

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Remote Meeting

Thursday, October 15, 2020

9:00 am – 10:30 am

Minutes

Name	Organization
Adam Harr	City of Portland
Cullen Ryan	CHOM
Amanda Methot	City of Portland
Aaron Geyer	City of Portland
Jim Devine	HVJ
Oliver Bradeen	Milestone Recovery
Bill Higgins	Ha4aLL
Jeff Tardif	City of Portland
Donna Yellen	Preble Street
Anna Brewer	Preble Street
Anne Pringle	Friends of Deering Oaks
Tome Natalie	Milestone Recovery
Katie Seelen	United Way

Name	Organization
Norm Maze	Shalom House
Ginny Dill	Shalom House
Vickey Rand	CHOM
Rota Knott	
George Rheault	
Brian Townsend	Amistad
Rob Liscord	MEJP
Henry Tarlow	City of Portland
Mason Norton	
Jonathan Sahrbeck	District Attorney
Joann Bautista	
Meredith Pesce	Amistad
Amy Geren	Portland Downtown

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- **Introductions**
 - Brian moved to approve the meeting minutes from September, Amy seconded and the minutes were approved unanimously.
- **Meeting Norms**
 - Meeting with the executive committee worked out timing on the agenda as well as space to bring up concerns not on the agenda for folks coming to the meeting.
- **Concerns not on the Agenda**
 - George wanted to note what isn't on the agenda and that he thinks it should be; that Preble Street's planning board process starts soon. Given the group's history of letters that deter or support, should it is important that this committee weighs in. Amistad and CHOM gave strong feedback on the riverside shelter and he thinks that would be true to a 40-bed shelter.
 - But it in local legislation discussion but the floor is open for the next ten minutes to discuss.
 - Donna responded and said it would be wonderful for ESAC to take a position on this. Many executive directors have signed onto a statement supporting the unsheltered who are the target audience of this shelter.
 - Bill asked about the handwashing and showers.
 - Discussed at weekly 9:00 AM calls. Learning collaborative and milestone have allowed the use of showers on a limited basis as well as handwashing.
 - Cold weather meeting among providers is tomorrow.
 - Opening the castle in Deering Oaks for bathrooms.
- **Rapid Re-Housing Program Update**
 - Brian announced there is a more official operations, Amistad and Preble Street are contracted with MaineHousing to each serve 40 individuals. The teams are aware of what each are doing and coordinating who they are working with. The City of Portland and Amistad have one contract and have hired two housing specialists and an administrator; still looking to hire one more housing specialist.
 - MaineHousing will be providing trainings on engaging the populations with specific housing vouchers available in the program.
 - Donna Said the first person in the program just found housing and was the first utilizer of the quarantine shelter and used both the Sullivan and Oxford street shelter. Four more are lined up and ready for apartments.
 - George asked about what the two contracts are doing better or differently that represents an innovation? This can be presented at future meetings.
 - More housing work?
 - These are full time case workers dedicated to housing relocation casework.
 - Something else that makes it easier for housing navigators to be effective?
 - The name by name list streamlines and eliminates duplicative work that sometimes occurs from someone receiving services at multiple locations.

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- Name by name list has also let people work with people who they have established previous relationships with.
 - Does the voucher itself have a leg up?
 - There are landlord incentives specific to rapid rehousing.
 - Learning from the program will be brought back to this group and constructive feedback to MaineHousing as they lay out future programming.
 - Cullen Thanks Amistad, Preble Street and MaineHousing. When someone is helped with relationship work with landlords it helps connect people to housing. The pandemic has subtracted people from that line of work to deal with the crisis needs of distancing across shelters. There has been a lack of outflow from shelter for a number of months.
- **Status of Shelter Accessibility for Adults**
 - o September Shelter Statistics
 - Rob said it would be good to see the voucher break down.
 - Donna agreed and said it may warrant a different slide.
 - Not everyone getting housed is from shelters.
 - o How to present that?
 - If the only properties in Portland that are affordable with vouchers then these properties aren't really fair market.
 - Are there volunteers to mock up what that would look like?
 - Rob, Adam, possibly Aaron and Norm will work on adding to the slides.
 - Norm would like to see referrals to permanent supportive housing.
 - During COC meeting on the first, MaineHousing share a spread sheet of people in shelter and hotels.
 - 92 in shelter 189 in hotels.
 - Not for someone housed and behaving badly on premises.
 - o Question on CTOs and if they include public places
 - CTOs from each specific shelter from those issued in the month and the ones that are active as they last a year.
 - The CTOs are only for people who could be clients to that shelter.
 - o Expo
 - Need to leave by the 25th
 - Possible space on County Way.
 - In talks with a hotel to contract with similar to Bangor and the Ramada in.
 - Cold weather meeting tomorrow includes state leadership
- **Unsheltered Homelessness**
 - o Holding Weekly meetings three days a week; moved to a weekly meetings of service providers.
 - About 20 people on the Monday calls.
 - A subset on the cold weather call tomorrow

