

CITY OF OXNARD
COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
May 17 2021

On Monday, May 17, at (insert time)pm the Meeting of the Commission on Homelessness convened remotely via Zoom. Peggy Rivera, Chair, called the meeting to order at (insert time)pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Peggy Rivera; Vice-Chair Yukio Okano; Commissioners, Ruby Durias, Rene Camper-Stewart (joined during item 4b), Alejandro Fregoso, David Littell. Also present is Jack Villa who is yet to be sworn in.

Staff members present: Emilio Ramirez, Housing Director; Jessica Petrillo, Homeless Assistance Program Coordinator. Rose Chaparro, City Clerk was present for the completion of item 1.

a. Swearing of Commissioner Jack Villa

City Clerk Rose Chaparro swore in new Commissioner Jack Villa

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

3. INFORMATION/CONSENT ITEMS

Motion to approve minutes of meeting April 5 2021

Correction: Commissioner Ruby Durias identified that the minutes state Commissioner Peggy Rivera called the meeting to order but Commissioner Rivera was not present at the meeting. The motion was made by Vice-Chair Yukio Okano.

Motion to approve with correction: First – Ruby Durias; Seconded – Yukio Okano.

All in favor – Yes with two abstentions (Peggy Rivera and Jack Villa) due to not being present at the April 5th Meeting.

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. Director's Update

The Navigation Center operated by Mercy House continues to operate with the expansion to a second location due to COVID-19 protocol. We are planning for the eventual move to a single

location but do not yet know when this will happen. We anticipate the Governor is going to issue a re-opening of the state come June 15th and that may or may not come with guidance on homeless shelter operations.

The Vagabond is in operation as a non-congregate shelter also run by Mercy House and in partnership with National Health Foundation. The conversion into Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is on track. An entitlement package has been submitted. The site must be converted into PSH by December 2022.

The downtown Homeless Solutions Center has been approved by council and we are in the midst of getting ready to submit primary financing this fall. We hope to succeed in that effort and should be in construction by Summer 2022. Expecting a construction period of 18 months.

At the request of Commissioner Rivera we have looked into whether the chair of the Homeless Commission is able to make a motion under Robert's Rules of Order. As per advice from Jason Zaragoza in the City Attorney's Office we have determined that although in normal circumstances, the chair would be responsible for managing the meeting and not able to make a motion, in this case the chair of the commission does have the authority to do so.

b. Sub-Committees

The Commissioners discussed the sub-committees presented in the staff report and Measure M prerecorded presentation. There was a point of clarification on the number of sub committees. The presentation mentioned four proposed sub committees, however five were proposed.

The proposed sub committees are: Foul Weather Shelter; Safe Sleep Program; Housing First; Event Planning; and Public Safety.

Each sub-committee can have no more than three commissioners. The commissioners discussed the sub committees and decided to split the Event Planning sub committee into two sub committees (1. Signature Event, & 2. Longest Night of the Year). It was also decided to not have a Public Safety sub committee at this time. The Commissioners decided on the following members of each sub-committee.

1. **Foul Weather Shelter:** Yukio Okano; David Littell; and Alejandro Fregoso (staffed by Karl Lawson)
2. **Safe Sleep Program:** Ruby Durias; Yukio Okano; and David Littell (staffed by Jessica Petrillo)
3. **Housing First:** Jack Villa; Peggy Rivera; Rene Camper-Stewart (staffed by Emilio Ramirez)
4. **Signature Event:** Rene Camper-Stewart; Peggy Rivera; and Alejandro Fregoso (staffed by Emilio Ramirez)

5. **Longest Night of the Year:** Yukio Okano; Ruby Durias; and Alejandro Fregoso (staffed by Jessica Petrillo)

Motion to Approve: First – Peggy Rivera; Seconded – Ruby Durias.
All in Favor – Yes.

c. Vocational Program

The Commissioners discussed this program and staff answered questions (summarized below)

Q) How many people will this pilot serve, and are the participants already in housing?

A) The pilot will serve approximately 5 people and yes, it is for people who are now in housing but were previously homeless. If the pilot is successful and the program is expanded and continued this criteria is flexible to change in the future.

Q) There was a presentation to City Council and a lot of the positions were skilled trades (electrical companies, construction companies), is this program limited to those types of jobs?

A) No this is a separate program from the one you are referring to. This program has not yet been presented to council. The jobs available will be tailored to the participant. The Workforce Development Board will work with each participant to determine a career path and what type of training is needed.

Q) Who are the case managers that are going to be connected to the participants?

A) A Housing Case Worker, a worker from the Workforce Development Board and a Community Case Manager.

Motion to Approve: First – Peggy Rivera; Seconded – Rene Camper-Stewart
All in Favor – Yes.

d. Housing First

The Commissioners discussed this program and staff answered questions (summarized below)

Q) In the staff presentation, it was said that this plan will make use of set aside/section 8 vouchers. Where are these vouchers coming from? Who is going to pay for them?

A) We are not limited to only using Section 8 vouchers. Funding for housing in this plan will come from a myriad of sources and section 8 vouchers is one of them. Some vouchers can be project based.

Q) Does the Housing First plan go together with the Vocational Program?

A) They are not written as a joint program, but it is the hope that all of our homeless programs are cohesive. It's likely that vocational training and support fits within the Housing First Plan as

does the navigation center, and the street outreach team. All have the ultimate goals of housing and stability.

Q) The State just announced they were giving \$12B towards homelessness throughout the state. This plan probably has good timing in that regard. We're looking at the Homeless Solutions Center, but are we looking at other types of housing besides the 110 beds at the solutions center? Perhaps some tiny homes or other types of options?

A) Yes the state is also adopting a Housing First initiative and the programs it operates at a state level are moving forward with a Housing First requirement to receive funding from the state.

Q) Will homeless people be given preference for this housing?

A) We have a lot of work to do before we establish specific criteria. We are working with the Housing Authority's Homeless Program on a variety of efforts which will create a preference for homeless people within that program. We have mainstream vouchers that are intended to be for homeless or chronically homeless. We are also receiving 56 Emergency Housing Vouchers that are also planned to be for people who are homeless.

(Follow up comment from a Commissioner) I am concerned here that we are using a lot of vouchers for homeless people when we have a long waitlist of housed people who have been waiting on that list for a long time.

Q) The Housing First model has been tried in different communities and some have not been that successful. Is there a plan to gather information from other communities who have implemented Housing First, both successful and unsuccessful? There are good learning opportunities in the not successful models as well.

A) Yes, we will be doing extensive research. I believe the Housing First model has the greatest chance of success. Jessica also has experience in planning and implementation on Housing First. We will consider all of the models, why it worked and why it didn't work and be clear with our findings. I can say now a significant problem of why models didn't work is when they did not properly follow through with the supportive services that are needed in the Housing First model.

(Follow up comment from a Commissioner) When they say Housing First, it doesn't mean Housing Only. It also doesn't mean they will stop paying attention to the other parts of the homeless program. The supports are beyond housing stability and include health, mental health and life skills.

Motion to Approve: First – Ruby Durias; Seconded – Rene Camper-Stewart
All in Favor – Yes.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting is on June 7 2021. The meeting was adjourned at 5:48pm.