

Eldridge/West Oaks SN
August 10, 2011 Meeting Minutes

Called to order 7:06 p.m.
7 delegates present

Keith Bynam – Assistant Director Housing and Community Development Dept. spoke to the group about the homeless in the metro area. His experience in this area totals 20 years. He gave general statistics and information on the number of homeless, grants and funding, and main service providers in our area.

In COH there approximately 8,500 homeless with an additional 11,000 students that may also be considered as they are not “home” they may be in friend’s homes, or on the street as some may have “aged” out of the foster care system. A count is usually taken each January. New guidelines in many grants are calling for semi-annual counts to better serve the homeless population.

Several agencies provide guidance and administration to the two main funding areas for the homeless in our area. HUD (Housing and Urban Development), is a primary service agency. Administrative costs are usually very small per most grant policies. The private and not for profits are averaging 3% or less on administrative costs.

Continuing of Care - \$20 million dollar fund
Emergency shelter grant – \$1.3 million dollar fund
Search.com funding is now out of funds

There are over 200 service providers/agencies that are allowed funding or are servicing the need at this time. Some of these are as follows: Coalition of Houston, Bread of Life, YMCA, Catholic Charities, and Star of Hope among many others. Religious based groups as well as other not for profit entities are allowed to provide services while accepting funding from the above monies.

- As the weather worsens (lots of rain or cold) our number of homeless decreases as our weather is mild, conversely the number increases.
- Please note that “panhandlers” are not the same as “homeless”. These are often incorrectly stated.
- 400 prisoners are released on a daily basis. These persons often end up in the homeless situation.
- Houston is number 1 out of the top 9 in homeless persons.
- There are several main types of homeless: those due to economic difficulty, loss of family, tragedy, addiction, released from incarceration, and major mental illness and unfortunately veterans.
- These groups have understandably different needs and particular issues. Addiction (drugs or alcohol) victims are never allowed in shelters. They must make a sobering choice first. This is a most difficult group to aid.

- Adjacent counties send (often by bus) to our area when they “can’t deal with them” in their areas.
- The question was asked?...how long are persons allowed to be in the system. Generally the answer is 1 to 24 months as long as they are sober.
- There are clearly needs and shortages in beds for the large number of homeless in Houston.
- New databases are being considered to help “track” these persons to be provide services
- Ideas are being promoted to add more case management to integrate folks into any current family group
- A “sobering” center is possible by the end of the year.
- Future of this issue – Two cities Denver and San Antonio have piloted programs that have an actual campus that provides very good continuity of services. These models are being studied by the COH as possible plans for our metro area. These campuses have items such as: central intake area, daycare, school, animal kennels, separate areas for those addicted and not allowed with general population.
- Any new programming is slated to have ONE oversight agency and ONE plan so all charitable or non profits would have to “work in the same way” to receive funding. This is also planned for end of the year.

Keith Bynam may be reached at the following:

Keith.bynam@houstontx.gov

713-868-8396

Old Business

Minutes – as there were not sufficient numbers of delegates to vote, minutes will be approved at next meeting

Committee reports –

Security - Bob Sumicek – Generally crime is a bit down due to extreme heat. Most of reported crimes seem to be related to car break-ins and crimes in public areas such as shopping centers. Gangs are knocking out sprinkler systems and main water systems in esplanades. Many areas have been forced to add the 900.00 cages over their watering systems to prevent these types of attacks.

Ronnie Simmons – from PROTECTION ONE – gave tips on how to protect our properties.

Leave talk radio station ON in your home when away

Have someone pick up newspapers/mail while you are away

Have timers on TV and lights on varied schedules

Move cars around a bit if they sit in the same spot all the time

Alarm systems

Swipe cards systems on public areas such as community pools

Cameras

Set for INSTANT when you are home on your alarm so it will trigger immediately and the thief can't get far if the alarm sounds immediately

Snap – no report

Beautification – no report

Flooding and Drainage – Billie Long – drought has curtailed many discussions on flooding at this time. The New program from COH is ongoing. 500,000 new water bills with new fee are being sent to citizens, 4% wanted reconsideration of their properties = 20,000 property owners. 10,000 were considered. 4,900 were disapproved.

Legislative – no report

Speakers - no report

New Business

None

Announcements

None

Adjournment at 8:24 p.m.

Next meeting September 14, 2011 at Eagles Trace in AC Classroom

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Lamb

Delegate from John Paul II Catholic School