

Committee on Homelessness Meeting March 5, 2003

Present at the meeting were: Klaas Nijhuis, Bob Marks, David Darling, Bob Mack, Maria Brown, Tony Epaphras, Linda Jeynes and David Cull.

The meeting began at 9:50 am. K. Nijhuis discussed the May 2nd Conference on Homelessness. He said that L. Christie and P. Kelleher would be soliciting for speakers. The steps they are planning to cover are:

Step 1. "Open the Front Door"

Step 2. "Open the Back Door" (creating opportunities for chronic homelessness.)

Step 3. "Building the info-structure"

This committee needs to put together a plan to address the "Closing the Front Door" section of the conference. We need to start advocating; spread the work. Be ready to talk/answer questions at the May Conference. We could start by reading the handouts from the Chicago and the National plans.

T. Epaphras suggested that homelessness is local, each community must take charge of their own situation regardless of National and State mandates.

Discussion:

Local towns and Nashua must handle Homelessness regionally.

Can we keep track of people coming from other towns and talk to towns about helping with the homeless coming into Nashua?

The housing situation is at the bottom of the problem.

Is zoning an obstacle in Nashua?

People coming to Nashua include those released from local prisons and hospitals.

We should create a list of things from this committee to tell people at the Conference in May.

Follow up after a helping/referring client is a problem for most agencies.

We need a more holistic approach encompassing things such as substance abuse, education, and mental/physical health.

The homeless need access to help to solve the underlying problem of homelessness as well as to find housing.

We should have something in place for people seeking shelter at all times.

With the rise in the cost of living, people can't afford to pay the higher rents.

There is a need for a resource information binder.

We need to attend zoning meetings for information and to speak up.

Homework: Work on questions/statements for May conference before the next meeting.

Next meeting: Will be on April 2, 2003, immediately after the CoC meeting in Room 208 at Nashua City Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 10:25 am.

Submitted by Linda Jeynes