

DURHAM HOMELESS SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, March 28, 2018

3:00 p.m.

**Durham County Human Services Building
414 E. Main Street – 2nd Floor Conference Room**

The Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) met on the above date and time.

Committee Members Present: HSAC Chair Angela Holmes (Former Homeless Representative for Durham County); HSAC Vice-Chair Charita McCollers, MSW (Lincoln Community Health Center/Federal Health Care for the Homeless); Durham City Manager Thomas J. Bonfield; Reverend Dr. B. Angelo Burch, Sr. (Corporate Private Sector Representative for Durham County/Executive Director, African American Dance Ensemble); Jonathan T. Crooms (Durham County Veteran Services Office); Meredith Daye, Development Director (Durham Housing Authority); Janeen Gordon (Durham County Social Services – *proxy for Durham County Commissioner Ellen W. Reckhow*); Captain Stan Harris (Durham County Sheriff's Department); Calleen Herbert (NCCU Office of Community Engagement & Service); Reverend Dr. Warren Herndon (Faith Community Representative for City of Durham/Greater Joy International Ministries); Jennifer Jones (City of Durham Office of Economic & Workforce Development); Pam Karriker (Faith Community Representative for Durham County/Christian Assembly); Melody Marshall, Homeless Liaison (Durham Public Schools); Council Member Mark-Anthony Middleton (*Proxy for Mayor Steve Schewel*); Fred Stoppelkamp (Non-Profit Representative for Durham County/Urban Ministries of Durham); Chris Toenes, MSW (Non-Profit Representative for the City of Durham/TROSA); Tony Tosh (Corporate Private Sector Representative for City of Durham/Prosperity Recovery Services) and Helen Tripp (Durham County Emergency Medical Services (EMS))

Excused Committee Members: Mayor Steve Schewel, HSAC Secretary Ellecia M. Thompson (Durham VA Medical Center) and Ve'ga Swepson, Resource Specialist (Durham Technical Community College)

Committee Members Absent: Drew Cummings, Chief of Staff (Durham County Manager's Office); Alma Davis (Durham Crisis Response Center, *Proxy*); Emanuel Kearney (Former Homeless Representative for City of Durham); Alex Protzman (LIFE Skills Foundation); Durham County Commissioner Ellen W. Reckhow; Tracy Stone-Dino (Alliance Behavioral Healthcare) and Mayme Webb-Bledsoe (Duke University)

Staff Present: Director Reginald Johnson, Assistant Director of Strategy Karen Lado, Project Manager Lloyd Schmeidler, Senior Project Manager of Strategy Goal 1 Matthew Walker, Administrative Analyst Keshia Barnette (Department of Community Development) and Senior Executive Assistant Sheila Bullock (Office of the City Clerk)

Also Present: Joyce Caesar (WakeUpReachUp, Inc.); Britt Jacobs (Prosperity Recovery Services); Samantha Martin, Rikki Gardner, Valaria Brown (Housing for New Hope); Ryan Fehrman (Families Moving Forward); Janet Xiao, Ronald Miller (Community Empowerment Fund (CEF)); Sam Frederick (Duke); Peter Gilbert, Logan Barcus (Legal Aid); Charles Holton

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(Duke Civil Justice Clinic); Erick Screult (Resident); Valerie Hayward, Sheldon Mitchell (Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD); Larry Partee' (Formerly Homeless Resident); Carolyn E. Hinton (Healing with CAARE, Inc.); Lanea Foster (Healing with CAARE, Inc./Southeast Community Resources); Michael Linton (Duke Police) and Karen Barfield (St. Joseph's Episcopal Church).

Subject: Call to Order/Welcome

Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.; welcomed everyone in attendance and read the HSAC goals aloud.

Minutes Review and Approval – February 28, 2018

Motion by Committee Member Burch, seconded by Committee Member Herndon to approve the minutes of February 28, 2018 was approved unanimously at 3:04 p.m.

