, you need to persuade them to come to the table, the Duffy Center is one of the entities that would receive more monies and grants because they are a large nonprofit business, so they would be someone to reach out to, because they have done these feasibility studies and are experienced in doing this. Councilor Cullum asked if the Town is paying for this study, Town Manager Mark Ells stated that was still being determined. Town Manager Ells stated we may need three feasibility studies because there is so much to cover. Chair of the Committee would also like to speak to Catholic Social Services, and also not to lose sight on moving the shelter. There has been a lot of good work on moving this and she does not want this idea lost or forgotten. Ms. Krau would also like the feasibility study to include the Transitional Living Model. Town Manager Ells stated we need to stay focused and be very clear, and use him to communicate to the agencies and the state.

SGT. J. Ellis asked how economical would a feasibility study be on moving the shelter if it is under new management. Town Manager Ells is going to ask Rose Evans how long the new management team will need in order to see a change in the way it is run, it may turn into a Transitional Living Center. Ms. Krau said that the original plan was also to have a day program and it was funded that way when HAC had the management of NOAH. The funds that were given to NOAH should have been shifted.

Councilor James Crocker would like our legal office to look at the zoning for these types of homes and whether it's aloud. Attorney Ruth Weil stated she has looked at this and has spent a lot of time on this and a town can't discriminate against disabled individuals in cluster housing. The town can't impose on this type of housing. Attorney Ruth Weil said she will explore further and look deeper into the issue. Councilor James Crocker stated there are rules and regulations when you have rental property there are certain things that have to be installed so these homes should not be exempt from this.

ADJOURN: 7:11pm

NEXT MEETING: November 7, 2016 at 6pm Selectmen's Conference Room