

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Remote Meeting

Thursday, May 19, 2022

8:30 am – 10:00 am

Minutes

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Adam Harr	City of Portland	Norm Maze	Shalom House
Jenny Stasio	Through These Doors	Ben Martineau	HVJ
Terence Miller	Preble Street	Dan Coyne	United Way
Bill Higgins	HA4All	Ben Strick	Spurwink
Johnathan Sarbeck	District Attorney	Anne Marie Brown	United Way
Sarah Michniewicz	BNA	Cullen Ryan	CHOM
Ginny Dill	Office of Behavioral Health	Anne Prinlge	Friends of Deering Oaks Park
Suzanne Randal	HA4All	Harrison Deah	City of Westbrook Social Services
Wendy Harmon	Southern Maine Landlords Association	Mike Guthrie	CoP Family Shelter
Scott Morrison	Community member	Brian Townsend	Amistad
Vickey Rand	CHOM	Aaron Geyer	CoP Social Services
Hanna brier	United Way	Lacey Albers	Maine Med. Center
Marie Gray	Parkside Neighborhood Assoc.	Mathew Jarrell	HUB coordinator
Rachel Ohm	Portland Press Herald		

Meeting Summary

2019 numbers were added to the slides to compare to prepandemic levels. In April one family left the hotels for Canada and 28 of the out of state OSS intakes are likely asylum seekers. The Family Shelter and General Assistance gave an update on their process as the shelter and area hotels have reached capacity, shelter can no longer be guaranteed; families will be allowed initial shelter in a warming center and need to self-direct their housing searches. The City and State have identified a potential congregate shelter location for the 280 singles who will be displaced from hotels. HHS&PS Committee discussed shelter licensing that will be taken up again by the

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full Council on June 6th. South Portland will consider an eviction moratorium in response to increased rents and evictions at the Redbank development. Milestone's HOME Team is going out daily to South Portland hotels. ERA funding is drying up and as of this Friday, the last Covid quarantine shelter will no longer be taking referrals.

- **April Meeting Minutes**

- o Arron moved to approve the minutes, Suzanne second and the minutes were approved with none opposed.

- **April Statistics**

- o One family moved on to Canada.
- o 28 out of state OSS intakes are likely asylum seekers.
- o Slides now show 2019 data to compare to prepandemic data.

- **Community emergency shelter capacity for families and policy changes. Update and discussion – Aaron Geyer**

- o In early May, we saw a continued uptick of the families presenting and reached capacity in our shelters and in the hotels we were using.
 - We could no longer guarantee shelter.
 - Moved to a self-directed housing search model used by other municipalities.
- o We are keeping rooms open for the first night of new arrivals.
 - Allowed to stay the first night.
 - Given self-directed housing search information
- o 45 families for 159 individuals have arrived since the policy change.
 - They went to the overnight initially.
 - After that, we opened a warming center.
 - Last night we had 8 families.
 - 9 families have been placed in GA hotels through the Portland office.
 - Some families were granted GA in other municipalities and some used Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA).
 - ERA is administered by TOA and Prosperity Maine
 - None of the 45 families have had to sleep out.
- o Is there any advocacy update, such as an emergency statewide task force?
 - We continue to ask the State for assistance.
 - They have issued \$22 million for long term solutions.
 - Continue to ask for emergency assistance.
 - We are sheltering people across 3 counties.
 - Advocating for a better system to assist asylum seekers to be more efficient and better support success.
- o We are seeing people arrive who were bussed to DC from states like Texas.
- o What are other communities doing to help?
 - We cannot speak to their advocacy.
 - GPCOG is advocating for a regional approach.

