



APPROVED

CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

PSAB - Subcommittee on Homelessness DRAFT June Meeting Minutes

In Attendance

Members: Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, Councilor Jeff Foote, Councilor Jim Schlosser, Drew Biemer, Jessica Eskeland (Chair)

Staff: Nicole Petrin

Minute Taker: Jessica Eskeland (Chair)

- **Welcome from the Chair**
- **Introductions**
- **May 10, 2024 meeting minutes were approved.**
- **Emergency response data points update (Deputy Police Chief Moulton)**
 - Chief Moulton was unavailable so we will push this item further out.
- **Presentation by Rosanne Haggerty from Community Solutions**
 - Ms. Haggerty was unavailable so we will push this item further out.
- **Pallet house community presentation by Freeman Toth:**
 - Members have no updates on this front.
- Councilor Kretovic noted that in Laconia, they've identified a piece of land that could potentially be used for such a project, but it has to go through City Council and other budgetary costs need to be considered.
- Freeman Toth wants to get these houses through a grant, and he'd have to be successful in applying for the grant to achieve this project.
- **Theresa "Mama T" Gladstone addressed the Subcommittee.**
 - Mama T is a past volunteer worker within the homeless population and has worked with the Coalition to End Homelessness.
 - She is currently working on creating a new NPO for the sole purpose of creating a tiny house community. "No Barrier" is the working title for the project. The plan is based on a model of a tiny home community in Austin, TX which has been successful. The tiny homes would have one floor with a minimal kitchen facility, and would include a bathroom. It would also include an area for communal living, with an office area, shared kitchen, and community garden.



APPROVED

CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

- This would be a live/work community, so residents would contribute in some sense. There would be an emphasis put on learning transferable skills that can be used in the community, but it's a step before independent living.
- When you talk with CATCH Neighborhood Housing and Concord Housing Authority, sometimes unhoused individuals are put directly into housing and they don't succeed because they don't yet have the skill set they need to be successful in that environment. They fail and then these units need to be repaired, which is costly.
- CATCH Neighborhood Housing is willing to help Mama T through the development process with the city and foundations and manage the water/sewer hookup, etc. but they won't manage it.
- She has an attorney willing to establish the NPO for her and negotiate some land she's identified with.
- They are considering making the project more integrated than just the unhoused community. Mama T met with Sheriff Croft and they may be interested in participating in this with their diversion program.
- It is important that members of this community have guidance as well as 24-hour supervision/staff/site management. Mama T noted that perhaps the overnight staff could get a unit or get a discount to encourage the workforce.
- If Mama T is successful in procuring the land they're looking at it would be a significant acreage so they could integrate it more and make some of it affordable housing in an integrated community.
- Drew Biemer asked about the financing structure.
- Jennifer Kretovic responded that it would be an NPO that could receive grant funding. Some of these tiny houses are eligible for HUD grant funding.
- Drew Biemer asked whether Mama T would buy the land.
- Mama T responded that she has people willing to potentially help her buy it.
- Mama T noted that the property is on the city bus line, but it's also by itself. It's currently a resting agricultural site. It is located on Hutchins Street, just before you go into Penacook.



