

Hilltop Action Coalition Community Meeting – July 16th, 2018
Notes/Minutes

Brendan Nelson called the meeting to order at 6:03pm.

Board members present: Brendan Nelson, William Towey, and Greg Walker.

Brendan Nelson: Set Meeting Intention

Please be open-minded. We are here to learn, engage and communicate. Let's be inclusive and mindful of how we treat each other.

HACtion Announcements

- **Greg Walker (HAC): Annual Hilltop Cleanup.** July 21st from 10:00 AM to 1:45 PM at Evergreen Tacoma Campus. Postcards went out last week. Need volunteers to show up at 9:00 AM. Hoping to get 30+ volunteers so we can staff the site and then send people out in trucks to do area pickups. Come in close-toed shoes, HAC will provide other safety gear, safety training, snacks, etc. Need people directing traffic, unloading, etc. If you are capable, come join us, we will put you to work. NEW THIS YEAR: Multi-family properties are encouraged to participate this year, unlike in past.
- **Kaitlin Ohler (Safe Streets) & Jennifer Stolle (HAC): National Night Out (NNO) 2018.** August 7th. To register a block party go to the Safe Street on-line registration page at <http://safest.org/sign-up/> OR fill out a hard copy form with HAC and they will register your event with Safe Streets. All events should be registered with Safe Streets because they acquire a city-wide permit for street barricades for all NNO events on August 7th. HAC provides a bag of goodies to each registered event on Hilltop with local giveaways and a gift card from HAC.
- **Brendan Nelson (HAC) & William Towey (HAC): Hilltop Action Journal.** The Journal has been functioning for over a year. Won a National Award in June and recognized by the Mayor at City Council Meeting. Journal is self-supporting and cost neutral, gives a voice to youth and elders, grass roots organization. It is distributed to all students in Hilltop schools and 50+ retail locations. Working on a youth writing program with college students engaging with high school, middle school and elementary school age students, encouraging writing skills and youth participation.

Gerrit Nyland (Catholic Community Services): Homelessness on Hilltop – Part 1

- Each week 170 people are homeless in Pierce County, of which, 130 are newly homeless.
- The system of services for homeless in Pierce County is efficient, but we have too few resources to handle the flow.
- 13,000 flowing into the system each year. We have 4 layers to the system.
 - #1 Diversion – try to help them find options within their own circles; family, etc.
 - #2 Rapid Rehousing – Market rate vouchers, up to 6 months of assistance, 60% effective. Costs about \$6,000/household.
 - #3 Transitional Housing – costs about \$18,000 for each placement a year.
 - #4 Permanent Supportive Housing – client pays 1/3 of the rent and lasts for life of client.
- Only able to help about 2,500 people a year and there is a need for 13,000 – NOT ENOUGH \$
- Vulnerability determined through series of questions. Prioritize permanent support to the most vulnerable.
- ***Most people are homeless because there is simply not enough housing.*** Affordable housing is important, too, but any housing increases openings in all other housing types. Others end up homeless because of disability, divorce, mental health, medical bills, underemployed, unemployed, etc. Drug use and addiction is not a leading cause of homelessness; housing loss is the leading cause.
- People experiencing homelessness experience a loss in life expectancy; Pierce County average life expectancy is 74, whereas people experiencing homelessness for ANY amount of time, drop to 52.

James Pogue (Community Life Resources): Homelessness on Hilltop - Part 2

- 17 outreach specialists that reach out to clients (people experiencing homelessness) to offer services. All outreach specialists are in recovery from addiction, alcohol or mental health issues. Makes it easier to connect with their clients.
- It's not easy to help someone "get off the street". They can't usually "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" – they don't have bootstraps.
- Remember Soloman; homeless man on Hilltop who was in a wheelchair until about 2016? It took lots of work and continual effort to get him successfully housed. It took nearly 2 years of work, 11 months in a hotel, in and out of hospital. Now lives in Puyallup and is a house manager. Great success story. Couldn't make it tonight to share his experience. He would like to come to a future meeting.
- We usually only SEE 20% of the homeless community. These are the ones who are chronically homeless, mentally ill and often experiencing addiction, substance abuse. The other 80% are sleeping in cars, have jobs, hiding, avoiding being seen, etc.
- 2014 CLR expanded – Positive Interactions 24/7 line (253) 382-2677, leave message if no one answers, team is sent out next business day to check on reported issue.
- Team meets clients where they are at and help them get needs met to help them get housing. Sometimes there are barriers that take time to fix:
 - Common barriers: no transportation, no ID, low or zero income, criminal record, trauma, medical issues, mental health illness, substance use, hopelessness.
- Misconception that "Homeless people are offered services but they are refusing"
 - "BEING OFFERED SERVICES" *DOES NOT EQUATE* TO BEING GIVEN HOUSING
 - Only able to house/serve about 20% of clients – *simply not enough resources!*
- Options we use to help clients:
 - Emergency shelters, Rapid Rehousing, Housing 1st, Coordinated Entry, diversion, treatment, Crisis Beds, we also beg, borrow and trade.
- Tent city may be an option that communities could consider to help ease some pressure.
 - Many residents respond with "Not here, don't know where, but not here."
 - If it is structured, it can become a safe space for them.