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- **Imminent hotel closures update and discussion – Aaron Geyer**
 - Identified a congregant space.
 - Working closely with the owners and did walkthrough to outfit the space to make it appropriate for shelter. Followed up with an Architect, plumber and electrician.
 - Potentially, 295 people will leave hotels on May 31st.
 - Working closely with Greg Payne who helped identify a space with us and worked with hotel owners.
 - May 31st end date may have some flexibility.
 - **Shelter Licensing update and discussion**
 - May 10 HHS&PS meeting considered the shelter licensing provision as amended. \ul> - Decided to take public comment. 7 were opposed with 3 in support.
 - Councilor Trevorrow descirtbe4d a proposal of convening a group to look at best practices made up of people with lived experience, and providers.
 - HHS&PS did not take a vote as procedurally, it was at the full city council level.
 - Fiscal note of \$93,000
 - More opportunity to offer public comment at the June Meeting of the City Council.
- **Cumberland County Service Hub update – Dan Coyne**
 - Mathew Jarrell, mjerrell@UWSM.org, is the new HUB Coordinator
 - Went to the built for zero initiative learning session.
 - Portland is one of the communities working towards functional zero.
 - Putting together a comprehensive by name list.
 - Portland has local infrastructure doing this for long term stayers.
 - In the information gathering stage.
 - He is meeting with groups, please reach out to him if you haven't talked to him yet.
 - Are we still ramping up with the service hubs; how would they be able to assist us with the State or regional assistance?
 - Our HUB is the full Cumberland County.
 - We will have a focus on data that will help reach functional zero.
- **Federal, State, and Local Legislation update -Cullen Ryan, & others**
 - **Federal**
 - FEMA hotels funding stops July 1, 2022.
 - ARPA funds did not help create housing because they don't work well with low income housing credits.
 - Senator Collins cosponsored bill to fix that; Senator King signed on too.
 - Budget reconciliation bill to pick up some of the failed build back better aspects that would support housing.
 - FY23 Budget
 - President's budget is good but depends on congress approving.
 - Increase HUD's budget by Z\$6.4 billion.

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- Dear colleague letter signed on by our delegation to focus in section 8.
- Presidential 5-year plan to address the housing shortage
 - Incentivizes transportation and zoning changes
 - Puts significant resources in the housing issue.
- Coordinating Substance Use and Homelessness Care Act
- Eviction Crisis Act
- o State
 - Legislature adjourned
 - LD1985 included pay for direct support professionals.
 - Funding for homeless youth program
 - \$22 million towards housing relief.
 - Housing opportunities program to develop additional housing units.
 - HHS money to pay for substance use disorder treatment and health homes, targeted case management.
 - LD1871 continues for 2 more years.
 - LD1968 became law without the governor's signature; it supports defendants with mental illness and intellectual disabilities.
 - A lot of bills did not get funding.
 - LD 1860 didn't make it
 - LD1915 didn't make it.
 - LD 2003 signed into law; it allows an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on any single family home throughout the state.
 - Up to quadplexes in growth areas.
 - This opens the door to multifamily housing in Portland.
 - 1673 became law but several homelessness bills died.
 - Targeted case management made it in the supplemental budget.
 - LS910 will help tribal communities with General Assistance.
- o Maine CoC
 - Hotels closing and ERA drying up.
 - Need for day space across the space for warming and cooling centers.
 - PIT released
 - Homeless doubled across the state.
 - A lot was in sheltered homelessness in hotels.
 - Pit counted people in hotels which was never in the PIT before.
 - o GA doesn't enter people into HMIS
 - Unsheltered stayed flat.
- **Other Items, Updates, and Announcements**
 - o South Portland Eviction Moratorium Request
 - Cullen spoke to Victoria Morales.
 - Will change language to specify the eviction moratorium will be for people facing rent increases.
 - o Not for people not paying.

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- o For people unable to pay with section 8 due to rent increases.
 - Letter has not been sent yet.
- There may be a plan in South Portland to hold a workshop as early as June.
- Organizations who wish to join should contact Victoria Morales.
- This is a company from California bought the building as they saw an opportunity to increase rents and flip it as a money making opportunity.
 - The development was intended to be affordable housing and it is a worrisome trend that would displace many section 8 voucher holders.
 - We should do something to prevent this sort of thing occurring.
 - They are saying they are raising rents but if people sign new leases now, they are offered slightly cheaper rents.
- Has Victoria Morales sought legal advice?
 - She is an attorney.
- Cheryl Harkins of HVJ is one of the families impacted by this.
- National news covered a similar situation to Redbank; zoning changes were made so companies could not buy affordable housing units to flip.
- Organizations are able to sign on right now and ESAC will have an opportunity to weigh in as the situation unfolds.
 - 80% of members present (if there is a quorum) would have to pass a letter of support.
 - 16 organizational members can vote.
- o Milestone's HOME Team is going out daily to support those affected.
 - Concern of what will happen at the end of the month when singles leave hotels.
 - Please reach out to District attorney Sahrbeck.
- o Reported that a number of clients were turned away from OSS because the shelter was full?
 - OSS had around 115 people last night; please reach out to us to follow up on specific clients reporting this.
 - Our numbers have gone up the past few nights, but we haven't been full.
- o As of this Friday, the last Covid quarantine shelter will no longer be taking referrals.
- o HVJ Summer Solstice is the Friday, 17 of June from 5-8pm at Tommy's Park.