

MEETING MINUTES

COMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS

SOUTHERN NEVADA REGIONAL PLANNING COALITION

July 19, 2007

In attendance:

Darryl Martin, CHAIR, Clark County
Mark Stets, Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services
Kendall Wiley, Alternate, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Rose Ann Miele, City of Boulder City
Orlando Sanchez, City of Las Vegas
Maryann Ustick, City of North Las Vegas
Skeet Fitzgerald, City of Henderson

Absent:

Marc Joseph, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
Adrienne Cox, Focus Property Group
Kathleen Boutin, Nevada Homeless Alliance
John Thedinga, Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce
Myra Berkovits, Clark County School District
Marcia Evans, Veterans Administration

Agenda Item 1. Call to order, notice of agenda compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law.

The meeting of the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition Committee on Homelessness was called to order by Darryl Martin, Clark County, at 2:07 p.m., on Thursday, July 19, 2007, in Commission Chambers in the Clark County Government Center, 500 S. Grand Central Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada.

The agenda for the July 19, 2007, meeting was duly posted in compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law requirements.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of the Agenda for July 19, 2007.

It was requested that agenda item 7 (Receive an update on the development and implementation of the Public Awareness Campaign) be held until the next regularly scheduled meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda for the July 19, 2007, meeting, and holding item 7 until the next meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item 3. Approval of Minutes from the Meeting on June 21, 2007.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes for the June 21, 2007, meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item 4. Receive an update from the Regional Homeless Services Coordinator. Recommended action - Take any necessary action.

Shannon West, Regional Homeless Coordinator, gave a progress update including: Meetings of the Housing Working Group would be from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. on August 1 and August 15; and the Community Interfaith

Council Kick-Off Luncheon would be on August 13 at the East Las Vegas Community Service Center.

There was no discussion by the Committee; and no motion or action was required on this agenda item.

Agenda Item 5. Receive an update on Inclement Weather Shelter. Recommended action - Take any necessary action.

Shannon West, Regional Homeless Coordinator, reported that some provider partners supplied additional beds earlier in the month during times of extreme heat (i.e. Salvation Army and WestCare); and cooling stations and hydration assistance was made available by all the jurisdictions as well as through substantial donations of water and fruit by the following private businesses: Las Vegas Paving, Sierra Health, Marriott, At America, Kirban Dote Communications, Southwest Gas, Las Vegas Marathon, Southern Highlands and Kummer Kempfer Law Firm. Ms. West also discussed the numbers served by Catholic Charities, Salvation Army and HACA.

Darryl Martin, Clark County, recommended that the SNRPC Chair write letters of thanks to the above contributing companies.

There was discussion by the Committee on the utilization of the cooling stations and on the continuing evolution of the emergency plan. Mr. Martin stated that he had spoken to many national news stations (i.e. CNN and Fox News) about the emergency plan; and while there had been heat-related deaths according to the coroner's office, there probably would have been more had it not been for the emergency plan implementation.

No motion or action was required on this agenda item.

Agenda Item 6. Receive an update on the 2007 Summer Point in Time Count. Recommended action - Take any necessary action.

Michele Fuller-Hallauer, Management Analyst, stated that the 2007 Summer Point-in-Time Count would be held beginning at 2:00 a.m. on July 31, 2007. She said that the summer count would be a random sampling of a total of 87 census tracts, which was a snapshot of 25 percent of all the census tracts counted during the recently completed Winter Point-in-Time Count. She also stated that community trainings for the count would be held on July 26 at 3:00 and 6:00 p.m.; and on July 27 at 10:00 a.m., 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. on the 3rd floor at Clark County Social Service on 1600 Pinto Lane. She concluded by stating that there would be three deployment sites for this count; and any questions could be e-mailed to caw@co.clark.nv.us or called to 455-5832.

There was no discussion by the Committee; and no motion or action was required on this agenda item.

Agenda Item 7. Receive an update on the development and implementation of the Public Awareness Campaign. - Take any necessary action.

This item is held until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Agenda Item 8. Receive an update and report on the Southern Nevada Regional Homeless and Housing 10 Point Plan. Recommended action - Take any necessary action.

Shannon West, Regional Homeless Coordinator, spoke about the Southern Nevada Regional Homeless and Housing 10-Point Plan including: 15 community planning input sessions had been held to assist with evaluating the best practices used throughout the county based on recommendations from the National

Alliance to End Homelessness; three core strategies have been developed (Help – Planning for Outcomes, Hope – Closing the front door to homelessness through prevention and support, and Home – Opening a back door out of homelessness through housing); development of an official business plan titled “Help Hope Home – Southern Nevada’s Regional Plan to End Homelessness” that will be presented to the SNRPC Board for approval during August’s special workshop; and upon approval of the business plan by the Coalition Board, an Implementation Schedule will be developed as a companion piece to it.