Subject: Public Comment Period

Janet Xiao, Co-Director of the Community Empowerment Fund and on behalf of the HSAC Housing Results Team, gave an overview on the following topics:

- Challenges facing landlords and tenants in reference to housing vouchers
- Affirmation of recommendations from Focus Strategies to build communities' collective capacity for proactive engagement and partnership with housing providers
- Unlocking Doors initiative, on a voluntary basis, has yielded powerful results to build up the available housing stock since 2017
- Mitigation Plan pilot implemented to also address barriers facing landlords and tenants
- Partnerships have been coordinated with other agencies to better communicate supportive services that are offered to tenants and landlords
- Communication lines about available units and voucher processes have also opened between the CoC and the Durham Housing Authority (DHA)
- There is an opportunity for landlords and property managers to see their roles as potential and powerful partners in the affordable housing efforts

Ms. Xiao pointed out that even though all of the relationship building work has been significant; they don't have the capacity to invest as much time as needed. Work has been done on a voluntary basis through the generous time given from local agency leaders to fill an urgent need. Affirmation of a deeper investment from the city into these efforts is needed.

Ms. Xiao further explained that while the work started was focused on housing choice and VASH vouchers, they have been able to widen partnership coverage to include Rapid Re-housing, SSVF and Permanent Supportive Housing subsidies. She added that our community needs someone who is fully dedicated to coordinating processes, especially as housing needs become worse for community members in crisis.

Ms. Xiao indicated that ground work that has been laid to reveal the mocking bird's initiative network should be continued along with the building and piloting of innovative tools like the risk mitigation fund that brings housing providers to the table.

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Ms. Xiao explained that an agency that had supported a particular voucher holder had exhausted all of its housing leads. The Coordinated Team circulated to partner agencies a link to available housing units, part of the Mockingbird Initiative Network, the information was shared with the tenant and in turn the tenant immediately got in touch with the landlord. The tenant has now signed a lease and secured housing.

Per Ms. Xiao, Orange County is modeling a Risk Mitigation Fund and a housing locator based on Unlocking Doors. Various other communities have learned from the format of our roundtables and are using that same approach for conversations in their own communities.

Ms. Xiao re-emphasized how crucial it is to receive a deeper investment from the City and concluded that Durham has the opportunity to continue to lead and establish proactive community solutions that meet the needs of our residents facing the housing crisis.

Committee Member Burch asked what exactly could the HSAC do as a committee. He noted that he has folks that have vouchers and he wanted to know if landlords are giving any reasons for not taking the vouchers. He commented that something needs to be done because people are working and they are losing their homes.

Ms. Xiao stated that initially some feedback from landlords was that they want to say yes but they know that the tenant needs supportive services in order to maintain and sustain their housing. Non-profit agencies are able to provide some support but not necessarily all the support needed to assist tenants with stable housing.

Other feedback heard in 2016 indicated that communication with DHA was a challenge and being able to obtain housing vouchers was difficult. Landlords also complained in 2016 that it was taking 3 to 4 weeks to schedule an inspection. However, Ms. Xiao noted that now DHA has shortened the length of time for scheduling inspections to 2 weeks with the inspection actually occurring within 3 to 5 days after the scheduling.

Committee Member Herndon asked members to search their hearts as to the work they are doing and pointed out that they are doing great work but there are still gaps to be filled. He made an appeal to the HSAC in reference to the next upcoming funding cycle. Committee Herndon asked how much technical assistance has been provided to organizations that are in Durham County who were not funded previously. He encouraged everyone to spend time interacting as much as possible and noted as referenced earlier by Ms. Xiao, it is all about relationships. Committee Member Herndon commented they are trying to build a passage to make sure that all of the funds that are appropriated from the federal, state and local level remain with organizations in Durham County. He also requested that written communication be provided to organizations as they seek to meet the competitiveness of the funds.

Committee Member Herndon finished his comments by encouraging everyone to work together so they can reach their goals and objectives and to make sure funds reside in Durham County.

