



Homes for All Leadership Group

“Providing innovative leadership toward ending homelessness”

Tuesday, March 13, 2018, 9:00 am

Meeting Notes

Welcome & Introductions

Commissioner Garrido opened the meeting and thanked everyone involved for their hard work on this important project. Attendees introduced themselves. No comments or changes were noted for the previous February 13th meeting materials or meeting notes.

Reports/Updates

i. Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition

Sarah van Cleve, from the Bremerton Housing Association and Chair of the Kitsap Housing and Homelessness Coalition, spoke about the most recent meeting of the KHHC. The presenter at the last meeting, Kate Barber from the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, discussed the legislature’s recent passage of a number of positive bills for homelessness. These bills will mean new money for affordable housing, elimination of the sunset provision on document recording fees, improving data collection for youth, and help for people re-entering into society.

Sarah also mentioned that the KHHC group has been having ongoing discussions about the need for a year-round low-barrier shelter. The Salvation Army Winter Shelter has been open since December 1st 2017, but will be closing in 17 days. There are many guests that will not have shelter after March 31st.

There is work ongoing with many providers in the area to update the Homeless Housing Plan for 2018. Recently an online Community Member and Provider Survey was available for comment, and yesterday March 12th, a public forum was held at the Norm Dicks Center. The forum featured an introduction by Monica Bernhard, a presentation by Kirsten Jewell detailing homelessness in Kitsap County and the progress made to date, as well as opportunities for public input.

ii. Permanent Supportive Housing

Kurt Wiest, Executive Director of the Bremerton Housing Authority (BHA), updated the group about progress regarding the effort to move forward with a Permanent Supportive Housing / Housing First project. The focus of this project is to serve individuals with ongoing behavioral health, chronic health, substance use, and chronic homelessness issues. A feasibility study is underway by Kitsap Community Resources (KCR) using funds from the 1/10th of 1 percent grant funds for Mental Health to perform the study. The feasibility study concludes in April.

This project is currently looking at a 3-year time horizon and may potentially face budget issues for tax credits which could delay the project by an additional year. A letter has been written to the Washington State Housing Finance Commission regarding allocation of tax credits for 2019.

Work to identify potential sites for this project is ongoing, and there are several sites which are promising. It is anticipated that more information about these sites will be available at the next meeting.

This project will focus on utilizing the Housing First model. There is a difference between this model and the Permanent Supportive Housing model. Permanent supportive housing allows provides housing and then includes wraparound services for people in these units, but there are often requirements for participation in the supportive services. The Housing First model is a particular type of permanent supportive housing which provides housing on simple behavior-based rules, focuses on keeping people housed, and does not require participation in additional therapeutic services. There is a large body of research on the efficacy of the Housing First model. A study of a Seattle Housing First project found that 44% individuals in the project self-initiated contact and enrollment into case management services.

The project will need to be placed in the City of Bremerton so that the Bremerton Housing Authority can be involved to provide project-based vouchers.

iii. Legislative Update

Kirsten Jewell, Program Manager of the Kitsap County Human Services Housing and Homelessness Program, distributed a summary of the legislative bills and anticipated impacts to Kitsap County. In general the legislative update is all great news. HB1570 makes the document recording fees permanent and provides an increase for funding for homeless programs. Another positive change is that allowable uses have been extended to be available for both private and non-profit rental housing. This bill does come with some additional recording and program requirements.

HB1630 now allows for minors to share more information in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) used across Washington State. Currently, no identifying information is allowed to be collected about unaccompanied minors, and the ability to collect this information will help to collect more data on youth which will allow for better program planning and evaluation.

HB2578 outlaws discrimination based on source of income. Landlords will no longer be able to state that they do not rent to tenants with Section 8. This legislation also provides a mitigation fund for landlords who experience property damage.

Another important piece of legislation is bill SB6560. This bill directs the Department of Children and Youth to come up with a plan which outlines steps to ensure that

unaccompanied youth in publicly funded systems of care are not discharged into homelessness. The plan must be completed by December 2019.

There are two bills, HB1783 and HB1298, which have passed to help people re-entering from jail or prison. HB1783 removes very high interest rates on legal financial obligations (LFO - restitution and court fees) that people are unable to pay while in jail. This bill also specifies that the courts may not impose costs on defendants who are indigent at the time of sentencing. This will allow people leaving prison to have less accrued interest for fines owed.

