

Committee on Ending Homelessness Meeting January 7, 2004

Present at the meeting were: Eileen Brady, Maria Brown, Lisa Christie, Dave Darling, Alphonse Haettenschwiller, Grace Hicks-Grogan, Linda Jeynes, Donna Juskiewicz, Peter Kelleher, Bob Mack, Bob Marks, Klaas Nijhuis, Miles Pendry, Ray Peterson and Sr. Sharon Walsh.

K. Nijhuis called the meeting to order at 9:30 am in Room 208 of City Hall. The minutes were reviewed; B. Mack motioned to accept the minutes; A. Haettenschwiller seconded and the motion carried.

K. Nijhuis reported a few members had met briefly prior to this meeting (M. Auer, L. Christie, P. Kelleher, K. Nijhuis and Sr. S. Walsh) to discuss a plan of action to move the work of this committee forward and involve as many people as possible. Their suggestion was to have a retreat for the Whole CoC membership and other involved or interested people, about 75-100 in all. It would be held on the first Wednesday in March from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm at the Crowne Plaza in Nashua. The focus of the retreat would be the Plan to End Homelessness in the Greater Nashua Area.

At this retreat, after an overview presentation by the leaders, the group would be divided into specific focus groups to discuss specific subjects such as:

- Coordinating Homelessness efforts
- Prevention
- Emergency Shelters
- Transitional Housing
- Permanent Housing
- Supportive Services
- Funding Resources
- Policy Makers

Questions for the specific focus groups need to be developed ahead of time by this committee. Some questions suggested were:

- What will you provide/what will you not provide?
- How much will you provide (service, people)?
- How will you provide/in what way?

They would also be asking the agencies to sign a voluntary Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the next two years, thereby getting everyone to make a commitment to do something now. (Provider MOA's would have sub-listings with more detail.)

At the end, the focus groups would come together again and report their findings to the whole group.

Much discussion ensued around what to focus on using the Wheel of Responsibility as a guide

A. Haettenschwiler suggested using the three purposes from the preliminary draft of the plan as the central for thinking.

B. Mack added that discussion between agencies would help to better coordinate the work of the agencies.

A. Haettenschwiler emphasized that we need to do more to end homelessness.

L. Christie said that collaboration is not the cure for homelessness; we need to be doing more advocacy work.

R. Peterson stated that we must stay positive in our approach using words such as: “This is what we could do if.....!”

E. Brady said that the state/local government has the attitude that they do not need to be working on this since there are so many agencies working on it already. We need to involve the government too.

M. Brown related that we need to educate people about what a MOA really is. Ask the question – does public housing work? Is that what we need? If not in Nashua, is that what is needed in surrounding towns? Or do we just need more housing in general?

K. Nijhuis emphasized that we need to play a role in advocacy/education with politicians. The CoC is the component for policy watching.

P. Kelleher suggested we get all the Welfare Officers in the surrounding towns to participate.

The next meeting will be January 21, 2004, at 8:00 am in room 208 of the Nashua City Hall.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:23 am.