

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

One City Center

Thursday, May 16, 2019

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Minutes

Attendees:

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Adam Harr	City of Portland	Aaron Geyer	City of Portland
George Rheault	Bayside Resident	Sara Ewing-Merril	GP Family Promise
Amy Geren	Portland Downtown	Jeff Tardif	City of Portland Family Shelter
Jim Divine	HVJ	Christina Cook	TOA PATH
Cullen Ryan	CHOM	Andrew Bove	Preble Street
Jacques Ngaliema	Greater Portland Health	Henry Tarlow	City of Portland
Amanda Methot	City of Portland	Vickey Rand	CHOM
Jenny Stasio	Through These Doors	Brian Townsend	Amistad
William Higgins	Homeless Advocacy for All		

Introductions

- Approval of Minutes
 - o Bill moved to accept, Vickey seconded.
 - o Motion to approve the minutes passed without discussion.
- Announcements
 - o Finance committee voted:
 - \$50,000 in the PCSF bringing it up to \$200,000;
 - \$45,000 to warming center overflow.

HVJ

- Monday 5/20 and Portland inclusionary commission will have a rally at 4:30 then giving public comment to the City Council.

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- Annual summer solstice vigil June 21st.
 - Location TBD: Tommy's park, monument square, or the steps of City Hall.
- Rally for affordable housing around the 30th.

April Statistics

- <https://www.portlandmaine.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/986>

Warming Center

- 5 families for 18 individuals last night 5/15.
- Black out dates but with numbers below 30 means the family shelter can use its own space without using the Preble Street soup kitchen.
- 2 families from eagle pass Texas.
 - More from Laredo and El Paso.
 - The families are paroled.
- 6 families sent from El Paso were not paroled and are ineligible for PCSF/GA.
- 7 families housed in 41 Chestnut.
 - Another 8 Unites coming in mid to late summer.
 - Privately owned; working with the landlord after new property management (Brick Light) took over and rehabbed the building.
- Finance Committee: The warming Center cap is only for individual adults.
 - Does not affect FS overflow at the SA.
 - Currently funded in the budget.
 - All overflows are staffed by the City (Not the SA)
- Some clients in the shelter have I-94s expiring soon but they are in the recess of applying for asylum.
 - Number is tracked
 - Possibly 6 to 10.
- 1 family did not get their rent paid this month and may end up a return.
- It is possible that there could be empty spaces in the shelter and families in the warming center due to a lack of eligibility
 - Not there yet and may never get to that point.
- Parolees must wear ankle bracelets indefinitely until court dates unless there is a doctor's note.
- Detention centers do not act consistently making situations unpredictable.
- Press Herald reported a Pastor in Texas corresponding with an official in Portland.
 - Unknown who
 - Rumors on waves of travelers comes from the families in warming center and they are fairly accurate.
 - Shelters and detention centers are communicating with the family shelter
 - Texas organizations thought they were sending folks to a resettlement center.
 - They realized a year ago that the family shelter is a shelter, not a welcome center.
- Do families who have arrived communicate with those still traveling or are at the border?
 - What is available in Portland.

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- o Who is able to divert? (Logistically or politically)
- 1- and 2-bedroom apartments are not available
 - o Mostly small families.
 - o 3 bedrooms need a family of 5.
 - o 160 people are violating air bnb regulations and could potentially become rental units.

LTS

- 230 placements (beginning of the month was 234)
 - o 93.8% placed
- Minutes captured 244 last month (possible typo).
- The number tracked is who is housed.
- Low placements in April.
- Access to rental subsidies and folks are looking for housing.