Charles Holton (Duke Law School Civil Justice Clinic) stated he and Peter Gilbert (Durham Legal Aid Office) were initially invited to the HSAC meeting to discuss their Eviction Diversion Program. However, he was recently advised to briefly reference the program and return to give the presentation at a later HSAC meeting when there is more time.

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Mr. Holton provided the following summary concerning the Eviction Diversion Program:

- Program has been in operation since August 2017
- Goal is to reduce the number of evictions in Durham, which historically has the highest eviction rate of any other municipality in North Carolina
- Statistics have shown Durham having a high eviction rate for years, however, the reason for this is not known
- Duke Law School Civil Justice Center works in conjunction with the Durham Department of Social Services (DSS) in regards to referring people through DSS for a financial assessment to determine eligibility for rent assistance. Regardless of whether a person is found eligible or not, they can be seen by lawyers at Legal Aid or the Duke Civil Justice Center.

Mr. Gilbert pointed out that the Durham Human Relations Commission recently released recommendations concerning the eviction crisis in Durham. It was found that other cities which have done similar work save a lot of money by keeping people in place rather than re-housing them. Mr. Gilbert explained that currently they receive 40 to 50 referrals monthly from DSS, however; DSS would like to refer more people to the Eviction Diversion Program. Support from the HSAC or the city would be greatly appreciated. Mr. Gilbert stated that statistics are rising with over 900 new eviction cases filed monthly. He added there is a lot of work to be done to close the gap.

In response to Committee Member Herndon's question about whether any trends have been seen or lessons learned within the last couple of months with the work, Mr. Gilbert and Holton are doing, Mr. Gilbert stated the evictions that are filed in Durham are simply for non-payment of rent and private landlords. He noted that no matter how much new affordable housing development is funded, the majority of below wealth and low income tenants in Durham are going to continue to serve in private market. 45% of renters in Durham are paying more than their income in rent than they can afford according to HUD guidelines. Most of the programs within the city deal with residents of DHA, non-profit residents and voucher holders. Also, the majority of people who face eviction are in a private market and do not receive assistance through those programs. Other trends noted by Mr. Gilbert include seeing spikes in December and January with requests for assistance in preventing evictions. There were over 700 people seeking rental assistance from DSS during these months. The number also goes up in August each year with the increase in "back to school" expenses.

Mr. Gilbert noted that some cities found that without representation, a tenant is more likely to be evicted in 89% of the cases. However, with representation, below 50% of the time a tenant is more likely to be able to stay in their unit.

Subject: City Funding for Emergency Shelters

In response to a request concerning emergency shelter funding that was made at the last HSAC meeting, Director Reginald Johnson (Department of Community Development) stated an application for emergency shelter funding in the amount of \$177,000 will be released in May 2018.

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Committee Member Karriker asked if this was the issue that Ryan Fehrman brought before the HSAC that they voted on and if there would be funding released to help with the other services that were no longer going to be covered. Mr. Johnson responded yes.

In terms of what the amount was that was previously funded before the change, Vice-Chair McCollers wanted to know in regards to the \$177,000, how does this amount differ from what had been funded in the past. Mr. Johnson explained the amount funded in the past was approximately the same; however it had a different combination of funds which included the ESG grant and the CDBG. The two was combined and CDBG was used for the entire amount, with one funding source and not two.

In response to Committee Member Crooms' question regarding whether this would be a one-time application or did the Department of Community Development still want to move in the direction of doing all rapid re-housing, Mr. Johnson commented that in terms of ESG, it will remain rapid re-housing. In regards to this particular funding for CDBG, the application will be for the upcoming year. He added that Council has asked that the amount be maintained until such time in the foreseeable future until other things that have been discussed, such as navigation and coordinated entry are put into place. This will began to affect the number of persons in emergency shelters.

Chair Holmes wanted to know if the proposal for bridge funding would be for one year or would it be offered for each year going forward. Mr. Johnson said it would be considered for upcoming years as well.

Committee Member Tosh expressed concern about landlords allowing people to do drugs in their house. He requested that the HSAC take a look at those landlords.

