

Homeless Task Force Minutes of January 14, 2009

Kim Swinney, chair of the Homeless Task Force, began the meeting at 1:00pm with the reading of the Task Force mission.

Point in Time Survey – Everybody Counts!

There are 72 registered volunteers set for January 28th and they are still recruiting others. Volunteers have gone through a training session – with the last session set for tomorrow. They've received very good response, including the Topeka Police Department and the Sheriff's Department. The home base the day of the survey will be at the Housing & Neighborhood Development conference room at 620 SE Madison. Volunteers will check in at home base to pick up survey forms and be assigned an area. The volunteers will be paired up in teams and will be wearing buttons reading "Everybody Counts!". Posters have also been put up around town to help the community get ready for the day. There will be warming stations available so the volunteers can stop in and get warm.

Sue Wheatley asked what could be expected as far as the outcome of the survey results. Doug Wallace noted that the survey is a requirement to maintain certain funding; however there is a possibility that the additional information gathered can be used for future grant opportunities. The team hopes to derive outcomes that prove useful for the community, and United Way will be creating the final report. Sue suggested that once the information is available, the Task Force should try to engage other interested groups to join in an effort to develop suitable housing. Doug indicated one of the survey questions was "What type of housing would be most beneficial?" which may provide some good information for future planning. Corrie Wright recognized that this Point in Time survey, with its added media coverage and so many people helping, this year's survey may result in some of the best numbers yet. Doug agreed that the media coverage has been good and has helped to bring a lot of positive awareness to the homeless situation of Shawnee County. If anyone from the press has questions regarding the survey, they should contact Doug Wallace.

HTF Survey Results

Melissa Nolte presented a summary of the survey responses. The report shows the summarized answers of the 14 people who responded. Overall the date, time and location seem to work for all the members. Most who responded felt the Task Force needed more members and should work to increase their visibility within the community. Several people suggested studying other parts of the country and see what similar types of groups are doing in their community.

Sue Wheatley voiced a concern that the Task Force needs to ensure that all items required to be completed within a 12-month period don't get overlooked. A planning calendar may be helpful so the Task Force stays on top of the required tasks, and a new brochure is needed. The Task Force also needs to address the 10-year plan to see if we are on track with our long range goals.

Shelter + Care

Debra and Shirley reported that the Shelter + Care support group has been doing very well. When Kim asked if there was anything the Task Force could do to assist with the group, Shirley replied that they are really looking for ways to get more Shelter + Care people to join their group and for the support group to become a part of the HTF group. Jeff Karas proposed that a committee be created to work with the shelter support group and to help them with their ideas and goals. Kim Swinney indicated that the support group could become members of the Homeless Task Force. Nancy Johnson offered to post the support group's meeting date and location on the CRC website. In February, the Shelter+ Support group representatives will share some of their future goals.

Announcements

Kim Swinney announced that Sue Wheatley will be the Community Action ad hoc member for the HTF Executive Committee meetings.

Valeo will be hosting a Homeless Advisory Council Luncheon from 12-1pm; there will be discussion about the homeless team and to get updates from other agencies.

The Housing & Homeless Summit will be hosting their 10th summit in Topeka with tentative dates of October 29 & 30th. The event will take place at Ramada on 6th and includes an evening reception. Currently they are looking for speakers and an agenda. There will be a planning meeting on February 20th, at 11am, at the Ramada.

The Community Resources Council will be hosting a free breakfast for the annual meeting on February 3rd, at the Golden Corral at 7:30am. Minutes and agendas are now available on the CRC website. The next quarterly MAACLink meeting will be Friday, Jan 16th. MAACLink agencies will be receiving reimbursement checks once the paperwork has been completed. Work is being done to complete the 2009 CRC Directory – please contact the office if your agency has not been contacted for an update.

LIEAP starts next week – applications will be going out soon, but shouldn't be mailed in until January 20th. LIEAP runs from January 20th – March 31st, 2009.

The City's Emergency Program for low-income homeowners still has money for those households in need. The funds are for furnaces, water heaters, sewer lines, and other types of emergency needs. Contact Corrie Wright for more details.

John Johnston, with Topeka Housing Authority is trying to get a new tax credit program for development around five vacant lots and is looking to partner with another agency.

Those in attendance:

Kim Swinney – Kansas Legal Services
Corrie Wright—City of Topeka
Sue Wheatley – Community Action
Chris Kratochvil – HCCI
Devon Kariker—VA
Jeff Karas – Topeka Rescue Mission
John Homlish – Community Action
Kelly Matthews – Cornerstone
Nancy Johnson – CRC
Karen Peterson – SRS
Doug Wallace – Valeo
Lea Vincent – KS Legal TMAP
Melissa Nolte – KLS
Eileen Doran – YWCA BWTF
Paul Rasmussen – Heartland Community of Topeka
Debora Calhoun – SPCSG
Shirley Thompson - SPCSG