

**City of Oxnard
Commission on Homelessness
Minutes of the Regular Meeting of
April 6, 2015**

On Monday, April 6, 2015, at 5:00 p.m. the Regular Meeting of the Commission on Homelessness convened in the Council Chambers at 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 Martinez, and Darlene Miller. Deputy City Clerk Lyn McGraw administered the oath of office to returning Commissioner Castañon and incoming Commissioner Brinkmeyer. Vice-Chair Felipe Flores was absent with excuse. City of Oxnard staff members present were Mary Chappell, Administrative Technician, Housing Department; Karl Lawson, Housing Department, who arrived at 5:03 p.m. and acted as Executive Secretary; Carrie Sabatini, Interim Housing Director; Deputy City Manager Grace Hoffman; and Peter Brown, also from the Office of the City Manager.

1. ROLL CALL

Roll was called and a quorum was deemed present.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Tim Hockett, Executive Director of Community Action of Ventura County, addressed the Commission on the grant application submitted by CAVC and provided an update on the proposal to establish a shelter at the CVAC location on Richmond Avenue.

3. INFORMATION/CONSENT ITEMS

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETINGS OF MARCH 2, 2015 AND MARCH 5, 2015

Commissioner Castañon moved approval of the minutes as presented in the agenda packet. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Miller. Commissioner Martinez offered a friendly amendment to the motion to clarify that Commission's endorsement of the proposal on Section 8 vouchers would be conditioned upon the Commission's oversight of the social service agencies. Commissioner Castañon did not accept the friendly amendment, which died for lack of a second. Following discussion, the motion to approve the minutes to the March 2 and March 5 meetings passed with three votes in favor (Chairwoman Rivera, Commissioner Martinez, and Commissioner Miller) and three abstentions (Commissioners Brinkmeyer, Jaena and Castañon).

4. REPORTS FROM CITY STAFF

A: RESULTS OF 2015 POINT-IN-TIME COUNT

Mr. Brown reported that preliminary data from the 2015 Point-In-Time count revealed that the number of homeless individuals in the County of Ventura was roughly the same as it was in 2014. Final results are anticipated to be released sometime in early to mid-April, following a final review of data from the shelter providers in the cities of Ventura and Oxnard.

B: VAGRANCY ENFORCEMENT

Officer Jacob Jundef of the Oxnard Police Department addressed the Commission on the on-going efforts of the Department to enforce a zero-tolerance approach to unlawful conduct in public parks and other public spaces. Officer Jundef emphasized that all individuals, regardless of status, are invited to use public parks and spaces provided that they comply with all laws. He further described the “hand-up, not hand-out” philosophy that the City embraces; informed the Commission that police officers make every effort to connect homeless individuals with agencies that provide services to the homeless community; and that representatives of those agencies often accompany officers in the course of their patrols and visits to public parks and public spaces. Officer Jundef responded to questions from Commissioners and received the Commission’s thanks for the department’s work and efforts.

5. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

At 5:27 p.m., Chair Rivera requested and was granted unanimous consent from the Commission to take an agenda item out of order; more specifically, Chair Rivera asked to re-open Public Comment to allow one member of the public to address the Commission. It being so ordered, Mr. David Courtland of Simi Valley then addressed the Commission on the developments in the city of Simi Valley. He reported that on April 1, 2015, a group of homeless individuals had conducted a rally in front of Simi Valley municipal offices to protest recent actions related to homeless encampments in that city and to demand more services for the homeless community.

6. REPORTS FROM CITY STAFF

C: REMOVAL OF ENCAMPMENT

Mr. Brown reported on developments related to the pending removal of the homeless encampment on private property at the end of West Fifth Street, indicating that elected officials and over 100 community members have been invited to tour the encampment on Thursday, April 9, in the company of municipal government and law enforcement officials. Several members of the Commission stated that they had already taken advantage of the City’s offer and had visited the encampment with Mr. Brown and other City officials. Mr. Brown responded to questions from the Commissioners, and stated that the timeline called for the removal of the encampment sometime in April or May, with services and temporary housing to be provided for displacees. He further indicated that the City had information on thirteen individuals who reside in the encampment, and stressed that the challenge of providing services to those individuals, with the knowledge that some and perhaps a majority of those individuals are resistant to availing themselves of services.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO COMMISSION BY-LAWS; AND COMMISSION REQUEST TO APPOINT ADVISORS TO THE COMMISSION