Tammy Riles, Coordinated Entry: Associated Ministries

- AM quarterly meeting will be on September 20th at 5pm at Shiloh Baptist Church – join us!

Silvia Riley, Heidi Sohee and Tanya Moe: Pierce County Mobile Outreach Crisis Team

- 24/7 Mental Health Crisis Line 1(800) 576-7764
- Crisis intervention therapists that work on substance abuse, mental health with clients by going to where they are at. May take a while to respond in some cases; have to go out in pairs.
- 8 on staff; crisis workers, responders and peer specialists.
- Washington is low on list of states that have enough beds for those in need; ranked 50 out of 51.
- Late 80's there were more services, not enough now.
- Calls for youth under 18 are sent to Catholic Community Services.
- All other calls are sent to Crisis Team; go to site and intervene.
 - Offer services, intervention, crisis bed, recovery response, EMS-hospital, involuntary placement, etc.
- If someone can meet their own needs daily (food, etc), then they are not in crisis. If this changes and they can no longer feed themselves or they start urinating or defecating in their clothing = possibly in crisis and may need help.
- Will detain someone if they are a threat to themselves or someone else; involuntary detention.
- Main focus is risk assessment = send to outreach team, in and out, with a phone call follow up.
- Work closely with Tacoma Police Department and have members embedded with TPD.
 - Working on embedding team members in with Pierce County Sheriff's department, as well.

Greg Walker, Valejo Vocation: Stable Employment & Permanent Housing for Homeless

- These are human beings experiencing homelessness. They deserve to be treated with respect. They all have one common denominator ... they are all homeless.
- New social enterprise with purpose to offer stable employment and permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness.
- Lots of barriers that prevent them from getting gainfully employed. Goal is to help them overcome barriers; assess situation, put them to work.
- All jobs are in labor services in Tacoma.
- Office on Tacoma and 13th to open soon.

Lt Gretchen Aguirre, Tacoma Police Department: Sector 1 Commander Report

- 1501 Stop N Mart – new application with Liquor Control Board. New lease seems to be eager to comply with site needs and to work with community to improve space.
- People’s Park Mtg at THA was this am.
 - TPD does enforcement in the park. Hot Team (Homeless Outreach Team) makes contact with people in the park often, sometimes daily. Moved them off the sidewalk.
 - BEING HOMELESS IS NOT A CRIME.
- 3 drive-bys this month; two of the victims were non-compliant, one was DV related.
- Summer focus with TPD on Hilltop has resulted in 54 citizen contacts and 8 business contacts.
- Stolen vehicle on 14th and J
- City code will be reviewed and possibly updated around Chronic Nuisance; strengthen both codes and increase response capacity.
 - August 14th, 2018 – Changes will be presented to the City Council.
- Questions:
 - “What do I do if I see people shooting up?” – you can call 911, but usually done before TPD arrives on scene. Maybe call Positive Interactions
 - “What do I do if I find needles on the ground?” – Can call 311 for the

Community Announcements

- Grit City Co-Op – Member applications are here! Blank apps are available at the HAC office.
- Tacoma Community House has an event on August 2nd 6-8 PM “Books and Berries”, FREE family reading night, berries, beverages, crafts and stories.
- Crochet with Henry at Red Elm
- Hilltop Street Fair is August 25th – PARADE! Interested parties should contact Joyce Collins to get in the parade.

60+ persons were in attendance.

Brendan adjourned the meeting at 8:07pm.

Next meeting August 20th, 2018.

Submitted by Jennifer Stolle, July 18th, 2018.