

Committee on Ending Homelessness
Minutes of the April 5, 2006 Meeting
City Hall, Nashua

Present at the meeting were: Bob Mack, Wendy Furnari, Jack Kelley, Eileen Brady, Peter Kelleher, Gene Murray, Germano Martins, Linda Jeynes, Lori Cardin, Mary Andosca, Laura Nault, Tony Epaphras, David Cull, Jean Russell, Lisa Tufts, Jennifer Spencer, Marucha Omwenga, and Maria Brown.

The meeting began at 9:10 am.

Minutes from the March 30, 2006 meeting were reviewed. Jack Kelley moved to accept the minutes, Peter Kelleher seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Lori Cardin reviewed the committee sign-up sheets that were circulated at the GNCOC meeting and sent them around this committee for sign-ups as well.

Bob Mack introduced Marucha Omwenga who will be working with us to help track and monitor the Plan to End Homelessness. Bob discussed the ongoing challenges of tracking, monitoring and maintaining continuity of the plan. For example, we did a great job of connecting with landlords initially, but the momentum has been lost.

Peter Kelleher remarked that the committee has received some significant educational benefits, such as the count of evictions that Mike Perez gathered for us. David Cull mentioned a recent discussion he had with someone from the Sheriff's Department regarding evictions and foreclosures. He was informed that numbers have gone up significantly this year. David said he will ask for actual numbers from them. There was additional discussion around the fact that landlords often wait until the warmer months to evict. Folks mentioned the number of "for rent" signs out in the community.

Eileen Brady mentioned that rents are skyrocketing in Manchester and that 1,100 apartments are being turned into condos.

Laura Nault asked about utilizing volunteers to do outreach and work with Gene Murray, as she would be very interested in doing this. Tony Epaphras talked about the group outreach that used to take place in Manchester, but that the outreach workers were all paid staff. Bob Mack brought up the challenge of organizing and managing volunteers as well as liability issues. Tony will consider developing a program for volunteers.

Bob Mack brought up conversation regarding a forum for a simulation. Discussion took place about the benefits of the housing conference held a few years ago. Eileen Brady talked about the legislator luncheon that she attended recently, sponsored by NHHFA. She said that many of the legislators didn't know the ins and outs of housing issues and this was a very good meeting. She suggested holding a follow-up conference for legislators and perhaps Joan Schulze would be willing to help recruit other legislators.

Peter Kelleher remarked that the EHC comes up with great ideas and perhaps we should look at bringing them to the legislative affairs committee of the GNCOC. He suggested that we try to come up with 10 legislative initiatives each year and perhaps one or two will pass. This will allow us to become pro-active, instead of always being on the defensive when it comes to legislation that will negatively impact our clients. Some examples would be having Medicaid and SSA suspend benefits rather than terminate them for incarcerated individuals, and having inmates discharged with a NH State ID so that they can immediately begin a job search or gain access to benefits. Some of these issues are being discussed at the State D/C planning meetings.

David Cull recently met with the City View Management (Laton House). The property owner may be interested in renovating a section of the building and putting in a separate entrance for “clients who are trying to get their lives together”, feeling that this would lend to keeping the property well maintained. However, the property owner would be looking for volunteers to help with the renovation. Several folks had concerns about the feasibility of this plan, first because there’s no way to guarantee that anyone will remain clean and sober and behaviorally appropriate, and that this is a concern shared by most property owners.

Lori Cardin let us know that she had received a list of funding sources NPC is asking for seed money for the Revolving Loan Fund. This will be utilized to develop legislation for BOA to request some money to go towards this RLF. Lori also has contact information to send letters for general GNCOC.

Peter Kelleher announced a training to be held at HHI, 45 High St. for clients of the gathering place and any others that would like to attend. There will be two attorneys present from the Disability Rights Center to answer questions regarding getting benefits. All are welcome and pizza will be served after the presentation.

Mary Andosca asked about the possibility of setting up a facility for homeless folks who are being discharged from the hospital but are not yet stable enough to be back on the street or in a shelter, or may be near the end of their life. Bob Mack mentioned that there are committees working with the hospitals and institutions to plan for housing needs prior to discharge. Maria Brown noted that NH Medicaid does not pay for hospice care.

Bob Mack showed the group Chart N that the EHC has been asked to complete for the SuperNOFA. Committee members were asked to review the chart and fill in any items they could by reviewing the current EH plan and noting any other activities they may be aware of that their agency is doing or other agencies in the community might be doing.

The next meeting is scheduled for 1:00 pm on April 17th at Harbor Homes, 45 High Street. This meeting is to review and complete Chart N for the SuperNOFA.

The next regular meeting will take place on May 3rd at 9:00 at City Hall rm 208.