



Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee Minutes

Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 5:30pm, Council Chambers City Hall

Committee Attendance:

Belinda Ray, Chair (District 1), Brian Batson (District 3), Pious Ali (At Large)

Councilors in Attendance: Mayor, Ethan Strimling; Spencer Thibodeau (District 2), Justin Costa (District 4), Kimberly Cook (District 5), Jill Duson (At Large), Nicholas Mavodones (At Large)

City Staff: City Manager, Jon Jennings; Assistant City Manager, Michael Sauschuck; Jeff Levine, Director of Planning and Urban Development; Christian Roadman, Planner; David Maclean, Social Services Administrator; Meaghan Void, Assistant Director of Operations and Acting Capacity Director of Oxford Street Shelter; Sara Fleurant; Assistant Director of Housing Services; Robert Parritt, Consultant; Executive Assistant, Adam Harr;

Community Partner Speakers: The Opportunity Alliance Chief Program Officer, Joe Everett, Boulos Realtor, Nate Stevens; Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) Executive Director, Cullen Ryan; Avesta Vice President of Residential Services Douglas Gardner; Avesta President and CEO Dana Totman

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Announcements

Chair Ray announced that City staff will be introduced as they present throughout the meeting.

City Manager Jon Jennings announced that Councilors Costa and Mavodones are in meeting in the building and will join later in the evening.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Approval of Minutes

Chair Ray entertained a motion; Councilor Ali moved to approve the October 23, 2018 minutes; Councilor Batson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Homeless Services Center

City manager Jon Jennings introduced the history of the research and work City staff and the Committee has completed to on the model of future homeless services:

- Emphasis on collaboration with community partners and service providers.
- The model looked at a single 200 bed shelter where providers could deliver services.



Councilors have been reevaluating the role of a City emergency shelter that may be influenced by the clarification of Maine Housing (MSHA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rules and regulations.

Future of Homeless Services in Portland

Assistant City Manager Michael Sauschuck thanked the City staff and community partners that are collaborating on the plan for service delivery in the city. The presentation provided context; statistics, information on different shelter models as well as information on possible locations; this information did not weigh for or against.

- In 2017-2018, there were 1,821 unduplicated shelter guests who stayed at the Oxford Street Shelter (OSS)
 - Average of 200 guests per night
- Executive Director of Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) Cullen Ryan explained shelter usage and how the stats informed the Long-Term Stayer Initiative (LTS)
 - OSS numbers peaked in 2013
 - 2,200 unduplicated guests
 - 1/3 people in shelter stay 1-3 days.
 - 55% are in shelter for 2 weeks or less
 - 80% in shelter for 2 months or less
 - 5% Long Term Stayers have move 180 bed nights in a year; 195 have been housed after providers collaboratively assisted this group.
 - Focusing resources on those population frees up resources and space in the shelter; allowing most people to resolve their homelessness faster.
 - A MSHA program policy change required an assessment for every person when they enter, A housing stability Plan and Vulnerability Assessment:
 - This wastes time as most people will self-resolve within three days to two weeks
 - People who do not assessments will supplant resources from those who need them most while at the same time increasing the amount of time it may take resolve their homelessness.
 - Multiple sites that coordinate services will be limited in that ability because providers have a limited number of staff to spread across locations.
 - People who would benefits from substance use services are unlikely to seek them out.
- Shelter Model Concepts
 - Smaller shelters throughout the city.
 - Not planning on a 200-bed emergency shelter, but a 200-bed services hub that helps people focus on housing while also receiving services that would increase the likelihood of remaining successful when housed.



- The model shall reduce the population of those who need services due to on site resources increasing guests' ability help themselves.
- Model: Scattered sites would be able to accommodate limited overflows
 - Logistically and financially can be difficult
 - Client choice would be problematic and gut down the ability to guide clients to the best resource when personal preference may not match with the guidance.
 - Some costs would not increase across site
- Model: Combination:
 - Hybrids when Long term housing can be a goal
 - Dana Tottman, CEO of Avesta Housing, delivered some pros and cons
- Single Site model
 - Greater quantity and quality on site services

Avesta Houses about 2700 families within 80 developments through southern Maine.

