



Shelter Planning Task Force

May 27, 2015

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Bob Fowler	Milestone		Norm Maze	Shalom House
Dave Maclean	City of Portland, HHS, Social Services Division		Rob Parritt	MaineHousing
Angela Giordano	City of Portland, HHS, Social Services Division		Jim Devine	Homeless Voices for Justice and Region 1 Homeless Council
Sean Kerwin	Bayside Neighborhood Assn		Claude Rwangje	Immigrant/Refugee/Asylee Communities
Nicole Evans	United Way of Greater Portland		Mark Swann	Preble Street
Bill Higgins	Homeless Voices for Justice		Peter Driscoll	Amistad
Dory Waxman	Off-peninsula		Cindy Namer	MaineHousing
Dawn Stiles	City of Portland, Health & Human Services Dept		Cullen Ryan	Community Housing Options of Maine
Kim Cook	Off-peninsula		Julie Sullivan	Staff to the Task Force, City of Portland

1. Welcome, (re-)introductions
2. **Milestone Foundation** adult emergency shelter programmatic overview
 - Executive Director Bob Fowler described the services provided
 - Licensed as a substance abuse treatment agency; has long-term treatment facility in Old Orchard Beach for 16 men who have had multiple unsuccessful prior treatment attempts
 - Located at 65 India St
 - 16-bed, co-ed, medically managed detox
 - 3-7 day stay
 - Staffed 24 hours by nurses
 - Alcohol, benzos, opiates
 - Do accept MaineCare; folks not turned away for inability to pay
 - 41-bed shelter for men – state's only wet shelter (have to be intoxicated)
 - Over capacity every night
 - Coordinate closely with Oxford Street Shelter
 - Shower, laundry, meals
 - Some cots, rest are mats
 - Open around 5 pm, clients leave around 6 am
 - Front part open 24 hours – police calls, somewhere to put intoxicated male
 - Shelter staff – 2 FT attendants during the day, 3-4 in the evenings, 2 overnight; also serve as back-up for detox unit if there are problems

- Used to be 3 spots for intoxicated women, but eliminated 3-4 years ago when PMI funding gone
 - Florence House does take intoxicated women; Oxford Street has 9 female spots on the 1st floor (where intoxicated women would have to be), but those are also for those with physical disabilities, so intoxicated women would likely end up in chairs
- HOME team – staffed 6 days per week, 12-8 pm, adding Sundays via Amistad.
 - Respond to first responder calls, merchant calls, general patrolling
 - Additional work with long-term stayer initiative
- Financials not provided – Board not comfortable with sharing that information

3. **Long-term stayer approach** as best practice/what is working well

- Community Housing Options of Maine (CHOM) Executive Director Cullen Ryan presented data showing that around 55% of shelter users stay for less than 2 weeks – these people are not the priority population
 - Another 40% of shelter users stay for 15-179 days, and would benefit from rapid re-housing, but are also not our first priority
 - Less than 5% of shelter users are the long-term stayers and require our focus for a housing first approach, though they are far harder to engage, they are the ones that, when housed and supported, lead to a significant decrease in bed-night usage.
 - In 2013, the City housed 660 people, but the need for overflow did not go away, because they were not the right people – we have to focus on the longest-term stayers.
- ADA requirements for reasonable medical accommodations further reduces shelter capacity, as cots take up more space than mats; Oxford Street loses 11-20 spots per night
- In order to house the longest-term stayers, we need enough staff as housing counselors; rental subsidies; and support after folks are housed is critical – need for warm hand-off from housing counselors to support services, who check in as much as is needed at the person’s apartment
 - The Portland Continuum of Care could be coordinating this
 - Lack of MaineCare expansion in Maine hampers the provision of support services
 - City housing counselors are also providing support, which limits the housing counseling they can do
- The Oxford Street Shelter is the primary adult emergency shelter
 - 75 spots at Preble Street as first overflow; used nightly
 - the GA waiting room in the Social Services office at 195 Lancaster serves as a the second overflow, usually a warming center, but could have mats; used intermittently
 - the Refugee Services office within Social Services was the third overflow, which is no longer used
- Need to use Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Data Assessment Tool (VISPDAT) – for those staying 1-2 months, at risk of becoming chronically homeless – also indicates what type of housing and supports best fit their needs

4. **Best practices** – increasing resources to focus on longest-term stayers is clearly a best practice and is currently a focus via ESAC.
 - What else would the task force like to look at?
 - Governance, funding, how shelters operate
 - Burlington, VT; Salt Lake City, Utah; Bangor; Charlotte

5. Wrap up and **next meeting**
 - Weds 6/10, 9-11 a.m., City Hall, **STATE OF MAINE RM**
 - Best practice models – structure, scope, funding, governance
 - Web site: www.portlandmaine.gov/1512/Shelter-Planning-Task-Force
 - User name: taskforce
 - Password: portland15

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