APPROVED

CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

- Mama T noted that in order to be successful, this project has to be something the majority of the community can get behind, including neighbor consideration and access to transportation/services.
- Jeff Foote asked how many people this would accommodate.
- Mama T responded it would accommodate 27-30 people if possible, which would help with grant eligibility, but if she had to start with serving a smaller number of individuals in order to establish buy-in, she could do that.
- Jennifer Kretovic noted that we'd previously talked about setting aside a few tiny homes for the SOAR Program. The city also has a goal of achieving functional zero for veterans. We could work along with SOAR and the Coalition on this goal.
- Drew Biemer asked whether there is a calculus, or should there be, to ensure this type of housing goes to people truly from Concord or who are already in the system?
- Mama T responded that that would be her plan. She had a meeting with the Director of the Coalition to End Homelessness, and she said we have to be careful about HUD housing because many of their programs require only serving people off of their list, and they'll send you people from anywhere. Mama T's primary goal is to pursue funding from other areas so we can prioritize Concord residents.
- Mama T met with the sheriff and Nicole Petrin and they gave her two names to contact to discuss this project and ultimately present to the County Commissioners. Once she gets the 501(c)(3), the city could help her with grant money.
- Jennifer Kretovic noted that CATCH Neighborhood Housing is one of the key elements here, and it was helpful that they shared their challenges.
- Jess Eskeland asked how the model community in Austin is financed.
- Mama T responded that they get grants and some money from the city but try to keep it as privately funded as possible.
- Drew Biemer noted that he's noticed through his research that sometimes, lots of housing developments/units run by NPOs or the private sector will put up walls to law enforcement coming in, which is understandable to an extent, but it can also lead to the place being less



APPROVED

CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

safe. He asked whether Mama T has thought through the balance that she would strike as far as safety and security goes.

- Mama T responded that that is why she met with Deputy Chief Moulton. When she worked at the Coalition, there was a good relationship with law enforcement and they were great partners. Deputy Chief Moulton gave her great input about using specific wording so you don't worry about going through evictions and to ensure residents understand the required criteria to live there. This clarity makes things much easier for law enforcement.
- Mama T noted she has a call in to Matt Walsh and she's going to meet with him. Once the 501(c)(3) is set up she can start reaching out to people and telling the broader public more about it and soliciting more input.
- Jeff Foote asked whether there would be overnight monitoring.
- Mama T responded that yes, there would be 24/7 monitoring. During the day there would have to be a minimum of 2 staff on-site as well as, perhaps, case managers. At night, there would need to be a minimum of one staffer on-site.
- Jeff Foote noted that that was part of the pallet housing program in Laconia, and staffing for the first year cost was about \$2.7 million for a community of 25-50 people.
- Mama T noted she'd love to review that information.
- Jennifer Kretovic noted that from an employment law perspective in NH, the person who stays overnight and has housing cannot be a resident, otherwise you would have to pay them 24/7.
- Jeff Foote noted that he likes the initiative the county is demonstrating. He further noted that it feels like, as a taxpayer, the burden keeps getting shifted to Concord even though this is an issue as a county and state. It seems like other communities should pitch in. He noted he thinks it would be great for them to be colocated in Boscawen, right near the SOAR Program.
- Jennifer Kretovic noted she feels it makes sense, as this would be another facility serving the county. We need a willing county commission to understand the challenge we have and the model solutions out there that are working.



APPROVED

CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

- Jennifer Kretovic and Jeff Foote both agreed they feel the city would be more interested if it was a county-based project.
- Jeff Foote noted the buses do the loop 4 times a day, and it's free.
- Drew Biemer noted that If the county is saying this is going to be beneficial for the SOAR Program, then it's reasonable for them to help. The other issue you're going to run into is if it's something that benefits the county it's not unreasonable to ask the county to pay more or volunteer to handle the law enforcement component. He noted that Concord PD is short-staffed. What percentage increase of calls would this create? He further noted that if this was located in Boscawen, they have a much smaller police department, which would create a disproportionate strain on Boscawen PD. There's got to be a way to get the county to put more skin in the game. Maybe the county could donate man hours for law enforcement, or cost-share.
- Nicole Petrin noted that the county already has more services they operate like diversion, pre-trial, drug court, mental health court, and county navigators. The list of existing programs they already operate and run is extensive.
- Jennifer Kretovic responded that that's part of Concord's frustration. They seem to have lots of resources they're not using.
- Jim Schlosser noted he thinks the initiative and concept is fantastic, as is bringing in private partnerships. He likes that it's transitional housing and wants to know how the Council and this subcommittee can help.
- He noted the steering committee is working on 5 areas and one thing they're not focusing on is the homelessness justice-involved group, which is part of the consideration of this group. He noted that we're hearing clearly that residents are worried about public safety concerns associated with the unhoused population. He asked whether this subcommittee or PSAB could take on a project to help improve the services and coordination involved for justice-involved individuals? Can we take on the facet relative to justice-involved individuals?
- Jim Schlosser noted that there is a sequential intercept mapping model made by a national justice program. Merrimack County got money to convene 80 stakeholders. It's for mentally ill persons involved