- Two assisted Living situations.
- 75 State Street has 67 assisted living and 85 independent living beds
 - Assisted with MaineCare funding
- Dana parterre with Iris to help people with visual impairments secure housing without judgment.
- Other partnerships include mental health with partner Maine Behavioral Healthcare.
- A model for the senior population would have an assisted living that maintains individual agency.
- There is potential that new developments may work under MaineCare expansion,
 - Avesta analyzed characteristics of seniors needing housing
 - These ideas have potential.
- Joe Everett Chief Program Officer of The Opportunity Alliance.
 - The bridge program started in 1987 and is similar to what has been proposed assisting individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders to successful housing by wrapping services in residential treatment bed.
 - The bridge currently has 12 beds, serving approximately 13 to 15 individuals in a year.
- Assistant City Manager Sauschuck explained personnel is a large defining factor of the cost difference between models, as well as food which is currently contracted out.
- Councilor Cook Clarified that the facilities represented in the slide showing the costs of the current facility vs. one new homeless services center facility vs. three smaller facilities were not the Avesta nor TOA programs described, but demonstrates the financial difference between the City running homeless services programs in one and in multiple locations.
- Revaluations of Homeless Services Policy
 - City Staff will assess different sizes and factors at the will of the council.
- Jeff Levine, Planning:



- o Updated analysis included original 7 sites, sites on a map of potential housing development sites on City-owned property and some others; 3 made remained that may be available and merit further consideration:
 - Baron Center
 - District Road
 - County Way (State owned but is big enough and has no active uses)
- o Housing Committee Search
 - Color coded map of 650 City-owned parcels of land
 - Some parcels are grouped to one piece of land (6-7 parcels group to one piece)
- o Parcels grouped between having over 10,000 or 20,000 sq. feet of land.
 - 10,000 sq. feet of land for smaller shelters of 30-40 beds
 - 20,000 sq. feet would for a larger shelter of 150-200 beds
- o Prohibited uses cut the list to 30.
 - Prohibited use is flexible term used for when a location's existing use was compatible, including deed restrictions, not a legal term or a zoning regulation.
- Nate Stevens, broker from the Boulos Co.
 - o Looked at private sector land not owned by the City:
 - Existing buildings
 - Approximately 9,000 to 10,000 sq. feet.
 - o Portland has a very tight market and limited the list
 - Only 15 options were found.
 - Many were not interested in selling.
 - Properties range in size from 11.00 sq. ft. 50,000 Sq. ft.
- Master Map of possible sites.
 - o Cruise Ship added to list;
 - o Mercy hospital was added to the list.
 - o Thoughts on how
 - Zoning was not considered
- Any level of analysis can be revisited to the will of the committee.

Committee Questions

Model must be decided in order to move on and be able to focus on site selection. Chair Ray said that with the full council in attendance, this was an opportune time to get guidance from the full council so the committee could understand what the full council is inclined to support.

- Councilor Cook asked that Budget be part of the Model consideration.
- Mayor Strimling asked for clarification if the Chair is seeking a decision made on model tonight or in the following meetings.
 - o The focus should be on choosing a model, not questions which sites versus another as those decisions cannot happen until a model is selected.



- Councilor Mavodones asked if the city can discriminate or put restrictions on who can be served in the shelter.
 - City Manager Jennings explained that the City just received guidance from the State and the Federal Government that contrary to established understanding (that the City could not impose residency requirements,) the City can restrict who can and cannot access the shelter.
 - Councilor Mavodones requested a memo from Corporation Council
- Councilor Batson requested that the meeting shift to the Memo on services models.
 - Councilor Batson asked how overflow was considered in the scattered site models.
 - Centralized intake at one location then assign clients to appropriate site.
 - Intakes: Considering a scattered site model and the services and structure needed, do the budgets reflect all costs?
 - No, everything is except the cost of services from outside providers.
 - Some cost savings would exist as one facility would have a kitchen with other sites capable of warming food.
 - How would specialty beds in addition to one or two smaller shelters.
 - Would specialty beds be separate rooms?
 - No, someone would have an intake and then be assigned a specialty bed based on their unique circumstances.
- Assistant City Manager Sauschuck explained that space would be leveraged to maximize location's ability to serve the needs of the target population.
 - Councilor Dusen asked about the combination of low barrier and specialty beds as examples of A, B, C, or D.
- Does the City have the ability to buy property?
 - Yes but the City is not advocating to run an emergency Shelter and two specialized shelters; The City would run an emergency shelter and then help community partners open two specialty shelters.
 - Is there anything precluding the committee/City from giving land.
- Councilor Batson asked about stratifying individuals with mental health and/or substance use disorders by gender.
 - The information is self-reported so would not be comprehensive.
- Councilor Batson highlighted the specialty shelters in the context of hospitals that discharge to emergency shelters; some individuals need extra care.
 - Councilor Batson asked what assistance is given at a PNMI.
- Councilor Batson asked Cullen Ryan about people with severe behavioral health issue.
 - When people present,
- Councilor Batson spoke with Acting Director of Preble Street Donna Yellen, about opening a specialty low barrier women's shelter.