HB1298, often referred to as “Ban the Box”, has also passed. It prohibits employers from including questions on applications inquiring into an applicant’s criminal background until the employer determines that the applicant is otherwise qualified for the position.

- *Commissioner Garrido offered to prepare a thank you letter on behalf of the Homes for All Group to the legislators thanking them for their work to make real progress on a variety of housing and homelessness issues.*

iv. Low-Barrier Shelter

Major Scott Ramsey from the Salvation Army detailed some of the difficulties faced by the Salvation Army in its 2nd year of operating the Winter Shelter. During the month of January, the Winter Shelter averaged 78 guests per night, and initially the shelter did not think that it could provide shelter to more than 60 per night. In February, the Winter Shelter hosted a record of 87 people in one night, as staff did not want to turn away people who would otherwise have to sleep outside in the cold. Along with the Kitsap Rescue Mission, the highest bed night count for the combined night-by-night shelters was 110 individuals. So far the Winter Shelter has seen over 400 unique individuals, 90 of which were guests from last year. Many guests staying at the shelter are older people in their 70s and 80s with severe disabilities.

Fortunately this year there have been only a few minor incidents, but the Salvation Army was not designed as a shelter, and the space used for provide the overnight shelter is a dining room and a hallway. The shelter has been running with minimal staff and has incurred a large expense to the Salvation Army which has become problematic as they have also tried to assist guests with a variety of other needs including cab fare, emergency services, and have dealt with issues including bedbugs and lice. The Salvation Army is currently running an \$18-\$20 thousand dollar deficit.

Monica Bernhard of Kitsap Mental Health discussed some of the conversations about the need for year-round options. One of the issues is that a new location is needed outside of the Bremerton downtown core. Last week a committee met for the first time regarding the low-barrier shelter. Currently the discussion is centered on determining the needs and requirements to operate a 60-80 bed low-barrier shelter which ideally would operate 24-hours per day. Planning is underway, but finding funding to support shelter operations will be key. One of the focuses of the shelter would be to work on getting

guest into permanent housing or other housing options. Peninsula Community Health is interested in offering on-site primary health care services, and Harrison Health Partners has a residency program in Bremerton for family medicine which may be able to rotate doctors through the shelter and permanent supportive housing projects. As a county we have been dependent upon the Salvation Army carrying a heavy load, but the group is hopeful that an additional low-barrier shelter will provide a more permanent option.

v. Messaging Committee

Judy Rae Karlsen from the Homes for All messaging committee reported that their first meeting focused on taking all the information developed to date to place it into a framework to use for messaging. The initial focus is to develop messaging for the tiny homes village which will frame how this project will impact neighbors, businesses, and the community. This messaging will include numerous graphics and talking points. Examples of 3 existing projects that have been successful will be highlighted as part of this messaging. A list of all the concerns regarding this project and the other similar developed projects will be listed and addressed.

There was additional discussion on how to communicate this messaging and build alliances for tiny homes which may be developed on church properties. Several church sites have been identified as potential locations for a few tiny homes. The committee will create a toolkit for churches that will provide information about what will be needed to operate a tiny home and assist families living on the property. Some of the points in the messaging will be regarding permitting issues and care for residents.

- *The committee is looking for people with background in communications skills, public relations, and graphic design. It would be very helpful to have someone create graphics which can represent ideas to have the most impact possible. Ron Phinney from Northwest Productions was suggested as a possible contact.*

Discussions for Today

i. Incremental Roll-out of Tiny Cottages

At the March meeting there was some initial discussion for potential possibilities beyond a planned village. Kurt Wiest mentioned that there is interest from people involved in the Kitsap Interfaith Network. Project Share would like to build more tiny shelters and is excited to put the constructed units to use as soon as possible. A group of South Kitsap pastors are also interested in hearing more about these projects. Commissioner Garrido offered to attend the next Kitsap Interfaith Network and Project Share meetings.

a. Church Model

Becky Erickson, Mayor of the City of Poulsbo, stated some of the benefits to hosting tiny homes on church properties. With this model you may be able to get around some cost issues such as utility hookup fee issues. Adding on facilities needed for tiny homes can be deemed a facility bathroom and considered to be remodeling work, and as remodel work it would not require new utility fees in Poulsbo. She commented

that this can be a game changer from a financial standpoint. In this model the parishes would adopt individuals or families and build their volunteer bases. Even if just a few churches throughout the county could adopt this model they could make an impact on homelessness throughout the county. It is also possible that clustering tiny homes in this fashion may help reduce stigmatization and possibly generate less concern from local communities.

