



Health & Human Services Department HHS Committee Meeting

June 14, 2016
Meeting Minutes

Committee Attendance: Chair Suslovic, Councilor Ray and Councilor Brenerman
City Staff Attendance: Dawn Stiles, Rob Parritt, Jeff Tardif, Cindy Namer, Chief Sauschuck and Mike Murray.

AGENDA ITEM 1- Meeting Called to Order and Minutes Reviewed:

Meeting was called to order at approximately 5:00 PM by Chair Suslovic and Minutes Reviewed and accepted.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Background and Issues re: Homelessness Shelter and Housing:

(Please note this item was taken out of order)

Dawn addressed the Committee and gave an overview of the year to date data analysis. Dave MacLean then addressed the Committee with a Shelter demographic of family and OSS as well as a 5 year perspective.

Chair Suslovic questioned when we are going to see the money from the State. Danielle West-Chuhta is waiting for that response, Ed would like this on a future Agenda to discuss further.

Dave continued with details of the funding formula change from Maine State Housing.

Robb Parritt from Oxford Street Shelter explained the funding reimbursement and the incentives to work harder placing people in housing.

Councilor Brenerman questioned the reimbursement costs now vs what we should get back from the State with the new formula.

GA eligibility was discussed including a discussion that only 40% of applicants are eligible for GA. The State used to reimburse us for the cost of running the whole shelter now it is based on bed nights.

Dave gave an overview of the other shelters within Portland including Milestone, Florence House, Family Crisis Services and Preble Street. Those combined result in a total of 450 beds.

The Committee discussed the application process and the time that is involved with it. Dawn is aware of these issues and is addressing them. She also explained how we have pushed back on other municipalities to cover costs.

Chair would like Dave to draft the legislative language to require each town to be responsible to fund emergency housing for their residents. We would need this language by December.

Jeff Tardif addressed the Committee regarding the Family Shelter and gave an overview of services and guidelines at the shelter and services available for the families.

Cindy Namer from Maine State Housing spoke about the Housing First model and the push to keep individuals and families in their own hometowns.

Ed pointed out that Maine's homelessness problem is a state problem not just a Portland problem. He would like to have Cindy come back and report toward the end of the year.

Councilor Brenerman questioned a pilot program that is going on in Penobscot County and questioned why it is not being done in Portland.

Cindy explained that they are doing a test in a smaller community.

Councilor Ray believes that Bayside has been overtaxed with services and would like to see services dispersed around the city more. She feels we need to look at over zoning and said this is a good time to do so as Oxford Street Shelter needs improvements. She would like this issue to be on the Agenda in September or October.

The portion of the meeting was then open to Public Comment.

Mark Swann – Preble Street Resource Center; Mark stressed how the lack of Maine Care expansion has put a larger stress on services. Housing First Market was discussed as well as the Bishop Street model for which Preble Street is currently looking for funding.

He also stressed that unsheltered individuals are not mentioned so many people sleeping outside are not included in these numbers. The last Point in Time survey included 53 individuals who were sleeping outside.

Norman Maze, Shalom House; Thanked everyone for their good work.

Cullen Ryan, Community Housing of Maine; Commended the staff at the shelters for housing 79 individuals in a 1 year time period.

Adam Harr, Libbytown Resident; Adam questioned the housing stock available in Portland.

With no further comment, public comment was closed.

AGENDA ITEM 3- Golf Carts on Peaks Island:

Councilor Ray gave an overview of the recent correspondence she has received from islanders about the lack of enforcement in regards to golf cars on the islands. She pointed out she had not heard from the golf cart rental businesses on the island.

Chief Sauschuck spoke and gave an overview of the current ordinance. He feels the age should read that the person has a current license.

Councilor Suslovic questioned if we had any statistics on golf cart accidents. Chief, yes there have been less than 5 reported accidents over the years.

The Chief also clarified that you have to have a license in order to operate a golf cart and that it is a State Statute already. The way our Ordinance is worded now it is not stated that way – just that you need to be over the age of 21.

The Chief indicated he would prioritize his staff to address this on the islands.

Meeting open to public comment:

1. *Peaks Island Safety Council Member Lisa addressed some issues they have seen on the island and feels we need to maintain minimum safety standards such as lights and a flag etc. The Committee is looking for an update in the ordinance and believes that enforcement and education needs to occur.*

Public Comment was closed.

Chair does not believe the need so much for a new ordinance but more education and to tighten the current one. He would also like to see the definition of a golf cart. He would like to see the age deleted. Also requested this come back to the committee as soon as possible with the updates. Mike Murray will communicate this to the other islands.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Proposed Puppy Mill Ordinance:

Chair gave the background history on this proposed ordinance. The Humane Society of the United States is proposing for Committee consideration. This was passed by the House but vetoed by the Governor, the City can now enact.

Katie Hansberry – Humane Society of the United States / State of Maine Director. She explained the position of the Humane Society about puppy mills and that almost all puppy mill dogs end up in pet stores. While Portland does not currently have any pet stores that sell puppies they would like to enact this ordinance to discourage them from doing so. There are currently 5 pet stores statewide that sell puppies and kittens

Meeting was then open to Public Comment:

1. *Dale Bartlett who oversees public policy for Humane Society of United States spoke about his organizations efforts to ban puppy mills and the sale of dogs and cats from puppy mills. He explained that Albuquerque was the 1st in the country to enact this ordinance. He says there is a real need for more transparency and better quality of care in the industry.*
2. *Gina Geary is a Portland resident and is in attendance in support of the Ordinance.*
3. *Lynn is a member of Maine Citizens Against Puppy Mills is also here to support the Ordinance.*
4. *Portland resident spoke of the need to revive what Governor Baxter did for the State and reminded everyone that Portland is a dog friendly town. Boston has already passed this Ordinance and she supports Portland doing so as well.*

Public Comment closed.

Councilor Ray questioned if there is a certification of who is a good breeder?

No there currently is not a standard at this time.

Councilor Brenerman questioned if pet shops were invited to come to this meeting. Yes they were at the state level but there are currently no pet shops in Portland. This is making a point to the industry to show we are a humane city. The Chair concurred that Portland is typically the lead for the rest of the State.

Dale Bartlett acknowledged there is a lack of enforcement on the part of the USDA to oversee puppy mills and breeders.

A Motion to recommend passage to full City Council, Moved by Councilor Ray 2nd by Brenerman. Further Amendment 5-503 delete 'State Humane' text. Councilor Ray would like to flag and ask Danielle West-Chuhta.

All in favor 3-0 Amended.

With no further business to attend to the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.