Subject: Focus Strategies Revised Report and Adoption of Recommendations

Committee Member Stoppelkamp, Co-Chair of HSAC Income Results Team and member of the HSAC Executive Committee, directed HSAC Members' attention to the revised summary of recommendations contained in the Focus Strategies Report. He stated the HSAC Executive Committee is making a recommendation that the HSAC adopt the recommendations made by the Focus Strategies group.

Committee Member Herndon commented that whatever the HSAC decides to do or seek to do, he wants to make sure that they provide technical assistance.

Vice-Chair McCollers wanted to make sure that HSAC members were aware of what recommendations Committee Member Stoppelkamp was referencing and what the motion was about.

City Manager Bonfield stated he is fully supportive of the recommendation. He is looking at the details and timing of the implementation because the City and County is being flooded with funding requests concerning this particular recommendation. However, not enough information is currently available. Committee Member Stoppelkamp pointed out that the first step is to get the recommendations approved before they can move forward.

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Vice-Chair McCollers further explained the meaning of the particular sections of the recommendations.

Lanea Foster (SECR/Healing with CAARE, Inc.) asked for clarification on whether the Executive Committee will create a policy or structure that will come back to the HSAC for approval.

Committee Member Stoppelkamp noted that the Executive Committee will not finalize anything without getting the approval of the full body.

Vice-Chair McCollers added that the Executive Committee has been talking about the importance of CoC members being part of the HSAC subcommittees. Feedback from the subcommittees is needed to make sure challenges and barriers experienced by the CoC are addressed.

Carolyn Hinton (Healing with CAARE, Inc.) wanted to know in reference to the section on governance, who comprises the executive committee, is it representative of the community and what will be their guidance for bringing back policies to the HSAC.

Committee Member Stoppelkamp explained the Executive Committee is made up of the Board Chair, Vice-Chair and HSAC Members who are chairs of HSAC Subcommittees. He again pointed out that the Executive Committee will not make any policies without the entire board's recommendations and that they are relying on the Department of Community Development to be their lead in reference to next steps and time line. Committee Member Stoppelkamp wanted it made clear that they will not implement anything that the full CoC is not happy with.

Council Member Middleton stated that Mayor Schewel sends his regards and regrets for being unable to attend the meeting today.

Concerning the Focus Strategies recommendations, Council Member Middleton commented that as a policy maker he is thinking the recommendations are a philosophical framework that will lead the group when they come before City Council to ask them to spend money. He reminded everyone that some of these principles are some of the same principles that guided the Department of Community Development initially that brought back some recommendations that caused some heartache. He wants everyone to be clear if this is a philosophical framework that they are going to be operating there may be some difficult conversation. Council Member Middleton also noted if they are going to keep fidelity with this document of recommendations and approach funding sources, then moving forward they are going to have some conversation that keeps fidelity with the state that may cause some issue with what they continue to spend on and what they don't want to spend on, if indeed the board decides to adopt the recommendations.

Committee Member Burch asked if not this recommendation then what would be the alternative and if the HSAC does not go with this recommendation, what else would they do?

Committee Member Stoppelkamp agreed with Committee Member Burch and added they are looking to move forward to continue working with the recommendations to help Durham with housing challenges. The Executive Committee is recommending to the full board that this would be their next step.

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Motion by Committee Member Burch, seconded by Committee Member Jones to adopt the Focus Strategies revised report of recommendations was approved by the following vote:
Ayes: 17. Noes: 0. Abstain: 1.

Subject: Point in Time Count

Project Manager Lloyd Schmeidler (Department of Community Development) gave a power point presentation entitled *2018 Point in Time Count Results* that provided numbers from Durham's Point in Time Count (PIT Count) held on January 24, 2018. Topics covered included:

- What is the Vision?
- Who Is Counted as Homeless?
- Who Else Is Counted?
- Homeless Count by Living Situation (Total Count 338)
- Homeless Count Demographics: Gender
- Number of Persons by Age in Families and by Age – Adults
- Homeless Count – Race
- Homeless Count Subpopulations
- PIT Count, 2016-2018
- Homeless Encampments Photos

In reference to the faith community paying for someone to stay in a hotel, Committee Member Karriker wanted to know how this was considered in the PIT Count.

