

DURHAM HOMELESS SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 27, 2013

Committee Room - 2nd Floor - City Hall – 3:00 p.m.

The Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) met on the above date and time.

Members present: Chair Robert “Bo” Glenn, Jr., Vice-Chair Minnie Forte-Brown (Chair, Durham Public School Board); Reverend Warren Herndon, Kimberly Monroe, Joyce Payne, Fred Stoppelkamp, Reverend Chris Tuttle, City Manager Thomas J. Bonfield and Assistant County Manager Drew Cummings.

Excused Absences: Committee Members John Bowman, Stephen Hopkins, Deborah Bailey, Mayme Webb-Bledsoe, Sue Jackson, Lois Harvin-Ravin, Jackie Love, Bob Williamson, Mayor Pro-Tempore Cole-McFadden and County Commissioner Page.

Also Present: Director Reginald Johnson, Lloyd Schmeidler, Matthew Schnars (Department of Community Development); O’Mar Taylor (JACH) Ryan Fehrman, (Genesis Home); Jack Preiss (Housing Results Team); Sophia Caudle, (Citizen); Patrice Nelson (Urban Ministries of Durham); Pastor Spencer Bradford (Durham Mennonite Church/Citizen); Alma Davis (DCRC); Carolyn Schuldt (Open Table Ministry); Bill Anderson (Citizen); Catherine Pleil (Durham IHN); Joi Stepney, Nigel Brown (Housing for New Hope); Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove (Rutba House); Reverend Ernie Mills (Durham Rescue Mission); Stephanie Williams (Alliance Behavioral Healthcare); Michael Shiflett (Durham Businesses Against Crime); Angela Holmes (Urban Ministries); Ruebe Holmes (Duke University) and Sheila Bullock (Office of the City Clerk).

Subject: Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Glenn called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Excused absences were read by Sheila Bullock (Office of the City Clerk).

Subject: Minutes Review/Approval

Minutes of the February 27, 2013 HSAC meeting were not approved due to a lack of quorum.

Subject: Public Comment Period

Bill Anderson (Citizen) encouraged the committee to have clear discussion regarding the proposed ordinance. He added that the ordinance was not about homelessness but about panhandling, free speech and the safe places that free speech could be held. He feels that the new law was changed to create these safe places.

Pastor Spencer Bradford (Durham Mennonite Church/Citizen) spoke in support of considering a change to the revised ordinance. He understands the concerns behind the changes, however he noted that based on he and his family’s experiences, they have not observed panhandlers at these locations that they are now prohibited from, as hazards or creating a hazard in these areas. He feels that to continue to maintain access for people who are on the most marginal spots for this type of assistance is important to the community’s spiritual well-being.

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Carolyn Schuldt (Open Table Ministry) thanked the HSAC for the wonderful things they are doing and trying to do for the homeless community. She implored the committee to realize that until another way is found, those individuals need to be allowed to exercise their rights to be at the proposed prohibited locations. She asked the City to reconsider and figure out ways to serve all people and give everybody a chance.

There being no other comments to be heard, the public comment period was closed.

Subject: City Solicitation Ordinance

Chair Glenn explained that the Homeless Services Advisory Committee is an advisory committee to the City and County elected officials. It is their responsibility to receive and review comments and information and then make a recommendation to the elected officials.

Per Chair Glenn, the HSAC will form a special subcommittee and come before Committee Members at the April 2013 meeting with a recommendation as it relates to the solicitation ordinance.

City Manager Bonfield provided the City's perspective on changes to the solicitation ordinance and added that he was there to clarify and answer any questions concerning the amended ordinance that City Council adopted last year relating to roadside solicitation. The purpose of the amended ordinance is to have a safety measure not just for pedestrians but for the motoring public as well. City Manager Bonfield felt it was important that people understand that the ordinance applies to all types of roadside solicitation to include panhandlers, all charitable organizations, business purposes or those wanting to advertise their businesses, sales and electioneering. More specifically, City Manager Bonfield pointed out that the amended ordinance does not prohibit any of these activities but indicates where roadside solicitation can occur. Generally, the ordinance is an attempt to remove that solicitation from medians and areas in between highways and roads. Also, there is no registration required or fees to pay with the new ordinance as with the previous one and the new ordinance is much simpler to enforce.

In response to Committee Member Payne's question regarding where people could stand to solicit and the requirements, City Manager Bonfield responded people could solicit on the sides of many roads, and a license is no longer required. However, they do need to wear a safety vest.

Vice-Chair Forte-Brown asked if the issue was the danger involved or is it more of a nuisance to motorist. City Manager Bonfield stated that it was more of a danger issue.

