

MINUTES

September 8 2020, Homelessness Committee, WHWCNC

Item No. 1. Meeting called to order at 6:39 p.m.

Present: Ray Cole, Gina Thornburg, and Aaron Quantz; absent: John Sandy Campbell and Komalpreet Bath.

Members of the public present: Tadeh Kennedy.

Public Comments: Aaron Quantz and Ray Cole spoke briefly about issues with door-to-door Census takers, the involvement of service organizations, the possibility of an undercount, and AG Javier Becerra's restraining order against the Trump administration so that California could place Census counters on the ground.

Item no. 2. Increased Public Involvement and Homelessness Information for Stakeholders. These efforts are ongoing. Tadeh and John Sandy are supposed to work on the social-media component of this, but they had not been in touch between the August and September committee meetings. Tadeh has questions regarding social media in terms of creating content and scheduled posts. Ray, Gina, and Tadeh discussed compiling a glossary of housing-type definitions to post on the NC's social-media platforms. Gina and Ray said, let's focus on local issues, and Gina emphasized only weighing in on what our elected officials have to say about state and federal issues, legislation, policies, etc. Tadeh and Gina agreed to work on this list moving forward.

Item No. 3. Unhoused Persons' Accessibility to the Election Process. Ray read the motion. He added a flier on voter registration for unhoused voters. Gina provided the notes from the homelessness liaisons meeting on voting in the NC system. The committee discussed how unhoused Angelenos can receive and drop off NC ballots; the committee also discussed how unhoused people can register to vote for the NC elections. It can be done via wi-fi using phones and tablets. The committee discussed the challenges for unhoused people registering a physical address for the purpose of the NC elections. Ray stated that unhoused people can use the address of access centers, like LA Family Housing. Gina asked why is every bridge housing site not also an access center. Ray answered that there wasn't enough money. Aaron wondered whether, with all of the money in the homelessness-services sector, the organizations could be streamlined and

work more efficiently to help unhoused people. Ray said that there was going to be a meeting on registering unhoused voters at his place of employment the day after the committee meeting.

Item No. 4. Community Impact Statements. CF 20-1047. Coronavirus strain. Gina mentioned John Sandy's long statement about this council file during general public comment at a full board meeting even though it was still before the Homelessness Committee and hadn't been voted on yet. Ray was concerned about it, too, and is waiting to hear from Vanessa. Gina wants to work with John Sandy on a CIS on this motion.

Item No. 5. General Matters. Aaron regularly receives complaints from Area 1 neighbors about unhoused persons living in the underpasses. People with wheelchairs cannot pass on the sidewalks, so there are ADA violations, in his opinion. Drug and prostitution activities have been observed there, he reported. Aaron brought a couple of cases of water to these unhoused people. Ray said he had brought them sandwiches and water. Ray reported that he had spoken with Senior Lead Officer Sean Dinse at the site. Ray was trying to determine what the needs of these unhoused people were. Aaron remarked that the LA City Council had voted to resume sweeps, in spite of covid-19 restrictions. Gina stated that Councilmember Blumenfield had made a public commitment to find dwelling units for all of the people living in the Winnetka underpass. Ray spoke of the need to house people preemptively, and Aaron opined that permanent supportive housing would be preferable to temporary shelter.

Item No. 6. Community Ending Homelessness Updates.

1. The discussion of the idea introduced by Tadeh at the August meeting continued at the September meeting. He had introduced an idea of providing protected document folders to unhoused people so they could keep their vital records and other documents safe during clean-up operations. Gina and Tadeh had worked on the language of the motion in the intervening time. Tadeh, Gina, and Ray discussed details of the proposed folders, such as size, design, weather-proof qualities, portability, and whether they should be opaque or transparent. Aaron drew upon his own lived experience as an unhoused person and supported the idea of having a safe and protected place to keep needed documents. Tadeh asked how clean-ups work and whether they happen in the presence of the unhoused people. How could the folders be protected while the clean-up activities take place?

2. Ray resumed the ongoing discussion of a lack of an access center in Woodland Hills for unhoused people and wondered whether the West Valley Food Pantry or the Woodland Hills branch of the LA Public Library could serve as a site. Gina mentioned that our committee should write a letter to Councilmember Blumenfield about the need for an access center. Ray said he would work on the letter and send it out to the whole committee.

3. Pallet shelters. Ray stated that the former executive director of his place of employment now heads up homelessness services in Riverside. The committee discussed having a tour of the pallet shelters in Riverside. Ray said he would send out a Doodle Poll to the committee to determine when we could do that. Gina stated that she wanted to be sure that there would be no Brown Act concerns when we tour the shelters.

No. 7. Woodland Hills Homelessness Volunteer Opportunities. Ray would like to do a food drive but hasn't heard back yet from the West Valley Food Pantry; he wants to partner with the Public Safety Committee. He wants to generate social media buzz and a flier, distributed to apartment buildings, where food could be collected in the mailroom or lobby and committee members could come pick it up. Gina would prefer a central location to which people would bring the food items and says that Councilmember Blumenfield would probably support the effort. Ray suggested that a food drive could be done in Warner Center Park. A truck would be needed for receiving the donated food items. We would need additional funding from the full board. Ray suggested having different board members assigned to different apartment buildings to collect food.

A general discussion about outreach to unhoused people during the pandemic: Gina expressed concern that some outreach entities are not engaging in social distancing. Ray opined that people volunteer at their own risk and that people should do their own research. Gina asked whether the NC would have liability, and Ray replied that it would if it were sponsoring the event. Gina said she would not want the committee or NC board to recommend a nonprofit that is not socially distancing while engaging in outreach.

A rough draft calendar of events was discussed as a possibility for the committee.

Ray asked about the food pantry on the Pierce College campus. Gina stated that although the physical pantry is closed, the pantry manager is still helping a caseload of students.

Gina mentioned that she would like the committee, next month, to take up the discussion of the voucher program in Denver again. It is called LIVEDenver.

Item No. 8. Ray made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Gina seconded it. Adjournment was at 8:13 p.m.