

## Homeless Solutions Task Force HOST Meeting

Thursday, March 4, 2021, 10am

Zoom Online Meeting

1. **Roll Call**
2. **Introductions**
3. **Mayors Welcome:** Mayor Bruce Jones

Mayor Bruce Jones gave a brief history of Homeless Solutions Task Force (HOST). Purpose of HOST is to coordinate and communicate with other community agencies and individuals that are dealing with homelessness. It is beneficial to meet to share information and ideas to create solutions. Example of this method is the creation of the Homeless Liaison position, which will be discussed later on. Mayor Jones touched on other topics which will be presented later in the meeting. Chief Spalding will be transitioning out of the chair position at some point and Mayor Jones asked for any interested members to contact him if they would be interested in chairing the committee.

Chief Spalding shared his email address ([gspalding@astoria.or.us](mailto:gspalding@astoria.or.us)) and stated if individuals want to be added to the guest list for future meetings to contact him. Chief Spalding added Councilor Roger Rocka and Mike Davies as new members of HOST.

### **Protocols for the meeting:**

- Minutes are being typed by Megan McCall- Clatsop Community Action
- Members and guests may contact Chief Spalding for past minutes.
- Discussion must be focused on how to address homelessness in our community- talk about significant accomplishments, ideas, and shared information.
- Looking forward to seeing another HOST member to have an opportunity to Chair this committee. Chief Spalding has served as a chair since the beginning, it's time to have a new chair.
- All new members of the committee were approved by the Mayor.
- Members of the group duties include participation in group discussions and voting on matters requiring a vote. Guests are welcome to discuss in the meeting as well. There is a set time limit and guest will be able to ask questions at the end.

4. **Roster-Virtual Roll Call**
5. Approve Minutes from August. Amy Baker made a **motion** to approve minutes. Kate Allen seconded **motion**. All in favor. **Motion** carried.

### **Helping Hands- Program Updates-Personnel Changes: Raven Brown-**

Raven Brown of Helping Hands announced Mike Davies as their new Developer Director. Helping Hands changed locations from Seaside to Gearhart. All referrals are to be directed to either Justin or and Denise. There has been strict cleaning protocols and procedures at Helping Hands since the 3 COVID-19 outbreaks at their Astoria location.

### **Homelessness and Health Concerns: Lisa McClean**

The Public Health Department is focusing on COVID-19 vaccine events. They received their 1<sup>st</sup> shipment of the 1 dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Currently, they are organizing how to utilize this vaccination to the homeless population. The outreach method for the flu outreach event was successful at the Astoria Warming Center (AWC) and will be using the same method for outreach in this case. Lisa will reach out to the AWC for the vaccine event.

### **Countywide Liaison Position: Viviana Matthew, Executive Director, Clatsop Community Action:**

Monica Steele, Viviana Matthews, and Chief Spalding hired two individuals to fulfill the positions of Homeless Liaison. The Homeless Liaison will start April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. There were twenty applicants for the position and four followed into the interview process. The original plan was to hire one; after Clatsop Community Action (CCA) secured additional money, CCA hired two people. The two experienced hires are Cheryl Paul and Shannon Turner. Both have extensive experience working in Social Services and the homeless population. CCA will reach out to local government and community leaders to be part of an advisory committee to help oversee the homeless liaison's mission. Chief Spalding added that the Homeless Liaison is a significant accomplishment, and the Committee will be tracking the progress in the community.

Discussion between Sarah Lu and Viviana Matthews about one of the Homeless Liaison hires is having a challenge time finding a place to live. Viviana commented that CCA has good relationships with landlords in the county and are working on finding her a place. At this time, she has a temporary place to stay.

Sarah Lu questioned if the position was meant for people in crisis. Viviana answered that will be determined by the Advisory Committee. Both hires will go through an extensive training process with CCA and law enforcement, as well as forming relationships with community agencies. Monica Steele added that the Homeless Liaison will connect clients to the appropriate services.

Viviana Matthews, "Housing is an issue, remember we do the best we can. Inventory is low."

Chief Spalding will send out the official job description to the membership.

### **Clatsop County 2020 strategic plan: Monica Steele-**

The Board of County Commissioners implemented a Strategic plan for 2021-2022. The Strategic Plan identifies five goals. One of the projects is to build a navigation drop-in center. This drop-in center will be considered a one-stop shop of services for a client. Services incorporate mental health, public health, dental death, showers, meals, laundry, employment opportunities and more.

The challenge within the project is identifying a facility for the drop-in center. The Board is looking into the old jail as an opportunity to facilitate. Critics of the old jail as the building is that it may generate negative experiences for the clients. Remodeling is an option.

Question from Guest asking what the prioritization is at for the Navigation Drop – In Center.

Monica reinstated that the project is a #1 priority. There was a setback as for a building for the center, but that means they are still moving forward regardless of the follow through of the previous plan. A barrier is lack of real estate opportunities and finding a location.

Mayor Jones reminded guests and speakers to promote shared information, good input, and beneficial information to ensure progress and solutions.