- o Assistant City Manager Sauschuck explained that the City did not initially reach out to Peble Street due to the Resource Center recent curtailment of services but is completely open to such a project joining Portland's emergency shelter system
- Councilor Ali asked Avesta about housing that low- income, working and middle class.
- Councilor Ali Asked for Kenneth Capron to explain his proposal to use a decommissioned cruise ship for homeless services center
 - o 8 Acres of the former boat would be subdivided into sub population neighborhoods.
 - o There would be mixed use shops
 - o Neighborhood segregation would be enforced by program managers.
- Councilor Cook asked Councilor Batson if in his conversation with Preble Street that already has a women's shelter, Florence House, why have they not already expanded?
 - o Councilor Batson cannot speak to that based on his conversation.
 - o Councilor Thibodeaux clarified that there is now plan to expand Florence house.
- Mayor Strimling would like that were a residency requirement be considered that, yay or nay, it would be in a parallel or distinct process from this item.
- Mayor Strimling compared the food budgets of existing small shelters and those budgeting the models presented.
 - o We want to compare like with like in budget analysis where different programmatic elements such as hours or shelter and housing-first hybrids, would require deep dives.
- Mayor Strimling supports the collaboration.
- Councilor Dusen is cautious of curating services for highly specified target populations and that resources can get disproportionately allocated away from the majority of those affected by homelessness: men.
 - o Men are the most populous group experiencing homelessness;
 - o Most vilified
 - o Least sympathized.
- Councilor Mavodones asked about how much RFP or contractual details have been worked through.
 - o Not at this time but there is buy-in from partners such as Greater Portland Health.
- Councilor Mavodones wants homeless services to be revaluated and likes a smaller single shelter.
 - o Not everything should be driven by budget;
 - Must still be mindful of taxpayers
 - o Like 150 beds.
 - o Is considering the concern that someone could get lost a system of many shelters.



- Councilor Batson asked about the difference in budget costs between 5 and 3 sites and why is it so small?
 - Assistant City Manager Sauschuck suspects the personnel line and deferred to Rob Parritt.
 - Each iteration of the budget incorporated knowledge learned through this process.
 - The 5-site projection never included food until recently, as they had not gotten that far in the process before.
- Councilor Batson asked about why on the site analysis one criterion is “etc.”
 - With this map:
 - Looked at different uses;
 - Then observed on a map, there was some physical element that would make it unfeasible or cost prohibitive (in a very wet area or on a cliff for example.)
 - While not by zone, how many are in residential zones or purely residential zones.
 - It may be more helpful to create that list after the committee decides on the model so they can look at locations appropriate for the facility/ies.
 - Regarding the smaller shelter zoning that the 2017 HHS & PS committee approved, it went to the Planning Board, but the Planning Board did not want to make a recommendation until they knew how the number of facilities in a particular area might be limited by licensing. This item (Smaller Shelter Zoning) was listed as a possible focus for the 2018 HHS & PS committee at the beginning of the year, but the 2018 committee did not choose it as a priority in its 2018 workplan.
- Councilor Cook is excited to see community members looking to support different populations.
 - Wants to see a service funded by income streams other than property taxes
 - Portland is 5% of the state’s population but has 50% of the number of people who stay in a shelter on any given night: 500/1000 people.
 - OSS spent less than \$50,000 a year pre (YEAR)
 - Does not want to remain a statewide service as the State has pulled funding and may not be the best approach for clients who need to leave their own communities for shelter and services.
 - Cannot support the City operating more than one adult shelter
 - The City has a scattered site model.
 - Supports a parallel track for specialized shelters and services eligibility
 - Would support a singular City-run shelter of 100 to 120 beds to replace OSS.
- Councilor Thibodeau yielded his time to Councilor Costa.
- Councilor Costa asked how Medicaid Expansion will affect the process