Associate Minister Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove (St. John Missionary Baptist Church/Rutba House) expressed concerns about homeless people that he has interacted with, who have been receiving citations because they are soliciting in prohibited areas. He noted that information distributed by the Police Department explained the ordinance but did not explain where a person could go and ask for help. Therefore, people who were given citations were appearing in court, and in turn, clogging up

the court rooms. He stated that the new law seems to be unfairly and unequally harming those that are the most vulnerable.

In closing, Minister Wilson-Hartgrove added that the faith community is asking City Council to come back and try and develop an ordinance that keeps everyone safe, especially those that have to ask for help sometimes.

In response to Committee Member Herndon's question about the location of the other churches whose pastors are trying to find a resolution, Minister Wilson-Hartgrove, responded downtown Durham and South Durham.

Committee Member Stoppelkamp asked if Minister Wilson-Hartgrove and other ministers had a resolution to the ordinance. Minister Wilson-Hartgrove answered that from his perspective, because of the difficulty that faces the Police and the prosecutors, the City should rescind the ordinance as soon as possible in an effort to figure out a better one.

Committee Member Payne wanted to know if Minister Wilson-Hartgrove has tried to determine why the people are out there soliciting and if there were any other alternatives. Minister Wilson-Hartgrove pointed that poverty and homelessness are complex problems. There are several issues such as mental health and addiction. However, economically there are people who are unable to earn the income or pay their bills with their disability and still eat.

Bill Henderson (Citizen/Inter-Neighborhood Council) shared comments on how the "Durham Can You Spare a Change" campaign came about through four primary organizations: Inter-Neighborhood Council, Housing for New Hope, Durham Rescue Mission and Urban Ministries. Over time, these organizations concluded that their money should be given to organizations that could truly help. The campaign determined that time; volunteerism and money should be given to those organizations that could assist those individuals needing it the most.

Committee Member Payne wanted to know if anyone was contacting the people on the streets who are panhandling to get them to the services for help.

Committee Member Herndon commented that the number of persons in need is increasing. He felt that some type of study needs to be done to determine if the situation is getting better, worse or remaining the same.

Ryan Fehrman, Director (Genesis Home and Chair to the Council to End Homelessness) noted that they have had discussion about the new solicitation ordinance over the last few months. During their March meeting, where city and county staff excused themselves, a vote was taken which revealed that no one supported the ordinance, about half the group opposed the ordinance and slightly more than half the group felt more discussion was needed at a community level. He felt if the HSAC was going to take action then the recommendation of the City Council should be to suspend the new ordinance.

Mike Shiflett spoke representing “Durham Businesses against Crime”. He stated that the ordinance is not a perfect one and he feels that it was put into place because of the safety issue. He would like to see the public discussion continue and to add resources to their brochure which he encourages people to use. Again, he stated that he believes it is an issue of safety and not of free speech or the ability to collect money.

Vice-Chair Forte-Brown stated that she likes the statement made earlier regarding “having real talk” and the fact of having transparency. Committee Member Herndon agreed with Vice-Chair Forte-Brown.

Committee Member Payne appreciated all the comments made at today’s meeting and she felt that people who are panhandling should be made aware of programs that are available to them. She added that she does not think it’s a good solution to take people to jail or fine them, but they should be taken to a program and given assistance.

Chair Glenn appointed Committee Member Bowman to chair a committee that will look at the solicitation ordinance. Also Committee Member Tuttle was appointed to this committee and Chair Glenn will serve as well. An invitation was extended to everyone at the meeting to join the committee. A study will be conducted and a recommendation for a solicitation ordinance that addresses everything that was discussed will be brought back to the HSAC.

Subject: Entitlement ESG Review & Recommendations

The Committee decided to adjust the meeting agenda and hear the Results Team Updates after discussion of the Entitlement ESG Review & Recommendations.

Patrice Nelson, Executive Director (Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD)) noted that city staff recommendations for CDBG and ESG funding allocations recommended that UMD receive 15% less than what they requested which was \$63,000 versus \$80,000. Ms. Nelson is requesting that the HSAC recommend an increase in the funding to at least the amount that they requested. She presented the following four reasons for her request:

1. UMD serves those that are homeless and most in need. Ms. Nelson provided some statistics collected from the Point-in-Time Count to help illustrate this. She commented that they have a difficult group that they are trying to help and move forward.
2. UMD believes that the community needs a strong weigh station. When developing a system that is designed to focus on moving more people into permanent housing, even with an active coordinated intake system, there will be people in emergency shelter. National best practices say that some type of a weigh station is needed.
3. UMD is focused on re-housing. They have moved 180 people from their shelter to permanent housing. Not many of these people have had rapid re-housing money to support them in their move. UMD is also working on a coordinated program with the Veterans Administration (VA) and have moved 21 veterans to permanent housing.