It would be helpful to develop a toolkit for this church model which adapts the village model rules and case management plan to fit a church site. Additional discussion needs to happen regarding the legal and liability issues for the churches. Coffee Oasis, Homeshare North Kitsap, and Host Homes are also great models to adapt moving forward.

➤ *Nancy Olsten of the Kitsap Rescue Mission and Becky Erickson will work on an outline.*

Jim Bolger from Kitsap County Department of Community Development has not talked about this concept within the department very much as their planning has been centered on working towards a village concept.

b. Unused Commercial or Other Spaces

Tom Pinkham discussed the option of placing tiny homes or other types of dividers/shelters within large unused commercial properties. This method is used at a project in Oahu. This would be more cost-effective to implement and more immediate. Heating/cooling would be provided by the shared HVAC systems of the building and it would be easy to change and adapt the layout as needed for the shelter.

Some of the issues with this option were pointed out including that for the transitory ordinance to apply the building would need to be in the County and not in a city. Additionally permitting would also be a problem. Leases for these types of properties are \$30K or more per year, so the property would need to be much less expensive, free or donated. Doug Washburn will talk with Tom about this in more detail.

c. Transitory Accommodation Ordinance

The Transitory Accommodation Ordinance allows for placement of a range of temporarily housing options including tiny homes. The initial application is \$350 and can be renewed at no cost each 180 days. The Planning Commission is currently considering amendments to the ordinance that will allow for more flexibility to expand into rural areas and opens the door to 1-2 housing units on church properties.

d. Help Requested

Tim Blair of Project Share notified the group that some of the tiny shelters that are currently awaiting placement and stored in the Lowes parking lot now need to be moved. A tow truck operator is needed to help move the units to another location.

ii. **County Data Updates**

Kirsten Jewell provided a walkthrough of the data summaries provided to the group pertaining to homelessness in Kitsap County and the crisis response system. The Housing and Homelessness Program can provide presentations and custom produced data for grants upon request.

a. Homelessness in Kitsap County

During 2017, the Housing Solutions Center (HSC) reported that 1,199 households seeking housing assistance were literally homeless, 412 households were about to be evicted, and 1,081 households were unstably housed and seeking assistance. During the 2018 Annual Point-in-Time Count (PIT) the count of people experiencing homelessness during a 24-hour period and living unsheltered was 146, a decrease from 197 during the summer 2017 PIT Count, and a small decrease from 165 during the last January PIT Count. This year during the PIT count 66 individuals were staying at the Salvation Army Winter Shelter compared to 47 last January. Rental rates and vacancies on this report have also been updated, and the average rent has increased \$408 (44%) over the last 4 years. This increase in rent is a primary driver pushing people into homelessness.

b. Annual Performance Dashboard

The Kitsap Homeless Response System Performance 2017 Annual Report provides an overview of how well the system is working to make homelessness in Kitsap County rare, brief, and one-time. Collectively 260 households were prevented from experiencing homelessness, and 75% of households seeking assistance are new to homelessness. 15.2% of households helped by the system have returned to homelessness within 2 years, this is double the prior year. 1 in 5 households seeking assistance has to go on the community waitlist for shelter, and for 1 in 8 there are no resources available and they could not be helped. There is a bottleneck for people moving out of shelters to their next step for housing which has caused people to stay longer in shelters, and therefore fewer people are able to be served.

c. Other Data

Another handout was supplied from the 2015 Washington State Needs Assessment which provide information regarding the gaps in Kitsap County regarding affordable housing, the housing market, cost burden to families, and the housing stock.

Cory Derenburger, Program Specialist in the Kitsap County Housing and Homelessness Program, will be producing data sheets for different parts of the county to assist those communities in understanding the scope of homelessness in their area.

