

S3 Housing Connect Meeting Notes
December 14, 2017
Gordon Wicker Room

Attendees: Kendra Martin, John Kirkman, Bob Hughes, Gayle Johnson, Beth List, Richard Sistrunk, Heather Garrity, Wayne Eric Chew, Carla Carpenter, Lesa Price, Marilyn Gilliam, Sherry Shudra, Dick Poletti, Patricia Hawes, Hal Hegwer, Holly Marosites, Emily Schwartz, Tamara Brogan, Byron Buckels, Shannon Judd, Bill Hicks, Jeffrey Rawlings, Rachel Picard, Marshall Downey, Karen Kennedy and Terry Allebaugh.

Welcome and Introductions, Mission Statement Review

Jeffrey Rawlings, Chair, welcomed everyone and introductions were made. S3's Mission Statement was read aloud to the group.

Presentation by Beth List, Lee County Library

Beth L. explained that when she heard about the *S3 Housing Connect* task force, she felt that the library should be represented. Beth would like for the library to be known as a place that all community groups can coincide and feel included. The library should still remain a place that the homeless can go to, but the rest of the community should feel just as safe and welcome. The library wants to continue to provide help to everyone, without excluding anyone. Beth feels that the movie "*The Public*", by Emilio Estevez, will be crucial for getting the word out about the homeless and their ties to public libraries. The trailer was shown to everyone at the meeting.

In the library, the homeless don't often feel comfortable going to the staff and asking for help or information so you have to have it out for them to see. Library staff are still not completely clear on what local resources are available in the community and hopes that *S3 Housing Connect's* efforts will compile information on all the resources so staff will better be able to provide information to the community. In addition, Beth stated that the library will not be placing a time limit or restrictions on any services offered, because "if you respect people then they will respect you." Dick Poletti asked how many homeless people usually visit the library in a day's time? Beth's response was that the library is proud to admit they don't know the answer to that question, because they don't differentiate between their guests. However, if they had to guess, it would probably be about 15 to 20 in the course of each day. There are usually four or five people waiting outside the doors in the morning. Gayle Johnson asked how many homeless usually come in with children. Beth replied that there aren't very many, but yet again the library doesn't know for sure who is and is not homeless. Gayle also asked if the homeless are disruptive. Beth stated that the regulars are never disruptive or rude. Terry Allebaugh asked if the staff have access to the resource booklet to aid with helping find local resources. Rachel and staff at Haven are working on the resource booklet and hope to have it available soon. Kendra Martin mentioned that 2-1-1 is a resource that is always available for everyone to call. Jeffrey R.

explained that homeless shelters often require homeless individuals to leave early in the am so they go to the next place they can to seek shelter, often the library. The Bread Basket opens at 11 AM, so they will go eat and then return to the library until 5:30, because the shelters open back up in the 6-8 pm timeframe.

Presentation about Coordinated Assessment and Coordinated Entry- Jeffrey Rawlings and Tami Carter

Jeffrey R. explained that without one agency taking on the role as the main entry point, Lee County will have multiple entry points at this time. These include Family Promise, the Men's and Women's shelters, Johnston Lee Harnett Community Action, Salvation Army, the library, the Enrichment Center, HAVEN, tentatively the Enrichment Center, and the hospital, because the emergency room is always open. Staff at all of these entry points will be trained on how to handle the service needs as an "entry point!" If anyone presents to anyone outside of these points then we have to tell that person to go to one of these specific entry points. These were chosen because they are direct contact points. The prevention and diversion form will only be at these entry points.

In addition, the city and county governing boards contributed \$1,500 each towards an emergency fund for hotel stays. Several local hotels are on board with this idea. Johnston Lee Harnett Community Action (JLHCA) will serve as the contracted agency to oversee and distribute the funds. However, this has to be a last resort for the individuals. If a person has anywhere else they can possibly go, then they should go there first. The access point will contact Jeffrey R. with JLHCA and if he gives the okay then a hotel will be contacted and told that the emergency stay has been approved. Gayle J. asked about transportation to the hotels, and Jeffrey R. replied that we will find a way to get them there if they can't get there themselves. Jeffrey R. also mentioned that we currently have not found a way to get past the ID requirement. Someone in the person's family has to have an ID. Wayne Chew asked if we could use our own IDs for them. The answer was yes, but then you would be liable for everything the person does. Police also provide positive identification, but not everyone would want that. Carla Carpenter asked if police would be involved with this process. Yes, there will be a live document showing what local shelters have beds and other resources available. Police and committee members will have access to the document, but only points of entry can edit it.

Coordinated assessment is necessary because HUD requires that we report how people come in and leave the system. Prevention and diversion is necessary to prevent or divert people from entering the homeless network. If the person is entered into the network they will then be given a number. From their initial entry they have 14 days to self-resolve and find a place to go. This is known as the cooling period. Over half of all clients self-resolve during this time period. The rest of the clients come back for the VI-SPDAT form (Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool or VI-F-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index-Family-Service Prioritization

Decision Assistance Tool unless the individual or family is an imminent danger. During this cooling off period approximately half of all clients self-resolve. The remainder of the clients complete the assessment.

