



## **S3 Housing Connect Meeting Notes**

May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Zoom

**Attendance** (36): Kendra Martin, Tamara Brogan, Bob Hughes, Crystal Mclver, Cindy Hall, Darla Molina, Kimberly Rau, Bill Carver, John Kirkman, Tami Carter, Ashley Palmer, Brittany Newman, Gabby Murillo, Hamer Carter, Hannia Benitez, Heather Garrity, Johnnye Waller, Karin Duggan, Katherine Holt, Laura Spivey, Pamela Glover, Paul Escamilla, Quiotti Ratliffe, Ruth Price, Sharon Williams, Tracy Staley, Joey Mosley, Kerry Bashaw, John Paschal, Paul Tate

Staff: Karen Kennedy, Rachel Mann, Stan Holt

1. **Welcome, Mission Statement-** Tamara Brogan, Chair
2. **Habitat for Humanity-** Kimberly Rau, Executive Director

Kimberly stated that “Habitat is here and Habitat is back!” Habitat for Humanity wants to make the community a better place, provide new affordable housing, and partner with local organizations to make those dreams a reality. They have one house under construction right now. Their long-term vision is to create a village and provide a community for those in need. The Habitat ReStore has come a long way. The donation process has been streamlined, there are new cash registers, the windows were cleaned, new window graphics will be placed, and the Habitat for Birds store was remerchandised and nice Persian rugs will now be sold there. The only donation item the ReStore will not take is mattresses. Kimberly is excited to join S3 and can’t wait to be on some committees!

3. **Re-entry Services-** Crystal Mclver

Total Package is a local program serving justice-involved individuals. Crystal told the group about her passion for homelessness and for those who are justice-involved. Total Package is currently just for Lee and Harnett County residents. The purpose is to decrease recidivism, keep individuals in society, and restore hope. Individuals who are justice-involved have unique challenges they have to face. 2/3 of them return to society within three years. It is important to identify strategies and networks to make their transition smoother. There is a stigma around this population. Crystal formed a group of community leaders to assist those who are justice-involved. They identified the need, identified gaps, created momentum around the situation, developed strategies by working with other re-entry programs, and developed a SWOT analysis. There was, and is, a major opportunity to educate the community around this population. For the past two years, Total Package has been a pilot program. The pilot program taught the group a lot, including the fact that individuals often reenter society unhealthy or facing physical ailments. Health, employment, and mental health aid are the three biggest categories that those reentering society need. The group is also working to connect family and community, form relationships, and explore community resources. The justice-involved population needs more navigation and further exploration of existing resources. The process is person-centered; the individuals have to show up and show they are interested in changing their lives. Currently we have 454 justice-involved individuals living in Lee County, with 56 more expected to enter. Contact [cmcivere18@gmail.com](mailto:cmcivere18@gmail.com) if you’d like more information or want to get involved!

#### **4. Update on The Navigation Center- Darla Shoults**

During the Navigation Center's first week, they saw a total of 60 individuals. Last week, which was the fourth week, they saw 127 individuals. The weekly average is 103 individuals. A volunteer or staff member cooks a hot breakfast every day. There are shower and laundry services. There is a computer station, phone charging station, and relaxation station. Everything has been well received by the community they are trying to serve. Staff is able to start building relationships around breakfast. Partnerships are going well; They are experiencing growing pains but working towards being the best partners possible. Someone asked if The Navigation Center being open has affected Bread Basket. Darla reported that Susan at the Bread Basket said their numbers have remained the same, even with all of the new services and bagged lunches being offered at the Navigation Center. Most of the center's clientele are Lee County residents, evenly split between shelter residents and unsheltered clients. People are mostly using the showers and laundry because they are important free services. Case management is becoming more and more utilized. Staff has recently started discussing a partnership with First Health for addiction peer support and counseling services.

#### **5. Update on Activities- Karen Kennedy**

Kerry wrote a letter on behalf of S3 agencies with wish list items for the American Rescue Plan funding. That letter was sent to staff and elected officials, who are having conversations about new projects. City and County finance staff and managers have said that the guideline for the funding is slowly coming down, but the items mentioned in the letter are good things for them to think about. Karen and Beth Kelly with the City met to discuss S3's budget. This year's budget includes money for our consultant, a homelessness event, and S3 marketing materials. Due to all of the federal money from this year, shelters will not receive money from the City's budget. BOLM will receive funds for accounting. Commissioner Bill Carver did a great job presenting on behalf of S3 at the County meeting, but the County still voted to not support S3's initiatives this year. However, Commissioner Carver laid great groundwork for future projects!

Summer is coming up, so we need to start thinking about elections for S3. Tami Carter is stepping down as Services chair. We also need to vote on the replacement of Chris Kelley and Rosa Portillo at June's meeting. The bylaws should also be updated. We could add virtual meetings and the capacity to vote via email. There have been a few new committees suggested- advocacy and landlord outreach.

The City is considering a text amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance which would affect local hotel and motels, with regards to extended stay. A memo from Community Development Director Marshall Downey will be sent out tomorrow. Commissioner Carver asked about how to obtain community input for new projects. Ideas were thrown out such as public comment, letters, and meeting with neighborhood leaders that represent minority populations. Commissioner Carver stated that perspectives from elected officials are probably different than opinions of the general public, so officials should meet with members of the community. Stan added that the Navigation Center is a great place to get information from the community. Someone said that community meetings are challenging due to Covid.

## **6. Committee Reports**

Services, Tami Carter- The Department of Social Services came and gave a presentation on adult protective services. Tami is stepping down as chair. Let Tami know if you are interested in taking that role.

Housing, Bob Hughes- Housing Committee has continued to discuss Cape Fear Collective. Marshall Downey gave an update on land use policies, Unified Development Ordinance updates, and local rehab projects and condemnations. Kerry reported that the Eviction Committee has had two meetings now. The eviction moratorium was extended to June 30<sup>th</sup>. At the last Eviction meeting, legal aid and the Lee County Magistrate gave presentations. They further explained the legal aspect behind the eviction process. They also shared new information, such as the fact that the moratorium does not cover leases that expire. There is no obligation to extend the lease, which could be grounds for eviction. Tenants can also be evicted if there is criminal activity. At the next meeting, we will be figuring out how to coordinate services for those who are being evicted. Kerry also would like to know how emergency housing vouchers will be working and who will be administering them. Bob added that we will be charting the process of prevention and diversion. Representatives from Johnston Lee Harnett Community Action have not attended any meetings or given reports in several months.

Community Engagement, Cindy Hall- Community Engagement discussed how agencies could help with the eviction crisis. It was decided that agencies could write letters to future landlords or employers to smooth the path for clients. Agencies can also reach out to family members and advocate for clients. There are no firm dates for Project Homeless Connect at CCCC, but we are hoping for Fall 2021. Cindy encouraged everyone to share their stories. Hamer Carter shared that 70-75% of individuals that are currently in stable housing were diverted back to their family homes.

## **7. Closing Remarks**

Tracy announced that she is the new Salvation Army of Lee County Executive Director. Everyone congratulated her!

Someone asked who is helping with rental assistance, and the response was that Salvation Army and CUOC offer rental assistance.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned.