



REGULAR MEETING
Commission on Homelessness
Monday, October 5, 2015, 4:00 p.m.
Oxnard City Council Chambers
305 West Third Street, Oxnard CA 93030

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

- 2. PUBLIC COMMENT.** A person may address the Commission only on matters appearing on the Special Meeting agenda. The presiding officer shall limit public comments to three (3) minutes per speaker. Public comments will be heard during Commission consideration of the item on the agenda.

3. INFORMATION/CONSENT ITEMS

SUBJECT: Minutes of Special Meetings of September 14, 2015

RECOMMENDATION: Approve minutes of meeting of September 14, 2015.

4. REPORTS FROM CITY STAFF

- (A) Report on Winter Warming Shelter
- (B) Report from Oxnard Housing Authority on Section 8 Vouchers

5. NEW BUSINESS

- (A) Report on Homeless Information Management System
- (B) Protocol for Commission Communications with City Council
- (D) Agenda Items for Future Commission Meetings
- (E) Announcements of upcoming events

6. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

- (A) Subcommittee on Housing and Sheltering
- (B) Subcommittee on Coordinated Services
- (C) Subcommittee on Community Outreach and Communications

7. ADJOURNMENT

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and City of Oxnard policy, if you need special assistance to participate in a meeting, please contact the Housing Department at 385-8095 (TDD 487-2850). Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will assist the City in being able to make reasonable arrangements to ensure meeting accessibility.

**City of Oxnard
Commission on Homelessness
DRAFT Minutes of the Special Meeting of
September 14, 2015**

On Monday, September 14, 2015, at 4:05 p.m. the Special Meeting of the Commission on Homelessness convened in the Oxnard City Council Chambers, 305 West Third Street, Oxnard, CA 93030. The following Commissioners were in attendance: Chair Peggy Rivera; and Commissioners Susan Brinkmeyer, Francine Castañon, Francisco Jaena, Lucy Ramirez and Darlene Miller Gonzalez. Commissioner Lucy Ramirez and Vice-Chair Felipe Flores were absent with excuse. City of Oxnard staff members present were Arturo Casillas, Director, Oxnard Housing Department; Karl Lawson, interim Homeless Services Program Manager, Oxnard Housing Department; Grace Hoffman, Deputy City Manager; and Peter Brown, from the Office of the City Manager. Mr. Lawson acted as Executive Secretary.

1. ROLL CALL

Roll was called and a quorum was deemed present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Barbara Macri-Ortiz addressed the Commission on the topic the siting of affordable housing developments, and urged Commissioners and the public to refrain from being insensitive to the need to locate affordable housing on lots which are available for such housing. She spoke regarding the proposed projects planned for Pleasant Valley Road, which are meeting with some opposition. Ms. Macri-Ortiz described the history of several specific projects, detailing the reasons for why those projects ended up being constructed in their precise locations.

Mr. Daniel Wilborn addressed the Commissioners, stating that he was a homeless veteran who needed assistance in finding a place to live. Mr. Wilborn indicated that he received a pension income, and asked how to obtain one of the vouchers designated for veterans or other homeless persons. He was referred by the Commission to staff and to the service providers who were present in the audience.

3. INFORMATION/CONSENT ITEMS

Commissioner Brinkmeyer moved, and Chair Rivera seconded, approval of the minutes of the July 27, 2015 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

4. REPORTS FROM CITY STAFF

- (A) **City Housing Element:** Dr. Chris Williamson of the Planning Division provided an update to the Commission on the 2013-2021 Housing Element of the City's General Plan. He reported that the draft Housing Element had been submitted to the State of California Housing and Community Development Department in July for initial review, and that the City anticipated receipt in the near future of the HCD's Conditional Letter of Compliance. Following that, the Housing Element will be disseminated for public review for a period of at least thirty days. The public comment period will

be followed by presentation to the Planning Commission before the end of 2015, and possible presentation to the City Council in early 2016. Dr. Williamson answered questions from Commissioners, and stated that he will be scheduling meetings on the Element to receive input from with community stakeholders, and would welcome participation by the Commission and/or its subcommittees.

- (B) **Fifth Street Canal Encampment:** Mr. Brown provided a verbal report on the August 18th relocation of individuals living in the encampment off of West Fifth Street by the canal, and the subsequent remediation of the site, which is still on-going. He reported that the thirteen individuals remaining as of that date had been provided with six nights lodging in a hotel, and that none of those individuals had availed themselves of the services that the County and the other service providers offered. Mr. Brown stated that the cost of the operation so far came to over \$200,000.00, and noted that the landowner is reimbursing the City and the various service providers for that cost. Mr. Brown responded to questioning from Commissioners.

Mr. Lawrence Hurst of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul noted that operations such as this are not a one-shot effort, and that homeless service providers are patient and persistent with individuals who may at first be reluctant to avail themselves of programs and services. Mr. Hurst stated that his organization, and others, will be there and ready when those individuals are ready.

Ms. Karol Schulkin of the Ventura County Human Services Agency expressed concern about the use by staff of the term "service-resistant" when referring to individuals who did not avail themselves of the services offered. She noted that the providers cannot offer them what they had in the encampment, which was permanent housing (although in a non-traditional form), and could only offer transitional housing. Ms. Schulkin noted that the motel which housed the individuals who received vouchers praised them for their decorum and conduct.

Commissioner Jaena suggested that the City should produce an impact report, which should include an analysis of what has happened to the individuals who were displaced. That was endorsed by Chair Rivera and several other commissioners. Commissioner Castanon inquired about the benchmarks for Mr. Brown's contract with the City of Oxnard.

Mr. David Courtland addressed the Commission, stating that the entire discussion of the displacement and its aftermath highlighted the need for a permanent, year-round shelter for homeless individuals in Oxnard.

Ms. Eileen Tracy voiced her support for the construction of more SRO units (single-room occupancy) and studio apartments in Oxnard. She urged the Commission to formally recommend that the Housing Element should provide for increased density to promote the construction of smaller units, and to recommend that the Oxnard Housing authority take the lead on constructing such SROs and studio units. With respect to temporary shelter, Ms. Tracy suggested permitting of tent cities with portable bathroom facilities.

Commissioner Brinkmeyer expressed appreciation to all for their suggestions, and inviting the Commissioners and members of the public to an event entitled "Partners for Change," to be held on October 8, 2015, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Pointsettia Pavilion in Ventura, hosted by the Ventura Social Services Task Force (vsstf.org).

- (C) **Oxnard Housing Authority:** Housing Director Arturo Casillas provided a verbal report on activities of the Oxnard Housing Authority. Mr. Casillas stated that he and Mr. Lawson had been present during the August 18th operation at the homeless encampment, and observed that all individuals were treated with respect and dignity. He commended the work of Mr. Brown.

With respect to the 15 vouchers that have been set aside by the OHA for use by homeless individuals, Mr. Casillas stated that the regulations required that the recipients of the vouchers must be selected from applicants on the OHA waiting list, and that the OHA would open for new applicants only if there are insufficient qualified homeless persons already on the waiting list. The exception to this is the VASH vouchers which are reserved for military veterans.

Commissioner Miller-Gonzalez inquired about a recent Notice of Funding Availability for additional VASH vouchers. Mr. Casillas indicated that the Authority still had several unused VASH vouchers, and that it would not be advisable to apply for additional vouchers until all of the existing vouchers have been utilized by eligible veterans. Mr. Casillas responded to numerous questions from the Commissioners.

5. NEW BUSINESS

(A). Options for 2015-16 Winter Warming Shelter: Mr. Casillas reported that the best practice long-term solution for emergency sheltering would ideally consist of smaller sites at various locations, with on-site links to service providers for homeless persons. Community and City efforts towards that goal will be pursued, but it is not a viable option for the upcoming winter. He further reported that staff was considering several possible options for a 2015-16 Winter Warming Shelter: collaborating with the City of Ventura to jointly fund a shelter, including possibly utilizing a National Guard Armory for a shelter; utilizing the Armory in Oxnard; or modifying the Community Action of Ventura County facility in Oxnard for use as a shelter.

Mr. Kim Hocking of CAVC expressed dismay that his organization's efforts to obtain a requested zoning change from the City (which would permit the use of the facility as a shelter) had not yet produced action, and that their submission of plans for a temporary use had not yet been processed. He stated that the CAVC had the capacity and needed only the green light and the funding to be able to proceed. Mr. Hocking further indicated disappointment with the fact that the two CAVC grant awards from the City (for the Community Development Block Grant program, and the Emergency Solutions Grant program) had gone into effect on July 1, 2015, with the CAVC incurring expenses, but the City had yet to provide written contracts despite the CAVC's requests.

Mr. David Courtland indicated that he believed that the City of Ventura would not agree to collaborate with the City of Oxnard, and that the City needed to take immediate action to set up a winter warming shelter. Mr. Courtland and several Commissioners referred to the forecasts for a severe winter as a further reason to ensure that a shelter be established.

Chair Rivera expressed support for the CAVC option, and several Commissioners also addressed the urgency of finding a solution quickly.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Due to the loss of quorum, no further action could be taken, and Chair Rivera declared the meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

(Draft Minutes prepared by Karl Lawson)



TO: Honorable Chair and Commissioners
Commission on Homelessness

FROM: Karl Lawson, Housing 

DATE: September 29, 2015

SUBJECT: Protocol for Commission Communications with City Council,
Other Public Entities, and Media

I. RECOMMENDATION

That the Commission consider a set of principles governing communications by Commissioners with City Council, other public entities, and media.

II. DISCUSSION

The Commission By-Laws establishes two officers, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson. Article VII of the By-Laws, Coordination with City Council, reads as follows:

- VII. The Chairperson shall as soon as possible inform the City Council, through the City Manager, of policy recommendations made by the Commission. A copy of the minutes of meetings and resolutions of the Commission shall be delivered to the City Manager by the Secretary following each meeting.

The City Council established a Homeless Committee, consisting of two members of Council, as the preferred mechanism for initial presentation of recommendations from the Commission. Meeting minutes and all resolutions are included in the agenda packets for meetings of the Commission itself and of the Homeless Committee. Copies of the agenda packets are provided to members of City Council and to the City Manager.

In addition to recommendations and positions adopted by vote of the Commission, and formal resolutions of the Commission, it has been the practice and custom of members of the Commission to address the City Council, other public bodies, and the public at large, on issues pertaining to homelessness. Commissioners do not relinquish their rights as citizens to speak or to petition government by virtue of becoming a member of the Commission.

In order to provide clarity in cases wherein a Commissioner speaks publicly on a matter that arguably falls within the purview of the Commission, staff recommends that the Commission consider the following protocols:

1. When a Commissioner is addressing a matter about which the Commission as a body has taken a position, the Commissioner should clearly state that the Commission has taken a position on the matter, and should accurately state what that position is.
2. When a Commissioner is addressing a matter about which the Commission has not taken a position, the Commissioner should clearly state that the Commission has not taken a position; and that the comments of the Commissioner represent only the personal opinion of the speaker, and should not be considered as an official position of the Commission.
3. These protocols should apply to both verbal communications and written communications.

Staff proposes that the Commission consider and discuss these proposed protocols, and provide direction with respect thereto.

KL/kl