

Committee on Ending Homelessness
Minutes of the February 1, 2006 Meeting
City Hall, Nashua

Present at the meeting were: Bob Mack, Wendy Furnari, Donna Juskiewicz, Eileen Brady, Klaas Nijhuis, Miles Pendry, Peter Kelleher, Gene Murray, Germano Martins, Linda Jeynes, Lori Cardin, Mary Andosca, Laura Nault, Tony Epaphras, and Mike Perez.

The meeting began at 9:10 am.

Minutes from the January 26, 2006 were reviewed. Klaas clarified his clarification of the January 1, 2006 minutes. The January 1, 2006 minutes should read “Klaas *clarified that he* offered to create a template for letters to possible funding sources for their commitment, not actually write the letters.” Klaas then motioned to accept the January 26, 2006 minutes. Tony seconded the motion and the minutes were accepted as amended.

Several people including Eileen, Lori, Tony and Klaas shared their perception of the HB1388 hearing. We were told that 35-40 people attended, 22 signed up to testify in opposition of the bill and only one signed up to testify in support. Lori said she had called all Judiciary Committee members prior to the hearing. Eileen was concerned that one of the landlords that had come to our EHC meeting was at the hearing in support. The bill still needs to go through the Executive Committee.

Bob is concerned about some potential legislation that may change the way municipal welfare can assist with medical expenses. He feels that we may need to revisit the idea of a legislative committee from the GNCOC.

A lot of time was spent discussing the letter that Klaas wrote regarding the Good Neighbor Agreement to send to potential funders. First there was discussion regarding the GNCOC letterhead, which currently does not exist. Tony moved to bring the discussion to the Executive Committee and Peter seconded. Motion carried. Concern was voiced regarding all the agency names that were listed on the letter Klaas had drafted. Peter thought that all of the agencies listed might not endorse the letter. This moved into discussion of the United Way and their current priorities. Klaas said that the UW currently allocates 20% of their general budget to promote workforce housing. There was discussion around the GNCOC asking the UW to redirect their focus. Bob reminded us that workforce housing has a place in the community's balance. As discussion regarding the letter's content resumed, Germano suggested adding, “If you are already a contributor to the GNCOC, we appreciate your continuing support”. Otherwise, we might offend those who already participate. Klaas suggested “and if you haven't yet,” before the line asking them to sign on to the Good Neighbor Agreement. Mike suggested placement of some of the phrases. Klaas reminded us that the big picture is to get them to commit long term, with substantial financial contributions. Eileen was concerned about the length of time being spent on this issue today. Mike volunteered to re-draft the letter after these minutes are forwarded to him.

Prevention Strategy: Bob Mack reported that Maryse Wirbal from Nashua Pastoral Care is looking into funding sources for the Revolving Loan Fund, such as United Way. The committee for the loan fund meets monthly.

There are several action items on the EH plan with January 2006 time frames. The EHC will continue to review and tweak time frames. Klaas is following up on possible student intern to assist with this task, with a goal of commitment for April 2006.

Rapid re-housing: Klaas and Germano have talked about reaching out beyond the GNCOG for participants on this committee. They will send an email invite out to the target group by mid-February to try and plan a first meeting.

Wrap Around Strategies: Tony asked about Maria Brown from Milford Welfare being part of this committee. Gene volunteered to discuss it with Maria. It was noted we need to keep looking at the steps in the Plan regardless of the vacant chair. Bob reported that wrap-around meetings with clients have been successful.

Peter asked about the three subcommittees, members and roles. There was additional discussion of who does/should participate in the wrap-around meetings: Gene from So. NH Services, Sue Mead from Community Council, the Gathering Place, Employment Security, Welfare, hospitals...

Eileen mentioned that Kathy from the NH Corrections Dept will be speaking at the NH Coalition to End Homelessness meeting on Friday. Gene offered to attend and will speak to Kathy about participating in the prevention committee of the EHC.

Klaas suggested that a time slot be introduced into each EHC meeting to review the plan and see who should be recruited for key roles in the action steps. Plan to do this at next meeting.

Mike presented information on eviction actions made at Nashua District Court. In 2004 there were 1089 attempts to evict and in 2005 there were 1119. He clarified that this does not include those with a Notice to Quit, these are actions that made it to the court. He was unsure of what communities were included in this count, probably just Nashua and Hudson. Mike will try to see what additional information he can obtain, such as how many evictions were actually upheld, demographic info, how many came from subsidized housing and how many evictions resulted in homelessness. The committee understands that the latter information may be impossible to retrieve. This moved into more discussion of the Plan and the goal to reduce the eviction rate by 3%.

Peter asked if there are pieces of legislation that could be helpful, for example, request police department to communicate observed unsheltered homeless persons to service providers. Additional discussion took place regarding a "clearinghouse number" where police or those facing eviction could call. We talked about giving Gene's card to the sheriff to distribute when he evicts and a card or pamphlet with resources to give to the landlords to distribute with a notice to quit. Lori will talk to Nashua's Chief of Police to get information regarding current practices of dealing with homeless persons as well as try to get a feel for the police officer's perceptions of the homeless and if perhaps we should offer a training program for them.

Bob motioned to adjourn and Peter seconded. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.

The next meeting is scheduled for 9:00 am on February 23, 2006 at Harbor Homes, 45 High Street.