Ms. West announced that Southern Nevada has been selected to work with the National Alliance to End Homelessness for capacity building assistance.

There was discussion by the Committee on participation in the community planning input sessions.

Ms. West concluded by discussing the proposed agenda for the August 23 joint workshop including: updating progress made over the past two years; introducing Help Hope Home; seeking approval of the business plan and proposed implementation schedule; and seeking additional input and direction from the Coalition Board.

Darryl Martin, Clark County, recommended including a summary of the AB580 projects and programs as well as including discussion of the Inclement Weather Program, especially the improvements to the Emergency Shelter Program.

Ms. West recommended that any additional comments or suggestions regarding the joint workshop or the proposed agenda be directed to her.

No motion or action was required on this agenda item.

Mr. Martin recommended that, instead of a usual Committee on Homelessness meeting in August, a short meeting be held at 2:30 p.m. immediately before the joint workshop on August 23.

Frank Perna, Homeless Advocate, commented that housing is, and always has been, essential to addressing homelessness; and he spoke about converting shipping containers to low-cost housing units as suggested by Arnold Stalk. He also commented that advocates are ignored, and he doesn’t even get a courtesy response to any of his letters and suggestions. Mr. Perna referred to a letter he submitted to the Congressional Delegation, the Clark County Board of County Commissioners and Mayor Goodman and the City of Las Vegas City Council (a copy of this letter can be found under Agenda Item 10 [Public Comments] of this agenda’s meeting minutes).

Mr. Martin responded that there were plans to visit Mr. Stalk’s pod units in the future.

Agenda Item 9. Receive final reports on the AB580 funded “Transition from Homelessness” Programs. Recommended action - Take any necessary action.

Larry Lovelett, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (NPHY), presented an annual summary report for NPHY for 2007.

Terrie Stanfill, HELP of Southern Nevada, spoke about several gaps identified during the past two years including: services for chronically homeless families and detox beds were needed for individuals with substance abuse problems.

There was discussion by the Committee on continuing to bring groups together for joint assistance efforts.

Linda Lera-Randle El, Straight from the Streets, spoke about the progression of history regarding the homeless in the Valley. She also commented about intensive case management needs and the importance of developing an emergency response team.

There was discussion by the Committee on committing to replicate what worked within the AB580 project under the management of Clark County Social Service.

Pat Lau, OUTREACH analyst, gave a PowerPoint presentation titled “Transition from Homelessness: OUTREACH – Final Report November 2005 to June 2007”.

There was discussion by the Committee on the completed evaluation results and some of the unmet needs by clients.

Orlando Sanchez, City of Las Vegas, recommended identifying dedicated funding in addition to the Homeless Trust Fund. He also recommended hiring a grant writer to research and develop steadier sources of funding.

There was discussion by the Committee on how community-wide action is needed in addition to private funding, and that homelessness is not only a government problem to solve.

No motion or action was required on this agenda item.

Agenda Item 10. Public Comment.

Tara Ulmer, City of Las Vegas, spoke about the increased number of attendees to City Council meetings, (Las Vegas) City Hall and Frank Wright Park. She also spoke of a prototype community resource provider directory that had been installed in a kiosk at Frank Wright Park; and depending on its success, others would be placed.

Frank Perna, Homeless Advocate, commented on the continued missing representation by the Veterans Administration. He presented an article from the June 28 issue of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* titled “Veterans air concerns on health care” where he was quoted as saying “It’s disheartening to see our returning Iraq-Afghanistan veterans leaving the battlefield sick physically and mentally, being treated every bit as badly as the Vietnam-era veterans and first Gulf War veterans.” He also presented articles from the June 24 and June 25 issues of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* titled “War Leaves Scars Seen and Unseen” and “Parents learn to take care of son severely wounded in Iraq”.

Mr. Perna read a letter he submitted to the Congressional Delegation, the Clark County Board of County Commissioners and Mayor Goodman and the City of Las Vegas City Council as follows:

“I attended the 6/27 V.A. town meeting and heard a litany of complaints by veterans, of all ages, against the V.A. and especially the unfairness and lengthy waiting time in the benefits system. How can it be efficient when Southern Nevada, with the highest per capita population of veterans, has one service officer per 33,335 veterans? In Georgia the ratio is one service officer per 10,256 veterans and West Virginia has one service officer per 5,292 veterans? Why?

