

MEETING SUMMARY
REDMOND COMMUNITY HOMELESSNESS TASK FORCE
MEETING 3 – June 17, 2015
6:00 – 9:00 pm
Redmond City Hall, 15670 NE 85th Street
Council Conference Room

Task Force Members in Attendance:

Pam Mauk, Steve Daschle, Gary Smith, Andrew Koeppen, Carolyn Mansfield, Al Rosenthal, Chris Falco, Lara Bolger, Tim Short, Marian LaBeck, Andrea Liggett, Derek Wentorf, Tasha Witherspoon

Staff in Attendance:

Commander Charlie Gorman, Colleen Kelly, Brooke Buckingham, Karen Reed-Facilitator

Members of the Public Observing the Meeting:

Stan Conrad, Martha Sassorossi, David Fujimoto

Welcome, Introductions, Review of Agenda

Karen Reed welcomed the group and reviewed the ground rules and agenda.

Response to Task Force Questions from Meetings 1 & 2

Group reviewed recent news articles on housing/homelessness and follow-up to questions in the handouts.

Site Visits – Report out from Task Force members

Each task force member shared their reactions to the various site visits they attended (Camp Unity, Congregations for the Homeless, Sophia’s Way, Friends of Youth, Avondale Park, and Open Kitchen):

The Landing / Friends of Youth (FOY) – learned about the lottery process, didn’t realize how small the space was, learned that FOY provides outreach services. Impressed by focus on progression of clients towards stable housing. With only 100 youth beds countywide (20 beds at The Landing, we don’t come close to meeting the need). Question about partnership with faith community and willingness to have faith community help out.

Camp Unity – Observation that this group is not the group that is causing the problems at the library. Most folks here don’t seem to be from Redmond.

Congregations for the Homeless (CFH) – Members were impressed with the sense of community that CFH offers. Require an eastside connection to be a resident. Hope and vibrancy of the space. Good track record of getting people into housing after 4-6 months. Intensive case management.

Avondale Park – Observation about how this is a regional service, part of a regional system. Need for homework help for kids. Paperwork to get in is overwhelming. Most are eastside residents. FOY runs a couple units in the complex. In the systemic move away from transitional housing, there is concern that folks won’t be able to afford the rent.

Open Kitchen – Very welcoming to all members of the community and not just homeless individuals.

Sophia's Way – clean, personalized space. Removed from the central business district.

Review of Focus Group Transcripts of Homeless individuals and and representatives from Town Center:

Colleen shared that an additional focus group was added, which was a meeting with Redmond Town Center staff and Marriot staff. Task Force members shared key take-aways:

- **Redmond Town Center**
 - Hotel and bike patrols would be helpful – bike patrols would be funded by a proposed City levy.
 - Restrooms used for bathing.
 - Sense that greatest problems may be caused by a few individuals.
 - Use of trespass rules is an important but limited tool.

- **The Landing/FOY**
 - Very articulate and thoughtful individuals.
 - Many young adults have jobs.
 - Need for mailing address to get jobs. Suggestion to set up a PO Box which is anonymous and can't be tracked back to a homeless shelter.
 - Didn't realize some people weren't subject to Lottery for bed space
 - Where do people go if turned away?
 - Some have guaranteed spot if they are part of the program and/or working.
 - Feeling that The Landing has been attracting people and problems. "Police say The Landing is the problem."
 - Discussion regarding self-reliance, whether Landing residents are looking for help or to become self-reliant.
 - Observation that some communities in other parts of the world don't have homeless people

- **Sammamish Trail**
 - Awareness of mental health needs. Mentally ill individuals have been pushed onto the streets with closures of facilities. Question about police training.
 - Are outreach services available to help these individuals?

- **Camp Unity**
 - This area is so expensive, why try to even attempt to find housing here?
 - When some residents get money, they spend it all – budgeting skills are so important
 - This camp is more troubling for neighbors than is expressed by the transcript.

- **Bellevue Day Center**
 - Points out importance of showers/hygiene to get jobs.
 - Could a solution be to give folks housing through funding their first & last month's rent?
 - Noted interest of these folks to get work and improve their situation

- **Avondale Park**
 - Many situations of domestic violence.

- Heartbreaking stories
- Discrimination/stereotypes experienced by residents

Overall/Common themes:

- How difficult it is to save up money for first/last months' rent.
- Need for budgeting/how to manage \$ services.
- There are good homeless people and bad homeless people (just like in general population). Lots of homeless individuals feel judged/criminalized.

Downtown Business Panel Presentation

Several task force members sat on the business panel (Al Rosenthal, Tasha Witherspoon, Tim Short, Andrew Koeppen; Chris Falco and Pam Mauk also participated). In addition, a co-owner of Hancock's bakery was on the panel.

