



Shelter Planning Task Force

April 29, 2015

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Donna Yellen for Mark Swann	Preble Street	Sean Kerwin	Bayside Neighborhood Assn
Nicole Evans	United Way	Mike Tarpinian	Opportunity Alliance
Cullen Ryan	Community Housing of Maine	Dawn Stiles	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept
Bill Higgins	Homeless Voices for Justice	Jim Devine	HVJ and Region 1 Homeless Council
Claude Rwangje	Refugee/asylee communities	Melissa Skahan	Mercy Hospital
Jim Hanley	Chamber of Commerce	Dana Totman	Avesta Housing
Jenny Stasio	Region 1 Homeless Council	Angela Havlin	City of Portland, Oxford Street Shelter
Kim Cook	Off-peninsula	Bob Fowler	Milestone
Dory Waxman	Off-peninsula	Cindy Namer	MaineHousing
Norm Maze	Shalom House	Julie Sullivan	Staff to the Task Force, City of Portland

1. Welcome and introductions; meeting schedule

- Concerns were raised regarding the overflow shelter closure, and whether that issue should be incorporated into the Task Force's work was debated.
- Julie volunteered to bring this request to Councilor Suslovic, the chair of the City Council's Public Safety, Health & Human Services Committee, which authorized the creation of the task force.
 - Another question was subsequently raised regarding whether the Task Force's recommendations will be a communication to Council or something to be adopted. Julie should also bring this to Councilor Suslovic to confirm.
 - Update: Councilor Suslovic confirmed that concerns regarding the shelter overflow closure plan can be shared at the public hearing on this topic at the Public Safety, Health and Human Services Committee meeting on Tuesday, May 12 at 5:30 in Council Chambers. He believes that the Task Force should continue with its original charge.
 - Update: Councilor Suslovic also confirmed that the Task Force's recommendations are not a communication; the Committee will hear the recommendations, deliberate, and make their recommendation to the full Council.
- The group picked first, second and third choices for Task Force meeting dates and the meeting schedule will be the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 9-11 a.m. Nearly all meetings will be at City Hall in room 24 (with one exception on June 10).

2. Charge and proposed scope

- The proposed scope was discussed and the following changes are now incorporated: The Shelter Planning Task Force is charged with recommending a model of emergency shelter services for adults that is feasible within available funding sources, uses resources as efficiently and effectively as possible, and serves in the best interest of *people experiencing homelessness and the city as a whole*.

3. Proposed decision-making principles

- The proposed consensus decision-making approach was discussed and agreed upon with one addition: the fallback approach should the group find consensus unachievable will be to note both majority and minority positions.
- A majority is 51% of 21 (11 people), and a minority dissension to be included in the recommendations will consist of at least 25% of 21 (5 people).
- Individuals may also feel free to submit an appendix to the report should they dissent with the majority.

4. Work plan and time line – no changes requested.

5. Services currently provided at Oxford Street Shelter

- Angela Havlin, OSS Director, provided a comprehensive overview of services and staffing at Oxford Street and the overflow sites.
- In general, clients are 21 or older, though OSS does take clients at 18 if need be
- OSS is a “damp” shelter, serving as overflow when Milestone (“wet” shelter/detox) is full
- Open from 6 pm – 8 am
- Capacity 154, with about 50 spots for medical accommodations (like a cot)
- Preble Street has 75 mats for overflow (until June 30) with no capacity for medical accommodations
- Warming center at GA waiting room – up to 75, chairs only
- Used to have additional warming center at Refugee Services, no longer needed
- Highest number ever -292 clients
- Staffing is about 11 shelter attendants (5 at OSS, 2 each at Preble Street, GA, and to cover lunches/floating/Family Shelter/after hours GA)
- Moving to full GA eligibility screens upon check-in for new clients (then again every 30 days)
- Day shelter 5:30-8pm, 1-8 on weekends/holidays (when Preble Street not open)
- 12:30-4:30 weekdays – housing triage services, housing placement counselors (4 FTE, 2 on leave; plus 4 FTE in Home to Stay program, not part of OSS budget)
- LCSW for crisis support, assistance applying for subsidies related to mental illness, referrals to other resources
- Shalom House case manager there at least weekly
- VA community-based outpatient clinic – weekly

- Family Crisis Services outreach
 - Taxi vouchers (one way, within Portland only) provided for exigent health issues (eg, lice)
 - Bus tickets to other municipalities
6. Cullen Ryan of Community Housing of Maine provided statistics indicating that:
- 33% of shelter users pass through within 1-3 days; 55% within 2 weeks; 80% within 2 months; and only 5% stay for 180 days or more.
 - 2,166 people pass through the shelter annually
 - About 116 people are long-term stayers
 - In 2013, City housing counselors housed 700 people, but the shelter numbers did not drop because focused on those passing through the shelter quickly.
 - In 2014, focused on long-term stayers; 66 of the 116 were housed.
7. Wrap up and next meeting
- Weds 5/13, 9-11 a.m., City Hall, rm 24
 - Overview of Preble Street, Milestone related to emergency shelter services
 - Revenues/expenses for Oxford Street, Preble Street, Milestone
 - What works well – eg, what from current system should we keep doing
 - Best practice models to be evaluated; materials from Task Force to Prevent and End Homelessness to review
 - Tour of shelters
 - Web site: www.portlandmaine.gov/1512/Shelter-Planning-Task-Force
 - User name: taskforce
 - Password: portland15

Julie Sullivan
Acting Chief of Staff
207.756.8363
jas@portlandmaine.gov