Legislative Update

<https://portlandme.civicclerk.com/Web/GenFile.aspx?ad=2016>

- Federal
 - o Trying to raise the caps.
 - Receipts are low for housing program; short by 3.5 to 4 Billion dollars
 - Same amount needed for rental subsidies
 - About 8 billion dollars is needed to get even with 2019 levels.
 - o HUD Proposed rule amending housing and community development act to change eligibility to immigrants.
 - o 25,000 household to have at least one ineligible member.
 - o 60 comment period closes on July 9th.
 - Sent to listserv
 - Would ESAC like to comment?
 - Brian made a motion to support, Jeff seconded,
 - Motion passed without discussion.
 - o Unclear how many are in affected in Maine.
 - Majority in NY, LA and Texas.
 - o 15% increase to runaway and homeless youth.
 - o Policy proposal to change the measure of inflation when calculating poverty.
 - Changing poverty line to limit eligibility.
- State
 - o Any bills do undo LePage era tax cuts?
 - Yes, 1317.
 - Could ESAC support it?
 - o CHOM and the City have testified in support of a variety of bills.
 - o Rulemaking to reinterpret which asylum seekers are eligible for GA.
 - o Bill to update GA reimbursement rate.
 - o 1523 recovery residence to come into compliance and a rental subsidy.
 - Voted ought to pass.

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- o 775 to change section 17
 - Rule changes instead.
- o 613 stakeholder group for BRAP voted ought to pass
 - How would stakeholders be found/chosen?
 - Concern that CAA (Shalom House) would help
- o BRAP: separate bill suggesting a 30% income versus 50% income but that had passed before but it was unfunded.
 - Would need a fiscal note every year.
 - One legislature can't bundle the appropriations of future legislatures.
 - MaineHousing is having a tough time with section 8 due to lack of housing
 - Could these be backfilled with BRAP? (BRAP supposed to be temporary but effectively permanent because folks cannot access section 8).
- o 195 Youth reunited with families and the families would not lose coverage passed and moving towards signature.
- o Bill heard last night Senator Kathy Breen study commission to fix the broken mental health system
 - Only testimony in favor from jails, prisons, and law enforcement.
 - Likely favorable.
- o End of policy update lists bills voted ought not to pass.
- o HVJ on May 6th on LD 1294 pilot program on harassment due to housing status or lack of employment (homeless bill of rights)
 - Testified in support.
 - Work session scheduled on May 23rd at 1:00 PM.
- o MEJP1317 amendment to expand who is eligible to cover the gap if the rule change doesn't pass.

Homeless Services Center

- Preble Street opposes the Riverside location and asked the organizations in attendance their opinions on the proposed locations:
- HVJ via the Don't Hide Us Include us campaign opposes the riverside location.
- Council Workshop on Monday and the council will take it up in early June.
- Amistad weighed in at every step.
 - o Barron center is the least imperfect
 - o Officially endorsed County Way.
 - Most of the literally homeless individuals spoken to did not mind the proximity to the jail.
 - It was mostly people advocating on behalf of the literally homeless.
 - o Riverside is too far away.
 - o Tone and type of opposition is tough because the City has limited energy and must be mindful of the possibility of the City deciding the status quo.
- George Rheault is unhappy with the process.
 - o Neighborhoods have said they would not accept a 150+ bed shelter but would accept a 40-bed shelter.
 - o Could agencies create smaller shelters in those neighborhoods?

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- Inefficiencies of a scattered site model is more than financial
 - Programs are not big or well resourced
 - Strain would severely hinder delivery of services.
 - Very different way of conceptually looking at 150 beds at the current model.
- Not looking to warehouse people but to move to housing quickly.
- Are housing first or temporary housing projects from community partners coming forward soon?
 - No update on the TOA project on the Barron Center campus?
- We already have a lot of scattered sites and the need is for a new large shelter.
- The Barron center seemed to be the best of the options.
- An internally facing center is important; services on site will allow people to get their needs met.
- Hope the conversation is not limited to 150 beds as the current need is over 200 so the conversation should be about a shelter that is adequate and flexible to scale down.
 - Focus should be getting people housed (we are good at this).
 - Building housing takes years so it will take a long time to get down to 150.
- Current situation is outward facing, with people needing to move across a neighborhood.
- TOA doesn't officially have a stance, but from Christina's personal perspective and based her experience as a PATH provider:
 - OSS can be challenging for folks with a trauma history.
 - Smaller spaces can feel safer
 - A greater staff to client ratio increases the sense of security. (Than is at a large shelter)
- List of City-owned properties may get an update, as some staff are preparing for the possibility that neither location is accepted.

Next Meeting June 20th at 9:00 AM