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- Looking at:
 - Bathroom access
 - Shower access
 - Neighbor concerns.
 - Reports back from outreach teams.
- George asked if the group could create a memo explaining who is involved and what they are doing?
- Bill asked if the city can do short of 6-month leases on spaces in commercial locations that may be closed due to Covid. There is CDBG money for modified and converted space.
 - Have been speaking to entities but have not found landlords for less than a 2-year commitment.
 - Groups looking for night and day space are having similar results.
- What is the status of the people in Deering Oaks park?
 - Tuesday was the most recent unsheltered meeting that discussed a changing landscape magnified by Covid: displacement of resources and lack of clarity around sheltering options. This has influenced a reduction in all available resources. People are engaged case by case so it is difficult to speak to groups of people.
 - Name by name solutions.
 - Shifting to keeping people warm and alive.
 - It is getting cold already
 - Florence house has prioritized taking women who are unsheltered.
 - Numbers lower due to Covid response.
 - Precovid beds empty from people being in hospital would be filled with “one night only” but are remaining empty for safety.
 - Most women have medical vulnerabilities.
 - City is currently engaged with the people in hotels. People are encouraged to come into shelter or GA for hotels.
- Dan night, community policing officer said there has been a dip in overdoses activity.
 - Is there a specific statistic and where to find?
 - Overdoses can be people who are housed or unhoused.
 - Oliver Bradeen formerly of the police department and new Executive Director of Milestone Recovery said he hasn’t seen a spike up or down in overdoses.
 - PD uses OD Map; if there was a spike there would be alerts.
 - PD has one tool, the CTO and people by the marina were CTOd; milestone is engaging with them.
 - It is hard to read public CTOs and will keep asking PD for that information.
- Anna said HVJ has been concerned with the location on County Way:

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- Would people be deterred due to interactions with the Jail and police.
- Understand s the constraints the city is in; the providers and the City discussed this concern however other options have parameters by landlords and upfront costs that are unattainable.
- At the very least, it will get folks warm inside during the cold weather.
- **LTS**
 - o Smaller focus group working on difficult cases.
 - o 9 lists merged into 1.
 - Tracking people for over 5.5 years.
 - o New list will include emerged long-term stayers.
 - o There is a difference in long term stayers before and post pandemic; there is languishing in shelters due to lack of help whose case is not so difficult; they are circumstantially long-term stayers not due to severe mental illness.
 - Traditional LTS needs solutions like shelter plus cadre.
 - RRH helping to circumstantially LTS.
 - o Frontline staff that are normally included in housing are starting to get back to that focus and the City is hiring more housing consolors.
- **Policy Update**
 - o Bigger chunk of time dedicated to legislation to allow for a larger discussion with questions.
 - o **Federal**
 - Under federal moratorium on evictions; it has an unfunded mandate. LL should not be able to evict through the end of December.
 - Extended Unemployment benefits ended in July.
 - MaineHousing resources exhausted resources at the end of September.
 - Should be concerned people will run out of resources for rent by the end of October.
 - Staggering numbers of people outside in Bangor.
 - Landlords are boarding up units instead of taking people because of the eviction moratorium. They are closing down units and not taking people in.
 - Waiting for a stimulus package.
 - House has an updated HEROES that is smaller to \$2.2 Trillion.
 - o ESG
 - o Rental assistance
 - o New temporary housing vouchers
 - Senate hasn't produced anything and is working on the Supreme Court nomination.
 - Short term continuing resolution avoiding a government shutdown until December 11th.
 - Some additional resources.
 - No new proposed rule changes.
 - o **State**