Mr. Schmeidler reported that families or anyone that is being put up in hotels by a charitable organization or the faith community during the PIT Count can be counted. However, staff did not get any reports this year of applicants whose hotel room had been paid for by charitable organizations or the faith community during the count.

Committee Member Herndon expressed his concern regarding whether any dedicated time has been spent to try and find out what the HSAC can do, how can they collaborate and how can they build some relationships in solving some of the challenges? He also asked what can be done for the upcoming year to have a better partnership with Durham Public Schools (DPS) or schools in general to close the gap with the count.

In responding to Committee Member Herndon's question, Mr. Schmeidler stated they are working with three outreach projects in Durham; Engagement Team staffed through Housing for New Hope, funded by Alliance has a part time outreach worker, Mike Kelly who is actively working throughout the county to work on building trusting relationships with unsheltered persons. Open Table Ministries and the Treatment Health Center are regularly doing outreach as well as the Police Department Crisis Intervention Team Officers are doing outreach to these individuals. As part of the Coordinated Entry Process, staff is working to begin using the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to enter information into HMIS which will allow a regularly updated list to be available of who is experiencing homelessness in Durham at any given time. People who are unsheltered are offered opportunities to apply for rapid re-housing assistance for permanent supportive housing without entering into a shelter.

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In reference to working with DPS, Committee Member Marshall feels there is definitely movement when addressing the homeless children situation. She added that there is a wonderful partnership with Families Moving Forward and Urban Ministries.

Committee Member Harris asked if the time to do the PIT Count would be changed to daytime hours instead of night. He feels they are missing some people in the count and he would like to see it done during a warmer time of the year and at a different time frame.

Mr. Schmeidler stated that HUD requires PIT counts be done in the last part of January. He added that HUD suggests not having daytime counts because people are more mobile during the day and at night they are bedded down.

Subject: CoC Standards

Mr. Schmeidler reported that comments about the interim standards were received from Ryan Fehrman (Families Moving Forward), the N.C. Coalition to End Homelessness as well as Consultant David Tweetie. Mr. Tweetie wanted to ensure the CoC standards are aligning with the groups' visions regarding the coordinated entry system section. Mr. Schmeidler noted the deadline for submitting comments was March 21, 2018. Staff has not had time to process all of the changes being made to the standards. Hopefully revised standards with comments will be available in April 2018.

Vice-Chair McCollers commented on the amount of information that was involved in the standards. She wondered whether people in the CoC are actually revealing those things and can those things be done within their agencies. Vice-Chair McCollers also suggested maybe simplifying the standards and possibly having one-pagers so it will be easier to digest. She mentioned the number of pages that was contained in one of the documents and stated she was overwhelmed by the length of the package of information.

Mr. Schmeidler stated they will keep Vice-Chair McCollers' suggestions in mind.

Subject: Announcements

The next HSAC meeting will be held Wednesday, April 25, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. in Conference Room A of the Durham County Human Services Building located at 414 E. Main Street, 2nd floor.

Subject: Reminders

The Department of Community Development is hosting a 2018 CoC Homeless Grants Competition Pre-Application Workshop on Monday, April 9, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Schmeidler asked organizations who are interested in applying, to consider attending the workshop to learn more about CoC funding, its purposes and usage. The workshop will be held at the Department of Neighborhood Improvement Services, 807 E. Main Street in the 3rd Floor Conference Room. Organizations should notify Mr. Schmeidler if they are planning to attend.

Mr. Tweetie will be in Durham on Thursday, April 4, 2018 and Friday April 5, 2018 to conduct trainings about using the list for reducing homelessness among veterans, families and chronically homeless people. There will also be other workshops including those which talk about how

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Rapid Re-housing and Permanent Supportive Housing projects integrate their work with the coordinated entry system and process.

Subject: Adjourn

With no further business to come before the body, Chair Holmes adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sheila Bullock,
Office of the City Clerk