

Ending Homeless Committee  
Minutes of the 10/7/09 Meeting

Present were: Lianne Bower, Wendy LeBlanc, Jessica Karwatske, Magaly Rios, Eileen Brady, Kathryn Paquette, Laura Nault, Dennis Roy, Janet Roy, Jaretta Copeland, Katie Merrill, Jerry Leclerc, Laurie Skibba, Joan Koliss, Candace C, Gebhart, Michael Amichetti

Call to order: 9:00am

Introductions were made and visitors/newcomers welcomed.

Review of minutes from 9/2/09 meeting. W. LeBlanc motioned to accept the minutes. L. Nault seconded the motion and motion carried.

PEC Update:

Following J. Leclerc's review of Project Employment Connect's success at the COC meeting, E. Brady asked if this project will be done again next year. Jerry said we will definitely hold the event again next year, and since the committee now has some data regarding attendees and their needs/expectations, etc., they will know how to tweak the event so that it can be even more successful. The committee will be looking at how to market the event to vendors/employers next time so we can increase participation. The planning process will begin in April.

Landlord & Tenant's Rights Workshops:

Eileen asked for a status update on the Landlord workshop that is being planned by NHLA. C. Gebhart said there's no specific date set but they are looking at November. NHLA will create a flyer to advertise the event and possibly do a press release. The date for the Tenant's Rights workshop has been postponed. The workshop will now be held on 11/20/09 from 1-3pm at Harbor Homes.

Winter Preparedness/Shelter Capacity:

The subject of emergency winter preparedness came up again; K. Merrill said she's not sure whether the idea of "warming centers" is a realistic one, as facilities would need to be located and an agency/organization would need to be available to run it.

Discussion ensued about shelters running at capacity. K. Merrill stated that 2009 has been the first summer she's had a full shelter at Maple Street. E. Brady mentioned that she thinks the Rescue Mission is at capacity as well, and that the Soup Kitchen also has no beds available.

### Discrimination?:

K. Paquette mentioned that she has been approached by a few homeless individuals who have said they are not being allowed to sit on park benches outside of City Hall, and the NPD has been telling them to leave. K. Merrill noted that she has also gotten some second-hand information from consumers that they are being asked to not sit and read the paper on the benches at City Hall; she also said that there is a group of homeless persons who have been congregating in the space behind Rent-A-Center.

E. Brady and W. LeBlanc both agreed that this issue should be brought to the attention of City Hall and the Mayor. C. Gebhart suggested we address the issue with Capt. Segell, who has attended a few of the CoC meetings.

### Motels/Refusing Shelter Space:

J. Koliss asked what the City's responsibility is regarding motel vouchers, since the shelters are full. M. Amichetti stated he didn't know exactly how many families Nashua has in motels right now, but that City Welfare checks in with the shelters each day to see if there are any available beds.

K. Paquette mentioned that if she is able to find shelter space for a family in a different part of the State, she can provide rides so a family can be housed. Many times if a family is in a motel with a voucher from City Welfare, they must accept shelter space if it becomes available, even if the shelter is not local. This brought up much debate about the reasonableness of displacing a homeless family from their city of origin or the community they're familiar with, and how that would affect a family with school aged children., or parents who are job-searching.

The McKinney Vento Act states that a homeless family can send their child to their school of origin even if they are not residing in that town anymore. However, it would be a burden to a school district in Nashua, for example, to have to provide transportation to a child whose family is at a shelter in Plymouth. K. Merrill said she would bring this issue up at the shelter director's meeting this Friday. Perhaps this is something that should be brought to the attention of the State Legislature.

Discussion arose regarding applicants to City Welfare and their town of origin. Some providers have stated that persons who have come here from other towns or states have been denied by City Welfare due to the fact that they have not lived in Nashua for 30 days. C. Gebhart reviewed RSA 165, which sets forth a town's due diligence to assist residents, even if they are new to town.

Candace said that if anyone has experienced a denial from a Welfare office because they haven't lived here for 30 days, they should contact NHLA to investigate. Sometimes the providers are not given the whole story by the clients.

Ellen Latimore from Family Promise was a guest of L. Skibba, and gave a brief presentation and overview of the Family Mentoring Program, which Laurie is hoping to develop for the Nashua area. A more detailed presentation will be held on 10/7/09 at 6:30 in the Academic Center at St, Joseph Hospital. Anyone interested in learning more about the program is welcome to attend.

10:00am: Meeting adjourned

Minutes prepared by Jessica Karwatske, NPCC