



S3 Housing Connect Meeting Notes

April 8th, 2021 Zoom Call

Attendance (36): Darla Shoults, John Kirkman, Hamer Carter, Kimberly Rau, Bob Hughes, Ruth Price, Gabrielle Saunders, Marcia Johnson, Tamara Brogan, Sharon Williams, Kerry Bashaw, Joey Mosley, Brittany Newman, Crystal McIver, Tracy Staley, Chris Kelley, Laura Spivey, Cindy Hall, Kendra Martin, Majors Chuck and Julie Whiten, John Campbell, Heather Garrity, Beth Kelly, John Paschal, Paul Tate, Lesa Price, Holly Marosites, Hannia Benitez, Johnnye Waller, Sandra Torres, Shadonna Headen, Bill Carver, Byron Buckels

Staff: Karen Kennedy, Rachel Mann, Stan Holt

1. **Welcome, Mission Statement-** Tamara Brogan, Chair
2. **Update on Eviction Prevention Meeting-** Kerry Bashaw

The new ad hoc eviction moratorium committee met for the first time last week. The purpose of the committee is to make sure we are all on the same page about what the moratorium is and how to assist those it affects. Coincidentally, on the day we met, the moratorium was extended until June 30th. During the meeting, we discussed the tenant declaration form that clients need to fill out if being evicted. BCCDC is looking to provide eviction prevention counseling and work on repayment plans. If a legal process has been filed with the magistrate, all we can do at that point is refer clients to legal aid. Some landlords and property managers have been able to get around guidelines of the eviction moratorium, but it is important to remember that they have mortgages that they have to pay. Now that the moratorium has been extended, we will continue to meet and create a wrap-around service plan. S3 has been discussing how to influence conversations around the City and County's funding priorities. We want this funding to be inclusive of housing needs. The American Rescue Act funding could also be used to fill gaps in the local system. Kerry wrote a letter on behalf of S3 to send to local elected officials. In the letter, he advocated for housing-related programs and projects. Bob added that the Housing Committee strongly believes that S3 was formed to advocate for housing for those in need. Bob asked if voting members could approve the letter so we can proceed with sending it out. Tamara suggested taking a vote by email once Kerry sends out the draft. Kendra suggested the letter be sent to mayors from Sanford and Broadway as well. Bill Carver asked if this funding is to be used specifically for rent relief, and Kerry said rent relief funds are carved out separately.

3. **ESG-CV Round 2 Funding MOU Update-** Hamer Carter

Most of the CV collaboration funding has been approved. All MOUs have been signed with partners and all contracts have been signed. Dr. Hall is putting together bids for a mobile diagnostic instrument. Darla is working to open the Navigation Center this Monday. BOLM is creating personnel packages for new job positions. OMI is working to create a street outreach program to reach further into the county and compliment H3.

4. **Update on the Navigation Center-** Darla Shoults

The Navigation Center is the same concept as a day center, but Salvation Army created a new name for this program. It is open from 9 AM – 2 PM Monday-Friday. It is currently not as focused on

programming, but more focused on building relationships and making clients feel safe and comfortable. Once clients are comfortable, they will start focusing on education and programs. Darla thanked BOLM for allowing the Navigation Center to operate out of their facility, and she thanked OMI for being so collaborative and helpful. There are some donation needs, which Rachel sent out with the agency reports. The Navigation Center specifically needs shower items, such as shampoo, soap, towels, etc. There are lots of volunteer positions! Darla reminded the group that the support of S3 is crucial for the program moving forward.

Chris Kelley introduced Major Whiten. Major Whiten said he is excited to continue to support the Navigation Center, and Salvation Army is committed to everything they can do to make the project successful. Chris announced that he has received a new job and will not be as involved with S3 anymore, but will still be working with Sanford! S3 gave Chris a round of applause for all of his hard work. We will miss him, but he is going on to do great things with Salvation Army! Chris asked everyone to continue supporting Darla and the Navigation Center!

5. **S3 Speaking Points**- Stan Holt

Community Engagement Committee is working on speaking points so when people in the community make comments about homelessness, we can better educate them! The first statement that we've heard is that "homeless people are coming to Sanford to use our services". That's not quite true; There are quite a few reasons to come to Sanford, including being one of the best communities for new businesses. People are coming for economic reasons, livability, and social connections. People move here and sometimes aren't able to find or keep a job, and unfortunately become homeless. Also, some individuals are inappropriately discharged from jails or hospitals and become homeless. The other piece is that as we get state and federal dollars and with NC211, we are becoming part of a network of service providers. Therefore, we will get calls, and if we have availability, we will help people. Another statement we've heard is "you're getting all this funding, so my donation doesn't matter." This is not true at all; Unrestricted, small funds are just as important! These help organizations leverage federal funds, and they allow organizations to be creative and do things that grants/federal money won't allow.

You might not be able to change the public's mind on these topics, but at least you have things to say to challenge perceptions. Once we get more of these types of questions, we could create a FAQ on the website. Stan also wants to get 2020 data to tell a collective story of S3 agencies collaboration and efforts during Covid.

6. **Agency Reports**

Services, Tami Carter- 19 members were present at the last meeting. A special guest from Lee County's Child Protective Services made a presentation. Child Protective Services cannot take a report just because someone is experiencing poverty or homelessness. However, if they are living in a car and the car is too hot or too cold, that is an example of a situation in which you could make a call. Sometimes people are scared to reach out because they are afraid they will lose their children. Social services tries to keep families together, if possible. Adult Protective Services will attend the Services meeting next month. Kendra updated everyone that 211 has been receiving several calls from clients in Lee County who are saying the shelter is closing for the summer, so they are trying to directly receive aid from Back@Home. However, people should not be trying to receive aid from Back@Home if they are in need

of emergency assistance. Please tell clients to talk on the phone with the 211 specialist who will determine what referral to make.

Housing, Bob Hughes- Shannon from the Sanford Housing Authority updated the group on their rehab project. Some units will be completed this month. The Linden Avenue project is accepting bids this month for the building renovations. Bob and Kerry were invited to attend the Racial Equity task force meeting. The Cape Fear Collective (<https://capefearcollective.org/>) has been meeting with Bob and Kerry, and they want to come to Sanford/Lee County to look around. Bob and Kerry are hoping for a partnership with them. The City and County are going through the budgeting process currently. It is important to advocate for housing needs!

Community Engagement, Cindy Hall- 15 members were present at the last meeting. Darla gave a presentation about the Navigation Center. This committee needs to do some publicity around it because everyone is asking what the Navigation Center is. Community Engagement is planning for the CCCC event this Fall. They are anticipating setting up tables in the courtyard to try to reach homeless students. Emily will update everyone with dates. Sandra gave a presentation about a karaoke fundraiser for El Refugio. It is open to any nonprofit that wants to join. Contact elreugioed@gmail.com if interested! Cindy then shared her stories of homelessness. Please send your stories (no names or extra details) to Cindy and we will share some of these on S3 Facebook page and website. This generated conversation around those who are put on street with no access to services. People are falling through the cracks, and everyone has stories.

John Paschal shared that Covid vaccines were given out at BOLM today, and it went well! BOLM has an AED defibrillator hanging on the wall now.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is 5/13/2021 at 4 PM.