

Homeless Solutions Task Force (HOST) meeting  
Oct 1, 2019  
Clatsop Community College

MINUTES

1. Meeting began at 10:05 a.m. Members in attendance initialed the roster which is attached with these minutes.
2. Mayor Jones welcomed the group and appreciated the continued work that the group is doing.
3. Minutes of the July 25, 2019 meeting were approved. Mayor Jones moved, Tom Leiner seconded. Unanimous approval.
4. Chief Spalding shared that the Astoria Police Department responded to an accident involving a vehicle and a pedestrian on 9/13/2019. Todd Kirn was the pedestrian and later died from his injuries. Todd was remembered at a memorial service in Astoria as a good man that was experiencing homelessness. Officer Kenny Hansen attended Todd's memorial service at People's Park. Officer Hansen advised the service was well attended. Chief Spalding advised that there have been four pedestrian/vehicle accidents over the last year. Most of those involved homeless individuals wearing dark clothing and not in a crosswalk. Intoxication appeared to be a factor in many of the incidents.
5. Chief Spalding shared an update on calls for service related to homeless individuals. Year to date calls totaled 845, an increase of approximately 349% from last year. Chief Spalding shared the Department's efforts to work with individuals that are staying in campsites in the urban forest. Efforts continue to place these individuals in shelter with the assistance of CCA. Chief shared the pros and cons of the enforcement of illegal camping and advised that the Department is addressing these sites when there are complaints.
6. Chief Spalding shared a 10 minute video produced by the City of Gresham that highlighted a program utilizing a city employee in the role of homeless advocate to assist in the camp cleanups. The video can be viewed on YouTube here: [Gresham Program](#)
7. Ron Maxted gave an update from the presentation last month on Square One Villages. Ron referenced a book by Andrew Heben entitled "Tent City Urbanism". This was directly related to the discussion at our last meeting on Square One Villages. The thesis by Heben became his book and much of his research was based on Portland's Dignity Village and Eugene's Opportunity Village. Heben describes these informal settlements actually addressing many of the shortfalls of more formal responses to homelessness. The book is available on Amazon at: [Tent City Urbanism book](#).
8. Jonah Dart-McLean gave an update on the status of the Clean Slate Program. Jonah has been unable to substantiate the amount of individuals in need of having their court fines forgiven in lieu of community service, etc. Viviana from CCA said they may be able to look into finding out a way to see how many people are impacted. One idea was to form a community bank where

people could donate to a fund to assist. A good discussion surrounding the topic ensued and the consensus was that the concept could be expanded to include exploring other options for individuals to get out of debt from such things as medical expenses. Jarrod from CMH said that they have financial counselors that can help certain individuals to seek medical insurance. Jonah will reach out to CBH and the rest of his group to continue the discussion.

9. One member raised a concern about some homeless individuals not being able to have a surgery without a place to recuperate after the surgery. Perhaps Helping Hands might have capacity to assist these individuals on a temporary basis.
10. Chief Spalding states he is targeting the first quarter of 2020 to offer a council presentation with an update from the HOST Committee. The presentation would include a description of the work that has been done along with recommendations that may be in the Council's purview. The group agreed that it makes sense to focus on a small number of programs to present to council as opposed to a longer list that would be unrealistic to accomplish. The group will come up with a list of ideas and programs which will be sent out to the membership to prioritize for presentation.
11. Chief Spalding stated that there appears to be a growing need and level of interest in looking at a position dedicated to coordinating the efforts of all the different agencies and partners in the County to address the homelessness topic. The initial responsibilities and possible job description elements that were given to the members in the meeting are attached to these minutes. The position is partially based on the concept taken from the "Creating Systems that Work" program which states - *To address homelessness, communities should take a coordinated approach, moving from a collection of individual programs to a community-wide response that is strategic and data driven. Communities that have adopted this approach use data about the needs of those experiencing homelessness to inform how they allocate resources, services, and programs.* There was a strong level of interest in this topic as a top recommendation from the Committee to present to Council. Monica mentioned there is an upcoming combined City Council/County Commissioner meeting on October 10<sup>th</sup> and she would see if this can be added to the agenda. It was felt that a position(s) could be funded by many of the affected agencies and partners as a solutions to the growing problem. The following members agreed to form a subcommittee to work out some of the finer details – Jarrod Karnofski, Viviana Matthews and Tom Leiner.
12. Chief Spalding spoke about the continued problems with behavior from some individuals in the community. Chief was tasked with bringing recommendations to Council to address some of the concerns. Chief shared that he has reached out to other agencies in the state to get a feel for what is working and what isn't. Two ordinances have already gone to Council and were passed. These are the Unlawful Transfer ordinance which prohibits transactions between pedestrians and motor vehicles in the roadway and a prohibition of open containers of alcohol in public (consumption of alcohol in public is already prohibited with exceptions for events, etc.) Chief mentioned he will be presenting to Council an exclusion zone ordinance and was seeking

feedback from the group. The exclusion zone concept would identify an area of town where a higher number of illegal incidents are occurring. Individuals receiving three or more violations in a certain period of time could be excluded from that area for a limited period of time. One concern raised is if someone has to pass through the excluded area or needs to work in the zone. Spalding said he understood that concern and would ensure certain exceptions are incorporated into the ordinance.

13. One member brought up the Chip-In service that used to be offered by the Parks Department. Jonah mentioned the program was dropped due to insufficient resources to manage the program.
14. One member mentioned there is a significant need for additional psychological services in the community. The committee agreed.
15. The following items were raised by members of the committee during the Roundtable portion:
  - a. Rick Bowers said the Warming Shelter fundraising efforts are underway. Also, listening sessions are being hosted by CC Hope.
  - b. Viviana said January 28<sup>th</sup> is the date for Project Homeless Connect
  - c. Arline said she really enjoyed the book – “Ending Homelessness.” The book is available for any member to borrow – See Chief Spalding. Arline also mentioned she really appreciated having the one-page handout for Astoria Food Resources and felt we should have more distribution of this form.
  - d. Councilor West returned from the League of Cities conference where they learned others are dealing with the same issues we are.
16. Several guests in the audience commented:
  - a. Richard Elfering commented that mental illness is a significant problem in the community and there should be more resources to address it.
  - b. Dot Olsen raised the following issues – City should have permits to allow camping, Fines for open containers are too high, Everyone should check out the Facebook page for Filling Empty Bellies, Need to expand the amnesty program, need a team of people to assist the homeless, Use the blue building for a drop in center and Filling Empty Bellies and something about an ambulance.
  - c. Bill Black spoke about the creative peer approach.
17. Doodle Poll will be sent out to determine date for next meeting
18. Adjourned at 12:02 p.m.

Submitted by Geoff Spalding, October 2, 2019