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Public Safety Board - Subcommittee on Homelessness -

October 11, 2024 (12:00 PM) – City Council Chambers

In Attendance

Members:

Councilor Jennifer Kretovic, Councilor Jeff Foote, Councilor Jim Schlosser, Jessica Eskeland (Chair)

Staff: Nicole Petrin, Deputy Chief Mark Hebert

Guests: Connor Spern, Kait Gallagher – Concord Coalition to End Homelessness, Kailey Hults – Riverbend

Minute Taker: Jennifer Miskovic

Welcome from the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 12:02pm by Chair Jessica Eskeland

Introductions

Introductions were made by attending councilors, members, and guests.

Approval of June 14, 2024 meeting minutes

Motion made by Councilor Schlosser to approve the June 14, 2024 subcommittee meeting minutes. Councilor Kretovic seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Outreach Efforts – Concord Coalition to End Homelessness

Connor Spern – Street Outreach & Data Engagement Specialist from Concord Coalition to End Homelessness presented the outreach efforts being made.

Connor made the subcommittee aware that her grant funded employment will be ending in the next few days. Connor completed her last street outreach today.

Connor was asked what is the road block that the unhoused face in reaching out to resources found at the Friendly Kitchen, and other organizations in the area. She stated that a big issue is transportation. There is no direct access to the Friendly Kitchen and other organizations from Hall St., Manchester St, Storrs St. There is no bus route. Connor also spoke to the fact that safety is a concern in walking from Manchester St. to The Friendly Kitchen being a 3.5 mile walk that includes crossing the highway and most of the unhoused use the train tracks for the most direct route. Buses are not running on Manchester St. and the Triangle park stop is for elderly and medical transportation only.



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The Subcommittee discussed the nuances and plausibility of adding an additional bus route, as well as funding concerns and idea on how to manage this task in a time effective manner as to allow the unhoused to reach the Friendly Kitchen and other resources in the Commercial St. area in an easier and safer manner.

The subcommittee discussed speaking with the Community Action Program to draft a letter stating the need for an additional bus route. The Possible State and Federal funding that may be available for said route. The Possibility of arranging a meeting with Councilor Grady Sexton from the Public Safety Committee and requesting a route report and Gregory Bakos Chair from the Transportation Policy and Advisory Committee, to further the steps for implementation of an additional line to better serve the residents of Concord including the unhoused.

Connor and Nicole explained that they will be making tangible tools so that homeless can access the food pantries and ensure that the correct times are updated.

Connor and Nicole informed the subcommittee that there is an increase in crime along the train tracks due to encampments, specifically the 393 encampment and Storrs St encampment, being dispersed and folks being relegated to a smaller area of space. Concern about an increase risk of fire as the weather gets colder.

The Subcommittee discussed the possibility of serving a meal at The Friendly Kitchen as a subcommittee. It was mentioned that thankfully, The Friendly Kitchen has a full calendar for volunteers and there may be a long wait to volunteer.

With the Street Outreach & Data Engagement specialist position being dissolved, Community Action Program and the Department of Health and Human Services will continue to work together to provide help overcoming barriers and targeting those who are not already involved with other services. The key to reaching those people is being visible and building trust. CAP and DHHS will continue reaching out to the unhoused in an effort to meet the needs of the whole person.

Current Homelessness Update (Deputy Police Chief Moulton)

Deputy Police Chief Moulton was not in attendance to update the Subcommittee with the Police Department's Homelessness update.

Future Agenda Planning

- Invite Councilor Grady Sexton from the Public Safety Committee
- Invite Gregory Bakos from the Transportation Policy and Advisory Committee
- Homelessness Update (Deputy Police Chief Moulton)

Adjournment

Motion made by Jessica Eskeland to adjourn the meeting at 1:00PM. Councilor Kretovic seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:01pm