

City of New Haven Homeless Advisory Commission

Minutes October 12, 2023

Attendance:

Members Present: C. Mendez, S. Bass, T. Ficklin, U. Muley, J. Huettner

Ex- Officio: V. George,

Staff: S. James- Marquis

Members Absent: L. Hardy, N. Torres

YHHAP: J. Simmons

Excused Absent: C. Spears

Call to Order

Chair C. Mendez called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

Minutes: The group reviewed July's minutes. Motion to accept minutes by U. Muley, seconded by S. Bass. Minutes were unanimously accepted.

NEW BUSINESS: V. George introduced and welcomed J. Huettner back as a commissioner to the HAC. V. George shared that John previously served as the HAC chair but took some time off due to maxing out his time as chair some years ago.

Updates:

V. George thanked the commissioners for their unwavering support, especially T. Ficklin and L. Hardy for their presence at the Board of Alders (BOA) Finance committee and the Human Service Committee public hearing to purchase the Days Inn Hotel. V. George shared that there were some residents who spoke out against the purchase, and there were service providers who spoke in favor of the purchase. Ultimately, the purchase was approved by the committee members of the BOA. V. George shared that on Tuesday, October 10th, Continuum of Care was the provider chosen to operate the hotel. V. George shared that this agency presented a comprehensive application along with over three hundred thousand dollars of in-kind mental health and addiction services and supervision. V. George shared that the agency would receive \$1.5 million per year to operate the hotel.

U. Muley asked V. George if Continuum of Care (COC) has bi-lingual staff to serve clients to whom English is not their first language. V. George shared that COC currently has bilingual capacity and expects that to hold true for this new program. C. Mendez asked V. George what the residents' complaints at the hearing were. V. George shared that some concerns were around the impact on their property value, pedestrian safety for clients on Route 8, and the impact on the school which is adjacent. V. George shared that during the hearing, residents were informed of the traffic calming initiative between state and city to address traffic safety. V. George also shared that there will be an advisory board (including alder, residents, hotel operator and CSA staff) to ensure neighbors' concerns are addressed.

V. George shared that the city is hoping to close on the hotel purchase by mid -November of this year and start the shelter operation in December of this year. Entry into the hotel shelter will be coordinated through CAN. The target population for this program will be individuals and couples. The length of stay for this program will be 70-120 days. This program will be housing focused from day one to connect guests to deeply affordable housing units.

T. Ficklin presented a brief overview of the BOA process. He shared that it is a democratic process that allows for community input before any approval takes place. T. Ficklin shared that

this purchase is a very impressive and innovative action taken by the city to address homelessness. T. Ficklin encouraged commissioners to take an active role in the activities and invitations of the office of Housing & Homelessness.

V. George gave an update on the Greater New Haven Landlord Recruitment Brunch which was a huge success. The goal of this event was to recruit new landlords and share resources with current landlords in the program. V. Georg shared a list of the providers that were present: the Health Department - LEAD program, Elmcity Housing Authority – Section 8 Program, LCI - Housing Code/ Homeowners grants, TEAM Inc, from the Valley, BH CARE Inc. Many landlords attended to gain information and network.

V. George shared that a robust plan is being worked on for seasonal warming centers. She shared that there will be 3 warming centers serving individuals and couples. Two new services coming on line if all goes well – youth warming center and a triage space for families. V. George shared that the recent fire code changes impacted one of the existing warming centers. V. George shared that the new fire regulation states that warming centers must be on the first floors with multiple exits. V. George shared that CSA is in negotiation with the Board of Education for use of a decommission school. V. George shared that the CSA department will be going in front of BOE in the coming week.

V. George shared that the Power in the Shower mobile shower service collaborated with Southern Connecticut State to conduct a qualitative research project. V. George state that the partners will be preset during November's meeting to share their findings.

CAN Update: J. Inabinet

J. Inabinet shared that there are 127 individuals currently on the CAN (Coordinated Access Network) shelter wait list - 91 males and 36 females, and 18 families on the stabilization list and 2 families in triage. She also shared that CAN appointments for family are same day and a 1 day wait for individuals. J. Inabinet shared that the average wait time on shelter wait list for families is 10 days, for single females 31 days and 51 days for single men. J. Inabinet shared that the CAN housed a total of 136 households which includes youth, families, and individuals this year.

YHHAP Update: J. Simmons

J. Simmons shared that YHHAP has 9 active projects which include Clothing Closet, VITA (tax prep program), YHHAP Fast, No Closed Doors, and Restaurant Rescue. They are currently planning for the Hunger and Homeless Awareness week (11/13) T. Ficklin suggested YHHAP partner with surrounding universities around these initiatives.

Announcements

- V. George shared that the City of New Haven was awarded the Gold Standard for sustainability in Connecticut. She shared that New Haven is the first to attain Gold. V. George shared that the homeless services and the equity initiatives were key.
- T. Ficklin announced the upcoming 2-day dental clinic to be held on Oct 27 and 28 at the Floyd Center at Hillhouse High school.
- T. Ficklin shared the Homeless Bill of Rights is back before the BOA.

Adjourn– 7:06 pm

