

CITY of Auburn Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness
Meeting Summary for Meeting 1: Tuesday, November 17, 2015
5:00 – 7:00pm
Auburn Senior Activity Center

MEETING ATTENDANCE					
Task Force Members & Alternates:					
Sylvia Fuerstenburg <i>For Sarah Christiansen</i>	✓	Suzanne Laurel <i>For Alexis Schleiss</i>	✓	Carla Hopkins	✓
Alexander Foster	✓	Leticia Figueroa	✓	Jeremy James	X
Josh Wheeldon	✓	Dennis Grad	✓	Nancy Wyatt	X
Virginia Gannon	✓	Jeff Escobar	✓	Ron Roberts	X
Debbie Christian	✓	Cara Brinkley	✓	Diane Cimino-Kelly	✓
Laura Kniss	✓	Denise Daniels	✓	Kathie Blaschke	X
Ted Leonard	✓				
Staff Support Team:					
Dana Hinman	✓	Tami Kapule	✓	Dan O'Neil <i>For Bill Pierson</i>	✓
Erica Azcueta	✓	Daryl Faber <i>For Jamie Kelly</i>	✓	Kristin Winkel	✓
Karen Reed, Facilitator	✓	Eric Robertson	✓	Jason Blake <i>For Bill Pierson</i>	✓
Mark Callier <i>For Bill Pierson and Bob Lee</i>	✓				
Guests:					
Rebecca Roy	✓	Alison Eisinger	✓	Mayor Nancy Backus	✓

The meeting convened at 5:05 pm.

- **Welcome, Introductions Review of Agenda**

Karen Reed, Task Force facilitator, welcomed the group and reviewed the agenda

- **Opening remarks and introductions**

Mayor Backus offered opening remarks and her thanks to the Task Force Members for volunteering their time.

- **Task Force Formation and Process Issues**

Karen reviewed the Task Force Mission Statement with the group. The Task Force reviewed and approved proposed ground rules. Karen noted that Mayor Backus has appointed Carla Hopkins and Denise Daniels to serve as Task Force Co-Chairs. Karen spoke briefly to the work plan for the Task Force, which includes a proposed seven meetings, with a final report and recommendations to be issued in April 2016.

- **Task Force Members Hopes and Questions**

Karen asked the members of the Task Force and the staff support team to speak to what they hope ideally to get from this process, and any major questions they have. Responses included:

Ideally, we will:

- Find safe places for kids to be at night, and before and after school solution that are also safe for kids.
- Develop a comprehensive plan to address homelessness in the City
- Understand what's going on in Auburn and how my organization (King County Housing Authority) can help.
- Understand the resources we can provide to people in need
- Eliminate homelessness in Auburn
- Identify a list of resources we have, and find new resources to help the homeless
- Understand the problem here and identify solutions we can come together on as a group, with the goal of making the situation here more comfortable for both the homeless and residents
- Find a place for everyone who comes to our church meal program that is safe.
- Ensure that the young people at Auburn Youth Resources have the resources to move out of homelessness. See more support for these youth from our community.
- Help clarify the problem for our community. Help the community understand that those on the street are people before they are homeless.
- Do this task force! Engage a large community based conversation around the issue. We will come together and make things better for our community.
- I agree with what others have said. I'd like to see the "All Home" agency goals happen here, that is, homelessness becomes rare, brief and one time. I would like to see us be able to house all those who want to be housed. And I'd like to share this model with other communities.
- Tell the story of the homeless. We're all one step away from being in their condition.
- See Auburn be a non-judgmental community. Ensure that the homeless are warm, safe and dry.
- Understand the reasons for homelessness and find housing for the homeless.
- Become more aware of the resources that are available. Respect the choices that some of the homeless may make to remain homeless.
- Help the less fortunate get the resources they need in a way that improves both public safety and is respectful of all.
- See Auburn become a more culturally aware community.
- End veteran's homelessness in 2016.
- Create a plan we can all embrace to make homelessness very rare in Auburn.
- Get the resources to address the needs of the homeless. Get my business information on how we can help.
- Recognize the underlying issues. Provide support for those who do not choose to be homeless.
- Develop a comprehensive plan to address homelessness in Auburn.
- Find sustainable solutions for very low income people so they don't become homeless.
- Improve coordination between systems and service providers so existing resources are more effectively made available.

Major questions/issues offered included:

- What resources exist? Where can we get information about these?

- **Presentation: What we have heard from Auburn residents and business owners about homelessness, presented by Erica Azcueta, City Human Services Coordinator and Tami Kapule, City Code Compliance Officer**

Erica Azcueta spoke to the responses from Auburn residents & business owners about homelessness on the City's "TalkAuburn" blog focused on homelessness. The blog had 594 attendees (visitors to the website) and 67 responses were submitted. Major themes expressed were:

- Concern about an increase in crime & panhandling
- Observing a correlation between homelessness & mental health/substance abuse issues
- Concern for safety (for businesses, kids, parks, etc.)
- Expressed need for a shelter, tent cities, drop-in day centers/hygiene centers
- Desire for policy & system change
- More permanent housing is needed to serve the homeless population
- Some said to stop providing services
- Need to support basic needs & support services

Tami Kapuli described her "Knock & Talk" outreach in the Les Gove neighborhood, where over a several day period she went door to door to ask folks about the situation in their neighborhood. She knocked on about 240 doors and talked with residents in about 40% of the homes, and also talked with homeless individuals in the neighborhood (in the park, other areas.) Residents expressed concern about vehicle break-ins, vandalism, transients in area w/ mental health & substance abuse issues. Tami noted that perception is reality until you prove otherwise. She observed a great spirit of community.

Of the homeless individuals she spoke with, Tami noted all were polite & respectful. About 80% of the homeless described very difficult childhoods. Several expressed a desire for structure, boundaries and to be held accountable.

- **Presentation and Discussion: Demographics of homelessness in King County, South King County and Auburn, presented by Rebecca Roy, from the Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness**

Rebecca introduced the mission and membership of the Seattle King County Coalition on Homelessness and the work the Coalition does.

She noted the major trends responsible for the rise of homelessness in the last 30 years are a growing shortage of affordable rental housing, as well as a simultaneous increase in poverty. She spoke to the increasing cost of rental housing in South King County.

Rebecca then described the methodology for the annual "One Night Count" of homeless individuals in King County, as conducted by the Coalition on Homelessness and its volunteers. She noted that the One Night Count does not include those who are "couch surfing" or in hospital, jail or foster care, or staying in a motel. The One Night Count does count people living in emergency shelter or transitional housing, as well as those living "unsheltered" – outdoors, on streets, in parks, in tents, in cars—that are observed the night of the count. There were 10,047 people identified as being homeless in 2015's One Night County in King County in January 2015. That is a 21% increase from the One Night County number in 2014.

Rebecca noted that statewide, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction identified 32,539 students as being homeless in 2013-2014; the Auburn School District reported 210 homeless students. By grade level, nearly half of homeless students statewide are in grade school.

Rebecca closed by noting that the Coalition on Homelessness believes all communities must grapple with the issue of homelessness.

- **Homework Assignment**

Karen reviewed a short “homework assignment” for both Task Force members and the staff support team—to write down their thoughts as to of concern around homelessness, their thoughts as to underlying causes, and any key questions they have. The results will be reported at the next meeting without attribution.

- **Information Requests/Next Agenda**

Karen recapped the three information requests from Task Force members and mentioned the items that will be on the next meeting agenda.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.