

HOST meeting
January 30, 2019
Clatsop College

MINUTES

1. Mayor's Introduction (Bruce Jones). Critical that stakeholders be involved -- homeless individuals, citizens, service providers. The group should continue. What's changing? What is the current situation? What are the goals of this group?
2. Minutes of December 4, 2018 meeting. Sean Fitzpatrick moved, Tom Leiner seconded. Unanimous.
3. APD calls for service relating to homelessness (Chief Spalding). APD started counting these calls in January 2018, to provide data for HOST. In 2018 there were 349 calls, mostly quality of life crimes -- disturbance, trespass, suspicious circumstances, and liquor violations. Unknown how many of the 349 were individuals, versus multiple calls about particular individuals.

Behavior in 2019 has been more aggressive -- urinating on cars, confrontational with officers and among themselves. Chief has been hearing more frustration from APD officers. Many homeless individuals appear to feel more empowered, some by the Boise case regarding camping and misdemeanors. (In Astoria camping is only an infraction and not considered a criminal act.)

Det. Hansen has noticed more aggression. Homeless individuals argue with officers, are non-compliant, act like everything is all about them. It could be testing behavior: How much will an officer tolerate? Behavior often reflects on how the individual was treated in the last community they were in.

Mayor Jones suggested that, just as with almost all calls to the police, there are likely 20-30 incidents for every one reported. He has had several conversations with Columbia Bank employees who are consistently harassed when going to their cars after work.

Chief Spalding encouraged anyone to call APD about any such behavior.

Elaine Bruce said the people causing problems are mostly likely chronically homeless. There were no incidents at the recent Project Homeless Connect, and the volunteers recognized most of the people who came for services.

4. County Homelessness Fund (Monica Steele). The county is conducting a homeless fund survey before setting policy. A Construction Excise Tax to help fund affordable housing? A bond for

housing? Work session Feb 6, 6:00pm, in the Boyington Building. How will the fund be funded? Who will be eligible? What are the goals?

5. Clean Slate program subcommittee. Jonah Dart-McLean distributed the report of the committee. One of their questions: Is the intent of the program to eliminate existing debt related to housing issues, or to prevent people from being cited in the future?

Elaine Bruce said CCA can help negotiate; it is one of the easier challenges and deals with accountability -- teaching people to advocate for themselves.

Chief Spalding talked about equity -- making any such program available to all who don't have the ability to pay. The program needs to include obtaining ID and other means of making an individual attractive for employment and housing.

Det. Hansen said unpaid municipal court fines get turned over to collection agencies, who immediately add 50% to the total and then start adding interest. The court can pull back the judgment, but the collection agency isn't required to return the 50% fee.

6. Reading material (Chief Spalding). Chief assured all that the articles he distributes aren't meant to convey his point of view, but are for general information. Some pieces may take positions that some people won't like. What steps are being taken in other cities to help combat the causes of and find solutions for homelessness, in hopes of finding a collection of solutions appropriate for Astoria. HOST attendees urged the Chief to continue to distribute, and to include links on the City's website.

7. 2019 Direction -- recommendations to Council. How often should HOST meet? What are the goals?

Unanimous agreement that meetings are important and should continue about every 6 weeks. Goals included a drop-in day center (not city funded); incentives for private developers to build affordable housing; practical technical support; job training and development; identifying gaps and redundancies.

Suggestions: Make a collaborative ranking of goals, prioritizing one goal for 2019. Include a college representative on the task force. Use subcommittees for particular tasks. Take a balanced approach that includes the carrots of job training and education with the sticks of moving along those who are threatening. Create a camping village.

Begin a "Journey Home" program, where transportation funds are provided to individuals who have family elsewhere, want to return, and the family situation has been confirmed. Mayor Jones believed the City could help fund such a program. Cindy, Tom and Jennifer have agreed to be members of this committee. It was also suggested that Amy Baker would be a great addition as well. Chief Spalding will reach out to Amy.

What about the animals of homeless individuals? Do they have shots? Are they licensed? Det. Hansen said the majority are unlicensed and there are no resources to address the problem.

Tom Leiner and Cindy Price will pursue job training opportunities and report back.

8. Guest comment. Todd Tobey, owner, Astoria McDonald's (and six others on the coast). Mr. Tobey said there is a big problem with homeless individuals at all of his restaurants, and Astoria

is by far the worst. Some panhandle, some harass the customers and the employees. It is every day, all day. They are aggressive, don't want help, won't move on. Some of them bathe in the bathrooms. They scare the kids. Every day he and his staff are asked why this behavior is allowed. The police say there is nothing they can do. Meeting is fine, but where is progress? What are you going to do? We need action. Results. Everyone here should have something to do to address these problems.

Bruce Williams offered to form an outreach group from the Warming Center to help handle the people at McDonald's.

9. Adjourned 12:13pm

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Price, 12 Feb 2019