- o It is unknown as certain eligibility requirements for housing funding have not changed;
 - o Encouraged by partner opportunities and;
 - o The possibility of new funding opportunities.
- Chair Ray likes the partner models
 - o Acute care with housing first.
 - o Chair Ray asked how people would be referred to the TOA program as the target population are less likely to seek a treatment bed.
 - The Bridge program previously used the shelter as a referral source and the proposed project
- Chair Ray previously understood the Council decided to pursue a single site model for cost savings purposes
 - o Now Chair Ray supports the single site due to the majority opinion among area providers that a single site will provide superior service to community members experiencing homelessness.
 - o Chair Ray read excerpts of emails from the following service providers, all of whom stated a single central facility would provide superior services: Milestone Recovery, Shalom House, Through These Doors, Amistad, Greater Portland Health.
 - o Chair Ray does not want to spend more to provide less.
 - o Chair Ray does not want to have to sex segregated facilities as
 - Domestic partners choose not enter as it would require separating from their partners and support systems.
 - It erases non-binary and trans people who may choose not to enter shelter
 - o We don't need to look from away for experts, The LTS Initiative, the Oxford Street Shelter and the community partners have been recognized nationally for their work.
 - o The scattered sight "small" shelters NYC is building have 200 beds.
- Councilor Duseon is single site
- Councilor Cook is Single site 100 - 120
- Councilor Ali is pro partnerships with a city run single site. 150 feels high but may get there.
- Mayor Strimling is scattered site.
- Councilor Costa abstained from straw poll.
- Councilor Batson likes partnerships and is not sure about what the right number is looking at the fiscal impacts and possible boons. Is afraid of the impact on the neighborhood.
 - o Wants to see another similarly sized city with 175-200 beds.
 - o Doesn't want to have residential zones with shelters with more than 20 beds
 - o Doesn't support single site



- Councilor Cook asked for a memo focusing on funding sources in Maine and the types of shelters that exist, how many and who they serve.
 - A gap analysis
 - The memo is on its way shortly.
- Councilor Batson wants the committee to wait on voting until further discussion and until Preble Street has a more defined idea of the kind of partnerships.
 - Councilor Ali asked if Councilor Batson wants to invite Preble Street.
- Councilor Thibodeaux wants to make clear what the guest councilors' roles were
 - How many single adult shelters should the city-run.
 - Majority opinion is one.
 - Chair Ray does not want to base the City's plan based on Preble Street as they operate Florence House, Logan Place, and Huston Commons at a deficit which they have to privately fundraise to fill each year. Also, the idea that Preble Street would like to open a women's shelter is not a new conversation. It has been suggested since at least 2015, but there has been no action to date to make it happen.
- Councilor Mavodones appreciates the straw poll and process
- Councilor Ali thanked the guest councilors and would like to respect the committee process
 - Continue public private partnerships with the two organizations here tonight and
- Councilor Cook is comfortable making an agenda item for full council guidance

The guidance is that the City will operate one central intake homeless services center with the two proposed partnerships, continuing to grow

- Mayor Strimling: There should be a public comment if a decision was made
- Councilor Duson: The committee asked for model information and then asked for council opinion.
- The idea the council will approve is the single central site.
- Councilor Batson thinks it feels like a vote without process.
- Chair Ray reminded that the committee has had 18 months of public comment and voted on a single shelter
 - it was not until The Barron Center campus site was proposed that the question of model was raised again.
- Councilor Ali wants to respect process
 - City Staff have their direction
- Councilor Duson understands Councilor Batson wants to explore community partner projects with Preble street at the table.
- Councilor Ali- one step back for 5 steps forward
- Chair Ray doesn't not see the logic in moving backwards with a proposal
- Councilor Batson



- o Further information from potential partners.
 - o Locations can be talked about but the model is imperative.
 - o See all options
- Councilor Thibodaux: alternative proposals can be introduced at any time.
- Councilor Cook is happy to make a resolution on the model preference (single site) of the majority of councilors in the straw poll of the full council
- Mayor Strimling would like it to be agenda if it goes to the full council
 - o It can be on the agenda
 - o It does not require public comment
- Councilor Batson asked for information on multiple sites up to three
- Councilor Duson does not want to supplant the committee process
- Chair Ray wants the resolution to memorialize the guidance
- Councilor Duson will second
- Councilor Ali will support a resolution to memorialize the guidance as the guidance was recorded and is archived.

Next Steps

Councilor Cook to make a resolution at full City Council meeting.

Next Meeting on November 27:

- Shelter Model.
- Restriction Memo from Corporation Counsel
- Public Comment
- Committee Vote

The Committee adjourned at approximately 9:47 PM.