

# CITY OF NEW HAVEN HOMELESS ADVISORY COMMISSION

March 14, 2019

## Minutes

### Attendance:

**Members Present:** C. Phillips Jr., J. Huettner, N. Hogan, E Robinson, C. Gormley

**Ex-Officio:** V. George, N. Torres, J. Hardy, V. Wilson, D. Ecton, A. Roth,

**Staff:** V. George

**Guests:** B. Huang, C. Kidd, R. Golden, R. Cain, U. Pendragon, T. Clark, C. Rose, M. Stern, A. Bjerregaard, E. P. Hvenet

**Members Excused Absent:** -

**Members Absent:** -

0.0 J. Huettner called the meeting to order and proceeded with introductions.

1.0 Approval of February 14, 2019 Meeting Minutes was unanimous.

2.0 V. George shared that the singles shelters and warming center remained close to capacity. Most nights the warming center was full. Family shelters remained at capacity too.

3.0 T. Clark shared that the CAN has seen an increase in housing placements. More specifically, there were 80 families housed by the end of February.

### NEW BUSINESS

4.0 J. Huettner began the working session on the Decriminalization of Homelessness and the Homeless Bill of Rights by stating that this topic requires a national discussion. He shared that New Haven has always been progressive in its thinking, so this legislation is consistent with our past position. In short, he stated that this legislation is not requesting preferences, but the same fair treatment that the average resident receives. J. Huettner explained that it is not intended to be anti-police, but a tool to get us to work together.

J. Huettner welcomed Assistant Chief R. Cain and noted that Corporation Counsel J. Rose was not present and did not weigh in as directed by chair of BOA Human Service Committee.

As the group reviewed the documents Assistant Chief R. Cain suggested we clarify "facilities" in Section 3c of the Bill of Rights to read designated facilities. There was a discussion on how police at times target homeless individuals. Asst. Chief Cain instructed the group to reach out to her if they witness any such occurrence. It was suggested that the police institute sensitivity training around homelessness for

recruits in the academy. Cain was amenable to the idea. There was the discussion of how police data is collected and how incidences including homeless individuals can be tracked. Assistant Chief R. Cain shared that the current system does not allow officers to query homeless calls as such. She shared that they are exploring additional fields for data collection in the Records Management System (RMS). Assistant Chief R. Cain also shared that officers do not necessarily ask people their housing status. There was a suggestion to create Police Standard Operating Procedures on how to handle personal belongings when homeless individuals are arrested or displaced.

The following are additional Homeless Bill of Rights questions that emerged from the group discussion that require clarification from Corporation Counsel:

Section 3(e)

Please clarify the parameters of personal property rights attended and unattended in public spaces.

Section 3 (h)

Clarify this city's statutes on social exchange and panhandling.

Section 3 (g)

Right to sit – Would squatters rights have any bearing?

Next steps:

V. George will forward above questions to Corporation counsel for clarification.

J. Huettner will reach out to the Mayor regarding Corporation Counsel's lack of response to this commission.

Alder A. Roth will arrange a joint follow up meeting with J. Rose and Human Service Committee on this legislation.

5.0 Meeting adjourned.