The common thread is that veterans were promised and earned benefits, by their service, and were not given them. Who is to blame? The Department of Defense and the Pentagon have certainly failed the Iraqi-Afghanistan veterans. Many in Congress, today, have never served in the military and put funding considerations first and their duty and responsibility to the troops and veterans second. Given our history of neglect of the Vietnam era veterans and the

first Gulf War veterans, some neglected to the present day, this is shameful.

The closure of the Guy Ambulatory Clinic, in 2003, put a strain on an already burdened system which has wasted money, created transportation problems and worse of all sent veterans, many aged or severely injured, out of state for operations and complex procedures, without the support of family and friends.

It is essential that the V.A. Health Care Complex, at I-215 and Pecos, be built by 2009, thereby correcting the above problems and saving money which can be used to build domiciliaries to house PTSD, TBI, alcohol, drug and respite care programs, modeled on Arville House, to aid families who wish to care for their loved ones.

The Nevada legislature has failed to fund, at \$20,000,000, affordable housing at 30% of the median income, so therefore the V.A., having 140 acres, must serve our 3000-4000 homeless veterans, sadly being joined by some Iraqi-Afghanistan veterans.

Our population growth has led to the highest per capita population of veterans and homeless veterans so the V.A. health complex must be built to address this future growth.

Our infrastructure and social problems have been neglected because of lack of investment in America and Americans. A reduction in funding for foreign aid, IMF, World Bank, Development Banks, Export-Import Bank, OPIC, forgiveness of debt, the U.N., fraud, waste and abuse, corporate welfare, etc. can fund our society's essential needs.

Enclosed (not provided at this meeting) is information on our 501c3 "Southern Advocates for Homeless People", in which I am the veterans representative. We have followed the homeless issue since the 10 year plan to address chronic homelessness was proposed at the SNRPC/HUD summit in September, 2001. Housing was touted as the answer to comprehensively address homelessness, yet almost 6 years later money is being wasted on consultants, census's and administration.

Action is needed on the V.A. Health Complex, domicilliaris and innovative programs and housing for the homeless.

A public announcement about the acceleration of the completion of the V.A. Health Complex to 2009 is necessary to satisfy the complaints of the veteran community. We owe a better more efficient health system for all veterans, especially those Iraqi-Afghanistan veterans returning from the battlefield sick, physically and mentally.

Please reply, in writing, to this letter."

Mr. Perna also submitted a letter addressed to the SNRPC Homeless Committee and Darryl Martin, Chair. The letter submitted is as follows:

"In the midst of an investigation of the Veterans Administration, nationwide, we now have the added political diversion of the resignation of V.A. Secretary Jim Nicholson. He oversaw the neglect of veteran healthcare while shortchanging the V.A. budget and giving bonuses to underachieving V.A. bureaucrats.

Since the V.A. town hall meeting, held at the E. Flamingo Library on 6/27, I have attempted to forward a proposal to accelerate the completion of the V.A. Health Complex to a reasonable date of late 2009, and to suggest building domicilliaris on the 140 acre plot for veterans health services for TBI, PTSD, alcohol, drug programs and housing. My reason for attending these SNRPC/Homeless

meetings was to protect the interests of veterans and since it seems that the promise of homeless housing will again be broken, the V.A. should directly build veterans housing.

Since 6/27, I've attempted to get agreement from our federal Congressional Delegation and support from our local government. My activism has been ignored with letters and phone calls being unanswered. The only letter I've received was from Senator Ensign's office and was undated and unresponsive to my request. Both Senator Reed and Senator Ensign's offices had assured me that the completion date of the clinic would be accelerated to 2009 but refused to put it in writing.

The only way Southern Nevada will get adequate V.A. healthcare, that can serve our ever growing veteran population, is for veterans families, their friends and veterans organizations to phone and write state, county, local and our federal congressional delegation politicians to put their political self interests aside and serve our veterans as promised.

No more meaningless mantras "Support our troops." "Support our veterans" must be proven."

Tim Russell, private citizen, commented on the prevention of homelessness through a minimum earnable livable wage. He spoke about the rarity of seeing homeless families in the past, but on changing demographics now. He also recommended private sector involvement by the casinos (including MGM/Mirage's current support of "Three Square" and Harrah's support of the Las Vegas Rescue Mission) as well as possible monetary funding by the businesses that contributed water and fruit over the past month.

Ivo Plecko, private citizen, commented about housing in Slovenia and wanting to speak with individuals from each jurisdiction regarding homelessness and affordable housing before he returns to Slovenia in August.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m.