Challenges and concerns expressed included:

- Damage to locks, theft of bikes
- Loss of tenants due to security concerns related to encountering homeless people
- Homeless people sleeping in stairwells
- Perception that we have a problem and we (the landlord) aren't doing anything about it needs to be addressed.
- Sites are not always secure, have to put up trespass notices
- More aggressive panhandling observed – Village Square incident
- Businesses have had to re-landscape and install landscaping
- Fear of crime
- Urinating/defecating in and around businesses
- Partying at night behind buildings.
- Card key systems, fire doors defeated.
- "Push them out of Redmond won't work. "
- Quit giving handouts.
- Need public education about resources and what to do
- Public restrooms need to be patrolled.
- General agreement that "last 3-4 years the problem has gotten worse"
- Signage, fencing installed

What would help? What solutions have you tried?

- Calling the Police frequently does help.
- A day center with showers and storage.
- Daytime together center space that's bigger—perhaps moved elsewhere in the city.
- Move the Landing
- Change perception that business owners hate the homeless.
- Publicize ways to help.

- Free printing of resumes.
- Poll individuals to find out “what brought you here?”
- Police security check-ups
- Advertise police programs to help inform landlords how to make their buildings safer
- Question about anti-panhandling laws; what happened to city plan to post anti-panhandling signs. Staff responded that the signs were put on hold while other approaches were explored by the regional work group
- Transportation passes.
- There’s a fine line between enabling and helping people get out of their situation.
- Concern that expanding services will bring more people here and make the problem worse.
- Give money to organizations that help people, not panhandlers.
- Willingness to employ homeless individuals
- A feedback mechanism to notify service providers about particular troublemakers – so they will be held accountable.

Question from group about how much of the crime can be directly attributed to homeless individuals and not just criminal activity by anyone? Business members indicated that they had witnessed persons who were sleeping in their buildings, using restroom facilities for showering and that it is reasonable to assume that the behaviors were result of homeless individuals. Others noted we can’t assume all bad behaviors downtown are necessarily being committed by homeless individuals.

Presentation from The Landing – Derek Wentorf and Trevor Marshall gave an overview of The Landing’s services and operations.

- **Who is eligible?** – The Landing serves ages 18-24. However FOY serves young people between 16 and 18 in case management programs that operate during the day in Redmond.
- **How do youth find out about and access shelter?** – Variety of ways: street outreach staff, word of mouth, referrals from other social service providers & community members, parents dropping off young people, police departments, etc. They access shelter by showing up at 8:30 and going through the lottery process if there are more than 20 young people.
- **What happens when you have to turn someone away and what is the rate of turn-aways?** – All guests that are “lotto’d out” receive two bus tickets and if they are interested staff will call other shelters to see if they have any open beds. FOY staff will drive lotto’d guests to eastside shelters if they are interested. The Landing has averaged 1-2 “turn-aways” a night in calendar year 2015.
- **What services you provide?** Shelter, Case management, day time drop in services, street outreach services, mental health support, employment services, hygiene services, meals & emergency supplies including clothes.
- **What is expected of participants?** After 30 days at shelter, guests are expected to be actively working to move out of homelessness.
- **How do you define success?** Young people exiting homelessness and obtaining stable housing (either independently, in a structured housing program, or with friends & family).

- **What are the challenges/negative influences your clients are experiencing?** Isolation, stigmatized perceptions from the communities they are in, embarrassment, increased trauma, increased risk for violence, increased challenge to complete school & be an effective employee, increased risk of drug use, increased risk of criminal persecution,
- **What are the most common interventions needed for them to transition to a more productive life?** The main thing young people need is stable support from a community and guidance on how to make progress towards their goals. There are demands for mental health counseling as well as waiting list for supportive housing programs. We need more affordable housing and formerly homeless housing programs.
- **What resources do you find especially lacking?** Housing programs and affordable housing across King County. For the Redmond Youth Service Center, we need more space for current staff, more staff to operate drop in, Mental Health clinicians, and transportation support (to buy bus tickets).
- **What 3 things do you want the community to know about the youth you serve?** They are not that different than other young adults; they have often been dealt a challenging family life on top of increased likelihood for mental health and chemical dependency issues, they often want to be invisible. In the calendar year of 2014, Friends of Youth sheltered 238 different young people at The Landing. Most of the young people we serve don't want people to know they are homeless and often the communities that they live & work in will never know.
- **How are you funded? What if any barriers/challenges are caused by your funders?** King County, United Way of King County, FEMA, Cities of Redmond, Bellevue, Kirkland, Issaquah, and Sammamish, City of Seattle (one time this year), Corporate & Private Foundations, and community individual donations
- **What is the rate of staff turnover and why?** Typically we have relief staff that work 4-8 months, full time staff that work 6-12 months, supervisor position that works 12-18 months, program manager that works 12-18 months. The turnover is high because the work is hard (high crisis response, constant accusation as the "bad guy" from both the young people we serve and the community that they work within), required to work difficult hours (evening and overnight) and the compensation is low.

Topics for Next Meeting (July 8):

Karen shared that we are wrapping up the "learning phase" of the process and will be moving toward developing actionable solutions. She asked the members to be thinking of 3-5 ideas to address the business concerns and/or the concerns of homeless individuals.

Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 P.M.