Chief Spalding asked about the current structure of Filling Empty Bellies (FEB). A comment was made earlier from Guest, Erin Carlson to promote Beach Clubhouse and their services in relation to the drop-in center. Erin Carlson, Executive Director of the Beacon Clubhouse presented FEB new Executive Director, Ozark Orak. He has personal experience of being homeless and is point of contact for Filling Empty Bellies. Erin, herself is the Executive Director of NAOMI-Beacon Clubhouse. The Beacon Clubhouse addresses mental illness.

### **Pallet Shelters: Ron Maxted**

Ron Maxted spoke about the success of the pallet shelter concept. Chief Spalding presented a three-minute video on Opportunity Village in Seattle, WA. The video is an example of Transitional Housing and what the pallet shelters look like. AWC is looking for funding and a nonprofit to sponsor their nonprofit status for fundraising. AWC needs to find a location as well to place the transitional housing. Transitional housing will support the homeless population. Interested members and guest can learn more at [www.palletshelter.com](http://www.palletshelter.com).

### **Homeless Activity**

- **Mental Illness: Amy Baker**

Reminded the group, substance abuse does not create homelessness. 30% of people's income is on rent alone. Cities that tackle housing first model is important. Transitional housing is a good first step, but the next step further is focusing on permanent housing. There is a deficit of permanent housing. Along with mental illness, staffing attached to permanent housing for those connected to mental health services to prevent evictions and maintain sustainable housing. In 1963, the Community Mental Health Act deinstitutionalized people with mental health, but never funded housing. The community is dealing with this now. There is funding but next steps are how to utilize it. Kathleen Sullivan added that our community need to detach the stigma to those who are most vulnerable. Counselor Roger Rocka suggested to build rather than finding a building.

Monica Steele stated that there was a recent housing study in Clatsop County in low-income housing development. Merwyn apartments are a start to this process. Barriers

include zoning, codes, and how to draw in low-income developers to allow low-income housing. There is a lack of infrastructure in Clatsop County.

- **Calls for Service/ 9<sup>th</sup> St Park Activity Chief Spalding**

Calls addressing homelessness have decreased. In 2020, 786 calls/ 65 per month. 2021 so far 89 calls/ 20 less per month.

There were concerns about 9<sup>th</sup> street park regarding trash and numerous violations and several recent violent events. Chief Spalding shared slides from his presentation to City Council last month regarding 9<sup>th</sup> Street park area behavior. Out of 12 local businesses contacted 10 had concerns. The police are targeting bad behavior not homelessness at 9<sup>th</sup> street. Since two individuals have left the community there have been significantly less calls for service. There have been three assaults regarding a weapon at this location as well. The approach is to hold people accountable for their actions. Instead of a citation and bringing them to jail the result is to get them to services. Jail is for more serious behaviors. Chief Spalding showed the activity at 9<sup>th</sup> street and compared with two other areas downtown to present how much activity is going on regarding behaviors and law enforcement interaction. The Homeless Liaison is an approach to subside numbers at this location. Kenny Hansen, Astoria Police Department Homeless Liaison, agreed calls are down, but trash is accumulating. He reminds people to clean up and some respond well.

### **Open Discussion:**

Guest comment: Walked by 9<sup>th</sup> Street and the trash cans were full. Filling Empty Bellies (FEB) have lunches at the 9<sup>th</sup> street park and asked if they were told to move there.

Erin Carlson responded that FEB moved on their own terms. Moving to 9<sup>th</sup> street meant being closer to restaurants who supply food for their services. Erin is in contact with Jonah and Chief Spalding about the trash cans and garbage. Erin reminds them to clean after and the importance of cleaning the area. FEB and Erin are willing to work with Officer Kenny Hansen, Chief Spalding and participates to advocate on both sides.

Jonah commented trash cans get picked up 6 days a week. There is limited staff.

Member roundtable:

Jarrold Karnofski: Working on a plan to recruit a psychiatric nurse and prescriber for medication. Resourceful for the hospital and the community.

Guest: Addressed the concerns of both public safety and needs of the people. Consider current bill 2417 HB matching grant to cities and the opportunity of a mobile crisis team. Possibility to expand use of behavior health specialist in collaboration of public safety. Monica Steele said this was presented to the board along with Amy Baker. This will depend on funding- and funding in

rural communities. Amy has seen this idea be successful in other communities for those who do not have a place to go.

Guest addressed Merwyn Apartments are half full and there are a few more on the waitlist. Let us know how to contact them.

Guest reminded of a launch event for Trauma-Informed Care on April 6<sup>th</sup> from 1-3pm. This event is Childhood trauma related to homelessness. Chief Spalding will send out more information.

**Guest Comments:**

Guest: Representing AWC asked if meetings are open to the public, are there any members on the board who have experienced homelessness and how to become a member.

Chief Spalding answered: At this time there are no Board members that were/are part of the homeless community. Several homeless individuals have spoken at meetings which have been insightful and informative. The meetings are open to the public, they need to contact Chief Spalding to be added to the list if they want to be notified of future meetings. The Mayor approves the membership and roster. There is opportunity for everyone to speak and voice their opinion.

Guest: There are no representation from FEB

Guest: Recommended Ozark as he has personal experience of homelessness. Mayor Jones open invitation to Mr. Orak, Guest will let him know.

Next Meeting: May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021 10:00 am to 12:00 pm via Zoom

Meeting Adjourn 12pm