4. UMD really needs the money. Over the past few years, non-public funding received by UMD, continues to decrease, while the number of people being served has increased. Over 80% of their budget next year will have to come from private funding. In summary, she added that UMD needs the Committee's help; they cannot continue to try and do more and more with less and less support.

Vice-Chair Glenn disclosed, as a potential conflict of interest, that he volunteers with UMD about 10 hours a week.

At the request of Vice-Chair Glenn, Ms. Nelson explained how the coordinated intake process works at UMD for families. She also talked about the impact that would affect UMD moving forward.

Reginald Johnson, Director (Department of Community Development) briefly explained the application process for ESG funding. It was also noted that the total allotment for ESG funding that can be recommended is \$150,000.

Additional discussion and comments were made concerning a line item for administrative charges and applicant scoring process.

Matthew Schnars, Project Manager (Department of Community Development) stated that he sent the application packet and scoring to HSAC members through e-mail earlier for their review. He added that ESG Entitlement is the piece that HUD wants the CoC to have consultation about.

Assistant County Manager Cummings wanted to know how the scoring process was reflected in funding recommendation.

Larry Jarvis, Assistant Director (Department of Community Development) explained that a threshold minimum score was established that applicant's had to achieve to be considered for funding. If applicants met this minimum score then monies was allocated to them on a percentage basis. Under the new ESG rules not more than 60% of ESG monies can go to operations in central services.

Mr. Jarvis further pointed out that each organization received 85% of the requested amount. The Durham Housing Authority was the only organization that received slightly more, receiving 86% of the requested amount. He added that it was a "mathematical thing" to allocate all the money that was available.

Committee Member Herndon asked if there was any creative way to manipulate funds or is there a foundation or corporation that they could make an appeal to assist UMD with additional staffing.

Mr. Jarvis stated that all staff could speak to was the recommended distribution of funds that the City has been awarded.

Chair Glenn noted that there was no quorum to pass a resolution; however, as a body, a formal consultation could be issued. He also stated that he needed to reclude himself because of his connection with UMD.

Committee Member Stoppelkamp wanted to know what the Committee's options were. Mr. Schnars noted that this item is scheduled to go to the Council in April and it is required that there be some consultation, not necessarily a vote from the HSAC but consultation with the CoC; the HSAC being the decision making body for the CoC.

In response to Committee Member Stoppelkamp's inquiry about making a recommendation or an amendment, Mr. Johnson suggested that any recommendations or suggestions by the HSAC could be put in memo form by staff and included in the process when it goes to Council.

Vice-Chair Forte-Brown and Committee Member Payne both shared their concerns about where the extra money would be coming from for UMD. Chair Glenn commented that the body has the authority to recommend that there be some adjustments to some of the line items to fund some of the other programs at a higher level than what staff has suggested or to fund some of the line items at less than what staff has suggested.

As Mr. Schnars explained previously, HUD does not necessarily require a vote from the HSAC, only a consultation. After much discuss the HSAC recommended adopting staff's recommendations for awarding ESG funding.

Subject: HSAC Results Team Updates

Housing Result Team – Fred Stoppelkamp, Chair

According to Committee Member Stoppelkamp, the Year-to-Date Housing Team Report is almost complete. The update on rapid re-housing is the only thing needed. Once this information is completed the report will be sent to HSAC members.

Chair Glenn commended those Result Team chairs that were attendance at this meeting for all their good work.

Committee Member Stoppelkamp reported that the Department of Community Development has suggested other ways to spend the \$720,000 made available from the Preiss-Steele Reconstruction. In September 2012 the Team made a motion to the HSAC that this money be moved to a line item to be used for housing persons with special needs. The motion was passed and the HSAC made this recommendation to the Council.

Since that time the Department of Community Development has suggested some other ways to spend this money.

The Housing Results Team is advising that the \$720,000 remain in the line for match funding to support housing for persons with special needs.

Structure Subcommittee – Chris Tuttle, Chair

Structure Subcommittee report was tabled until the April 2013 meeting. Chair Glenn will circulate a hard copy of Committee Member Tuttle's report to members. Re-advertising for new members the HSAC will be taking place.

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The Income, Access to Services and Youth Results Teams updates were tabled until the April 2013 meeting.

Mr. Schnars noted that a follow-up letter from Michael Becketts, Director (Durham County Department of Social Services (DSS), regarding the Coordinated Intake Pilot, was added to Committee Members' information packets and was not electronically sent.

Subject: HSAC Annual Report

HSAC Annual Report was tabled until the April 2013 meeting.

Subject: Adjourn

With no further business to come before the body, the meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m. The next meeting of the HSAC is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24, 2013 at 3:00 p.m. in the Committee Room located on the 2nd floor of City Hall.

Respectfully Submitted

Sheila Bullock, Office of the City Clerk