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- Appears unlikely the legislature will reconvene. Democrats were interested in reconvening but republican refused.
 - All work in committees working in funding for homeless shelters and people ricocheting through shelter systems will likely need to start from scratch as the legislature is turning around many people.
- Increased eligibility for youth homeless shelters during pandemic; this allows flexibility around age.
- Rent relief program exhausted.
- GA is issuing assistance for two months.
- Portland has been a model for GA hotels.
 - Likely showing the striking difference in unsheltered homelessness in Portland versus the surge in Bangor.
 - Portland and Bangor are unique and administration around the state is unequal. To access GA in some communities, one needs legal representation. GA is the program that is supposed to meet these needs but it requires people pushing in other municipalities.
 - Anyone having trouble accessing GA should contact Pine Tree and Maine Equal Justice.
 - It is a program intended to meet the emergency need.
 - Statewide homeless council so looking at a strategic system, redesign.
 - Regional approach
 - It depends how well GA works in other communities.
 - No need for shelters in communities like Bridgeton; GA should be able to keep people in their communities.
- BRAP is a 40% subsidy.
- **Local**
 - Ballot referendum questions in Portland that would affect housing development
 - Question C would inhibit developing affordable housing as they would no longer fit under qualified allocation cost caps.
 - Green new deal may affect affordable housing development for at least the next 5 years.
 - Question D rent control
 - City denied two years ago.
 - May create problems for affordable housing.
 - Question E limits short term rentals and increases fees.
 - 40 Bed Preble Street Shelter:
 - Recently learned on Tuesday evening the planning board will have the first meeting discussing giving permission to start construction to convert the resource center into a 40-bed shelter.

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- Due to the pandemic and CDC recommendations, Preble Street has been unable to serve people like they used to at the resource center. After the Sullivan wellness shelter, they decided this is what is needed to continue.
- Similar to Florence house, this shelter would prioritize the unsheltered.
- Would gut the walls to make one big space upstairs; the downstairs will remain for food production.
- People would have access to their bed and food 24 hours a day; only people staying in the shelter would be allowed in outside of service providers.
- No line for check in/out; it would be a closed shelter model.
- Prioritize people who would not be able to get into shelter elsewhere
- Trauma-informed practices
- Privacy fence around the courtyard.
 - Main entrance would be the door on the left. The courtyard would be outdoor space for clients only, only accessible from the inside.
 - Would not have the outdoor activity that the resource center has.
- Using the building as a 24-hour shelter is needed more than open space.
- The City has used the space for overnight shelter for many years and before that s was used as a women's shelter.
- Preble Street is asking for support Tuesday night; people can support as an individual or sign onto a letter of support:

“We respectfully request that the City of Portland's Planning Board approve Preble Street's conditional use application in order that its facility at 5 Portland Street undergo renovations needed for a new 24/7 Wellness Shelter. This initiative is desperately needed with so many people sleeping outside, during a public health emergency, as winter approaches. Preble Street is not asking for City funds to do this and is only seeking Planning Board approval to do necessary Covid19-informed renovations to the building. We have a longstanding relationship with Preble Street, know them to be a professional, well-run organization, and they have offered us the opportunity to review its operating plans for this new shelter.”

 - George moved for ESAC to sign on to the statement, Norm seconded.
 - Discussion:

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- Norm said Shalom could support such a shelter on a temporary basis only to remain active until a vaccine is available and OSS can take in the full bed. The Need for this shelter would be sunsetted and then could go back to the homeless services center plans and the new women's shelter.
- o Cullen brought up what this body does with communicating to federal delegation versus weighing in on what an individual organization has decided on what to do.
 - We did not weigh in on when the resource center closed.
 - This puts organizations in an awkward spot judging our professional colleagues on what they are deciding to do as individual organizations.
 - He does not support ESAC weighing in and thinks it should be left to the public forum in the planning board.
 - CHOM did weigh in on the city shelter during an open 2-year process but ESAC did not. The City opened up a public process for it.
 - He will not vote for ESAC to weigh in.
- o George is willing to withdraw the motion ESAC is not a city body but is mostly facilitated by it publicly. It should be a policy that ESAC doesn't take such positions as it is the public perception that it is what we do.
- o Anne Pringle asked who can vote?
 - Governance committee is working on it.
 - Historically has been people and one vote per agency that attend meetings.
- o George is happy to withdraw the motion and move ESAC does not take positions on City of Portland actions on homelessness for or against.
 - People should not be confused about getting guidance from ESAC.
 - Any hesitancy to not take a position should not be viewed as being against a motion.
 - We are not taking a position on this because we do not take on positions on things.
- o George withdrew the motion.
- o Cullen did not articulate his point and will differentiate between major policy decisions and individual organization decisions; he will take time next month to clarify.

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- **Governance Committee Recommendations**
 - Who can vote?
 - Working on clear rules
 - People thought it was a City meeting versus a collaboration.
- **General Organization Updates**
 - **Milestone**
 - Welcome Oliver Bradeen as the new executive director of Milestone Recovery.