To find data and information on homelessness produce by this division, please visit <https://spf.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/HH-Reports-and-Data.aspx>

The Washington State Department of Commerce also produces reports and interactive charts online. You can access these reports at

iii. Agency Updates and Announcements

a. VASH Vouchers

Kurt Wiest noted that due to improved efforts to collect information about homeless veterans, the Bremerton Housing Authority was awarded 28 new VASH vouchers in addition to the 45 that they already are allotted. These vouchers will be available, but it is up to the Department of Veterans Affairs to make referrals to these vouchers. The VASH vouchers work like regular Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers, but these vouchers also include a case management component. Due to the increased number of vouchers it is anticipated that an additional staff person will need to be added by the VA to provide case management.

b. FEMA Shelter and Rental Assistance

Carl Borg, Director of the United Way of Kitsap County, announced that they are starting the distribution process for FEMA Shelter and Rental Assistance. There are 10 organizations currently sharing \$125K dollars. If you run a shelter, contact the United Way to help spread these resources throughout the county.

c. North Kitsap Update

Mayor Erickson mentioned some of the recent developments in North Kitsap. The Nelson House is full with 5 women residents and 1 house mother. Another house has been identified for remodel. This home is in rougher shape and will take a year to remodel. The North Kitsap Fishline (NKFL) construction is moving forward quickly. The campus will be quite large, bigger than the Salvation Army. Funding for the NKFL is primarily through proceeds from their thrift store which just expanded to a new location.

d. Announcements

Robert Christensen and Sally Jo Martine from West Sound for Social Justice announced that a forum with moderator Josh Farley from the Kitsap Sun will be held April 15th, 2pm-5:30pm at the Bremerton United Methodist Church, 1150 Marine Drive. The goal of this forum is to help engage community members and connect them with leaders to help address homelessness in the county.

The next Veterans Standown Community Resources Fair will be held April 28th at 10am at the Sheridan Park Community Center, 680 Lebo Blvd in Bremerton.

Commissioner Garrido noted that the Veterans Administration building will have a groundbreaking ceremony at April 2nd at 10am for their new clinic to be located at 9177 Ridgetop Blvd in Silverdale.

Commitments and Closing Comments

Thank you Salvation Army for hosting these meetings and for providing delicious food and snacks.

- *Interested parties should contact Becky Erickson or Nancy Olsten to participate in creating a toolkit for churches to host tiny houses.*
- *Tim Blair needs a tow truck operator to move Tiny Houses from the Lowes parking lot.*
- *Commissioner Garrido offered to prepare a thank you letter on behalf of the Homes for All Group to the legislators thanking them for their work to make real progress on a variety of housing and homelessness issues.*
- *Shelter programs should contact the United Way regarding FEMA funding.*

Next Meetings: 9 a.m. at the Salvation Army
April 10
May 8
June 12

Meeting Participants

Commissioner Charlotte Garrido	Kitsap County
Mayor Becky Erickson	City of Poulsbo
Angie Silva	Kitsap County Commissioner's Office
Carl Borg	United Way of Kitsap County
Cory Derenburger	Kitsap County Human Services
Denise Dinkins	St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Doug Washburn	Kitsap County Human Services
Dr. Susan Turner	Kitsap Public Health
Jim Bolger	Kitsap County Department of Community Development
Joe Roszak	Kitsap Mental Health Services
Judy Rae Karlsen	Citizen
Kirsten Jewell	Kitsap County Human Services
Kurt Wiest	Bremerton Housing Authority
Larry Keller	Citizen
Lisa Kurek	Eagle's Wings
Lisa Nickel	Kitsap County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
Mike O'Shaughnessy	Kitsap Rescue Mission
Monica Bernhard	Kitsap Mental Health Services
Nancy Olsten	Kitsap Rescue Mission
Randy Barnett	Coffee Oasis
Robert Christensen	West Sound for Social Justice
Roland Arper	Port Orchard United Methodist Church
Sally Jo Martine	West Sound for Social Justice
Sarah van Cleve	Bremerton Housing Authority

Scott Ramsey	Salvation Army
Stacey Smith	Kitsap County Aging and Long-Term Care
Stevin Johnson	Citizen
Stuart Grogan	Housing Kitsap
Tim Blair	Project Share – Ekklesia Church
Tom Pinkham	Citizen
Victoria Hilt	Citizen
Wayne Hammond	Port Orchard Church of Christ