APPROVED

CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

with the justice system. It was facilitated and there was a method from the national organization to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the community. What are the key milestones of a mentally ill person as they move through the justice system? One of their action groups is on housing. The responsibility for oversight devolved to one of the judges of courts, which is charged with implementation. Her job is to deploy this model of work to all 10 NH counties.

- Nicole Petrin shared that part of what came out of that was that Riverbend runs a Merrimack County crisis diversion task force, a monthly meeting with social worker clinicians from prison and jail, Riverbend emergency services team, and the Doorway Program, and they come together to discuss mutual overlapping clients and to determine whether there is a better way to service them. Nicole has looped in the Coalition to participate due to extensive overlap. They've had 3 meetings but it's getting more stamina.
- Nicole Petrin feels the mental health court in Merrimack is not well-utilized. Even folks at the PD didn't know we had one. How can we enhance its utility and referrals?
- Nicole Petrin added that these individuals are unsheltered and after an arrest they're back in Concord the next day, so she assumes it's the jails shuttling them back down here. There's no good catch point.
- At Merrimack County Jail, case management and clinical services require a sentencing. That's a huge population being missed.
- Jeff Foote asked whether we know at this point how many people are homeless in Merrimack County or Concord?
- Jim Schlosser replied that it's approximately 446 individuals.
- Jeff Foote asked what percentage of these people don't want services. Is there a way to take the total number of homeless persons and subtract the ones we know are sheltered, so we can get an idea of how many are unsheltered.
- Jim Schlosser noted that their numbers don't include individuals fleeing domestic violence.
- Jeff Foote asked how many of the 446 individuals would benefit from SIM.
- Jim Schlosser responded that national estimates suggest as many as $\frac{2}{3}$ of homeless individuals have a mental health diagnosis. We think the



APPROVED

CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

majority of homeless persons have mental health or substance abuse issues.

- Jeff Foote noted that not all of them would have some sort of involvement in the court system.
- Jim Schlosser responded that that is a data point we'd have to work our way toward.
- Jeff Foote noted that if all services are in Boscawen with the exception of transitional housing, it would seem they have a good allocation of resources.
- Nicole Petrin responded that a lot of those social services she named are available in both Concord and Boscawen. Concord is their main point.
- Jim Schlosser noted he thinks the limitation of only getting services upon sentencing is due to staffing shortages.
- Drew Biemer noted he wants to know why these services aren't being offered prior to sentencing. Is this consistent across all counties? We should have a conversation about that. We can't say how things should be until we understand why they are the way they are. It may be legislative, may be a budgetary determination, or another good practical reason. Would also like to know how long you can be in jail awaiting a trial. The pre- versus post-conviction issue is an interesting barrier we need to be able to navigate. One reason many diversion programs work better is because defense attorneys are more inclined to agree with things like demonstrating there's no need for their client to be incarcerated.
- Nicole Petrin noted she thinks there's still the ability to set people up for success even if they're not incarcerated for a long time. Nicole sees a lot of a waiting game there.
- **7. Future Agenda Planning - August 9th at noon**
 - Drew Biemer would love to talk to the county about why we don't provide services to individuals awaiting trial.
 - The Subcommittee would like to review sequential mapping. Perhaps Judge Zenkin can talk logistics?
 - Supreme Court case review re: homelessness?
 - Rosanne Haggerty presentation needs to be rescheduled.



APPROVED

CITY OF CONCORD

New Hampshire's Main Street™

- Jeff Foote hears there are 60 agencies working to address this and it would help if someone could report out on those ongoing efforts.
- **Meeting adjourned at 1:14 p.m.**