Mr. Lawson prefaced his remarks by reminding Commissioners that any communications among and between a majority of the Commissioners on matters related to Commission business must be conducted in open session; and specifically, that the Brown Act does not permit a majority of a legislative body to engage in substantive discussions by e-mail. Mr. Lawson then directed the Commission’s attention to the staff report at pages 009-011 of the agenda packet, and presented a brief

summary of the report and of the need for the Commission to amend its by-laws in order to bring them into agreement with the City Code as amended by the City Council on January 27, 2015. Mr. Lawson also summarized the legal opinion of the Office of the City Attorney setting forth the reasons for which the Commission lacks the legal authority to appoint official Advisors to the Commission. Following discussion, Commissioner Castañon moved, and Commissioner Brinkmeyer seconded, that the Commission submit the proposed amendments to Articles III.A, V.C, and V.E of the By-laws to City Council for approval, and that the Commission receive the staff report on the City Attorney's opinion regarding the request of the Commission to appoint advisors. The motion carried unanimously.

6. OLD BUSINESS

A. UPDATE ON WINTER WARMING SHELTER

Ms. Amanda Herrera from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul reported on the activity at the Winter Warming Shelter, and introduced two staff members from the facility, Ms. Molly Skidmore and Mr. Nicholas Starkey. Ms. Herrera presented a written report to the Commission summarizing the data of the clients served in the 2014-2015 season, including the Family Diversion Program. A copy of that report is attached to these minutes. Ms. Herrera responded to questions from Commissioners, who expressed the Commission's appreciation for the excellent work of SVDP in its operation of the Winter Warming Shelter.

B: COMMISSION PARTICIPATION IN THE 2015-2016 NEEDS ASSESSMENT; AND RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO THE SECTION 8 PLAN

Mr. Lawson distributed an excerpt of the draft Annual Action Plan, which sets forth the funding requests and recommendations, and indicated that those will be presented to City Council on April 28, 2015. A copy of that six-page excerpt of the Annual Action Plan is attached to these minutes. Interim Housing Director Carrie Sabatini reported to the Commission that on March 24, 2015, the City Council had approved the amendment to the Oxnard Housing Authority's Section 8 plan related to the provision of housing vouchers for homeless individuals. Council modified the staff recommendation to provide for the provision of 15 vouchers, rather than for "up to" 15 vouchers. Ms. Sabatini also reported on the work of the seven-member proposal review panel which evaluated applications for grant funding for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investments Partnerships Act (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) programs. Ms. Sabatini responded to questions from Commissioners, and Chair Rivera commented on the work of the review panel. Following discussion, Chair Rivera moved that the Commission endorse the recommendations set forth in the draft Annual Action Plan. Commissioner Martinez seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

C: PLANNING RETREAT

Mr. Lawson directed the Commissioners' attention to the staff report at pages 012-014, and provided a brief verbal summary thereof. Following an extensive discussion of the purpose, scheduling and organization of the upcoming retreat, it was agreed that a Wednesday morning in May would be preferable. Staff will coordinate the scheduling of the retreat and apprise Commissioners of the date and location when that is determined.

7. COMMISSION MEMBER BUSINESS

A. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

B: CONTINUUM OF CARE

Mr. Brown reported that the date of the next County Continuum of Care meeting has not yet been determined. Staff will apprise the Commission when that meeting is scheduled.

C: ANNOUNCEMENTS OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Ms. Karol Schulkin, County of Ventura Homeless Services Agency, reported that the next Ventura County Veterans' Stand-Down will take place on July 23-25, 2015, at the Ventura National Guard Armory.

Mr. Lawson informed the Commission of three upcoming public meetings, all scheduled to take place in City Council Chambers. On Wednesday, April 8, at 5:30 p.m., the City's Planning Department invites the community to a public input meeting on the City of Oxnard's Draft Housing Element update (which has been posted for public comment). On Tuesday, April 28, 2015, two public hearings are scheduled to take place during the City Council meeting beginning at 6:00 p.m. The first is Public Hearing on the Needs Assessment and the 2015-16 Annual Action Plan funding recommendations for CDBG, HOME, and ESG, and the other is the Public Hearing and Adoption of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing. Both of those documents have also been posted for public review and comment. Mr. Lawson urged interested parties to avail themselves of the opportunity to submit their comments in writing in advance.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Rivera declared the meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

(Draft Minutes prepared by Karl Lawson)

Attachments: 1. Report of St. Vincent de Paul Society on Winter Warming Shelter 2014-15 Season
2. Five-page excerpt from City of Oxnard Draft Annual Action Plan for 2015-16