The assessment attempts to measure to what degree the client (s) are exposed to harm or death while they are homeless. This includes asking relevant questions to determine the most critical needs. Due to the scarcity of funds, the applications are reviewed by the selection committee. The committee will review each application and select which persons will receive the assistance based on a fixed set of variables. After approval, the collected information about the applicant(s) is/are entered into the system. In 90 days, the client is interviewed and again at one year to record how they progressed through case management, financial assistance and their living situation upon an exit interview conducted at the end of the one-year timeframe. Some outcome examples are:

- If they move onto a different place of their own or maintain where they are staying
- If their income improved or declined
- If they gained services such as food stamps or health insurance or lost their benefits

HUD is looking for this information to see if the program is working as designed or needs additional modifications.

Six for Six Committee Reports

- **Low Barrier Shelter**- Sherry Shudra began the report and Bill Hicks assisted. The Extreme Weather Shelter was ready to serve on December 1st. The first opening night was December 8th. On the first night three people stayed. The next night six stayed, then 10, and then 11. On the most recent open night they had 13. Bread of Life still needs volunteers to come in and serve or bring evening meals and donations of food that can be frozen. Any group that could come in and help coordinate meals would be appreciated. Also, Bread of Life needs volunteers to come in and stay with the staff members throughout the night. Bill Hicks added that homelessness does not have a face, and each homeless person is still a person with a story. The shelter has already helped many, and Bill stated that “this is more than just an initiative, this is changing lives.” With that being said, the first pay run is this week. Two staff are required, and they will receive minimum wage, which is \$203 a night. Bread of Life hopes that additional resources will become available. Dick Poletti asked if a budget could be created. Bill replied that there is a budget, and it has been shared with the Resource Development committee who decided that Bread of Life would need \$50,000 through March 15th. Once Resource Development has reviewed the breakdown of the budget it will be brought back to *S3 Housing Connect* to be analyzed.

- **Housing-** Bob Hughes reported that the bottom line is that Sanford needs affordable housing! At the last committee meeting, Aspen Romeyn with the Triangle J Council of Governments presented information about affordable housing locally and in surrounding communities. The documents she presented will be in the resources tab in each member's notebook. In addition, a few more local individuals attended the meeting and provided great insight. The report showed that 58% of households are making less than \$50,000 a year which means they are cost burdened. Van Groce said that it is difficult to find financing or funding for affordable housing. There needs to be a streamlining process to make it easier for builders and developers. This could include speeding up or lifting zoning codes and restrictions. We also need to start having a conversation with the community to get them to understand the issues with building affordable housing. The Housing Committee is working on several initiatives targeted promoting the need for affordable housing emphasis locally.
- **Service Provision-** Tami Carter discussed regional coordinated assessment at meetings to identify portals of entry. The committee report was handled earlier in the meeting. Training sessions will be scheduled for the staff at local entry points. In addition, the committee has several projects they are working on to assist with care packages and food supplies for the local homeless.
- **Community Engagement-** Wayne Chew informed the group that this committee will be leading the PIT count in January with the assistance of Sherry Shudra's and her experience handling last year's count. The committee has gone through an overview of how to coordinate street count and work with the shelter providers and community. They are currently trying to recruit volunteers. Gayle J. asked if a time has been set for the count. The answer was that it will be sunset to sunrise on Wednesday, January 31, 2018. Dick Poletti asked if we should focus on looking at shelters and food pantries primarily. Wayne C. felt that we do need to focus on those, but to get a complete count we will also have to look in the woods and other common homeless spots. Maps have been prepared and are in the resources tab within the notebook.
- **Resource Development-** Tamara Brogan reported that a new volunteer has been identified to research grants- Irene Smith and an invitation to join the committee has been extended to this individual. Resource Development has been looking at a program to employ homeless workers in a program for the City and they are hoping Salvation Army will partner for this initiative. Gayle Johnson found a washer and dryer at Lowe's for the Extreme Weather Shelter, and has also found a generator. The latest budget shows that the extreme weather shelter's financial needs are \$50,000 for this season. This committee will be meeting with the Mayor Mann, to figure out sources of funding. Committee

members will then be able to begin making presentations for funding. After the extreme weather shelter, the Linden property is the next financial priority for the committee.

Terry A. stated he felt there is a misunderstanding about how the Resource Development committee works. This committee cannot find funding for every need in *S3 Housing Connect*. The point of Resource Development is that they are available to help by advising or coordinating fundraising strategies to find money.

For Bread of Life's extreme weather shelter donations, Terry suggested that BOLM find sponsors to cover the costs per night Bill estimated necessary each time the shelter is open. Many people and/or organizations may be willing to donate \$300 for a night. We need to make it known that we're seeking contributions for the shelter.

Furthermore, *S3 Housing Connect* cannot solicit funds or take donations since it does not have nonprofit status. Contributions for any project must be allocated to the proper agency handling the service.

- **Data and Metrics-** Emily S. stated that at their last meeting committee goals for 2018 were discussed. They also will be creating a Google Doc for coordinated entry and helping Community Engagement make the PIT count successful by finding volunteers and tapping into local churches. Kendra Martin added that Volunteer Lee is available as a resource.

A Busy Month in January- Terry Allebaugh

By January 8th, Terry recommends that all committee's suggested goals be sent to everyone in *S3 Housing Connect* so all members can be familiar with them and ready to make edits. By the end of the next meeting all goals will be endorsed and approved to become the 2018 work plan. Afterwards, a presentation will need to be created for city council and the county commissioners about all of the work *S3 Housing Connect* has done so far to receive endorsements and affirmations.

Closing Comments

Jeffrey R. thanked everyone for their continued efforts with this initiative and wished everyone a wonderful holiday.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.