

Committee on Ending Homelessness
Minutes of the March 1, 2006 Meeting
Nashua City Hall
Rm. 208

Present at the meeting were: Bob Mack, Wendy Furnari, Eileen Brady, Klaas Nijhuis, Peter Kelleher, Gene Murray, Linda Jeynes, Lori Cardin, Laura Nault, Tony Epaphras, Jennifer Spencer, Jack Kelley, Wayne MacDonald, Carol Hopfenspirger, Barbara Corman, and Mike Perez.

The meeting began at 9:05 am.

Minutes from the February 1, 2006 were reviewed. Amendments made. Motion by Klaas N. to accept the February 1, 2006 minutes as amended. Tony E. seconded the motion and the minutes were accepted as amended.

Discussion around interactions with NPD and homeless families and individuals. Deputy Chief of Police MacDonald noted that NPD officers deal with many homeless families and individuals, both during regular business hours and after hours. This includes families living in cars, people sleeping in boxes, in “the jungle” by the river, and other locations around the city. Two primary goals identified with such cases include getting people off the street into safe shelter and linking to services. While there is a desire to link to services, there is also a need to deal with any criminal matters accordingly. Families after hours may be connected to Salvation Army or Bridges (R & A services), depending on the circumstances. No consistent resource identified for individuals. NPD are not able to provide transportation services due to liability issues. Officers would benefit from having an after-hours contact to link people to emergency shelter services, particularly homeless individuals. Past practice allowed for homeless individuals to be given a few dollars to get a coffee and get out of the cold. Peter K. brought up “leave a light on” practice from last winter. Discussion around having an e-mail contact loop to alert providers of potential homeless people who may require additional outreach. Dep. Chief MacDonald noted such follow up may be utilized by officers but would not necessarily be required. Tony E. noted that in Manchester, a similar practice was dismissed for placing undue burden of responsibility on the MPD. Klaas N. brought up that the Crisis Map is available as a resource as well. However, this resource may not be appropriate for all interventions/initial interactions with homeless people. Discussed having Gene Murray be a primary referral contact and, under directive of Tony E., he will give his business cards to NPD so they can disseminate accordingly. Tony E. also noted that there seems to be more of a “humanization” of dealing with the homeless population. EHC will revisit the Crisis Map and possibly a “palm card” with three to four primary resource contacts that could be utilized by NPD officers. Peter K. noted that HH has a printing shop that could produce such a product. The Crisis Map and card could also be a good resource for school department, guidance counselors, etc. to get info to the homeless population in the districts.

Discussed GAPS count. In analyzing data, it was noted that there seems to be a disconnect between homeless families counted by school district and linkage to service providers. Peter K. asked Dep. Chief MacDonald if he has noted a change in the homeless population. Reported that

while numbers are high in accordance with GAPS analysis, there seems to be a less “obvious” homeless population.

Discussed past retreat, which brought numerous stakeholders together including law enforcement from surrounding towns. Discussed planning another such event. Also, providing tours of service agencies for community groups to educate them around availability of services for at risk and special populations. EHC will review agencies to participate and potential community members to invite to such a tour.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:20am.

Next EHC meeting: March 30, 2006, 8:30am @ Harbor Homes, 45 High St.

Next GNCOC mtg: April 5, 2006, 8:00am, City Hall Auditorium.