

Notes for HSHO Advisory Committee Meeting #4

Homelessness Services & Housing Opportunities Advisory Committee

Meeting #4

Monday February 3, 2020

4:00pm - 6:00pm

Fort Collins City Hall

HSHO Committee Members (attendees - in person or by phone - in bold):

Mike Sinnett (remote)

Josh Geppelt

Laura Walker

Alma Vigo-Morales

Fernando Leyva

Ben Mozer

Brian Ferrans

Cheryl Zimlich

David Rout

Mike Bello for Dean Hoag

Desiree Anthony

Jeff Swoboda

Johnny Square

Julie Brewen

Lily Adams

Luke McFetridge

Matt Robenalt

Nick Verni-Lau

Yvonne Myers

Kristen Psaki (remote)

Holly LeMasurier

Staff Members:

Honoré Depew, Jeff Mihelich, Beth Sowder

Meeting Facilitators:

Chris Hutchinson and Katie Huey, Trebuchet Group

Community Members (those who signed in):

Mary Alice McComb

Ryan Williams

John Klingaman

Patrick Ryan

Joe Glomboski

Kyle Duncan

Seth Forwood

Derek Getto

Eileen McCluskey

Don Butler

Dale Adamy

Joe Domko

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Welcome

- Agenda and group norms review
- Committee timeline and objectives review
- Summary of where we've been and where we are going - focus primarily on emergency shelter

Community Impacts Panel Discussion

- Local perspectives and experiences

Panelists:

- Don Butler - North College business owner
- Eileen McCluskey - Old Town library
- Kyle Duncan - Fort Collins Police Services
- John Klingaman - City Parks

1. What is an experience that demonstrates the impact you see around homelessness?

- **Don** - society should help take care of homeless because they don't have any hope. He calls the police frequently when he finds homeless sleeping along-side his north College store. Want to give folks dignity and hope.
- **Kyle** - Has 4 years of experience in police dept. Last week Kyle arrested a woman at 300 block of Mountain who had a warrant out for arrest. She had 3 large containers of used syringes on her person. She was previously arrested a month prior with stolen credit cards. While obviously struggling on the street, she shared she is also a mother who carries a picture of her son with her.

Another man arrested last week at 400 block of S. College - Lucky's Market and 7-11 - his behavior got disruptive to the point where he could be booked. He is an alcoholic and also a father. All these people in trouble also have personal stories and folks caring about them.

At Oak Street plaza every day Kyle will walk in on people smoking meth. He knows when he goes there, he will be busy for at least the next two hours.

These folks' behavior affects people trying to enjoy downtown and also affects their own families.

- **Jon** - Impacts to city park employees are from increased danger of items in backpacks, flowerpots, and needles in the open. Number one is safety and second is training they have to go through - this wasn't something we talked about ten years ago.
- **Eileen** - Doesn't want the story of the library to be just about our incidents - in January provided services to 1900 people in programs, classes, story-times, etc. At the same time dealing with significant amount of behavioral, hygiene, and

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vandalism issues. Three quarters of chairs are slashed - re-upholster all the time. People bathe in the library restrooms.

One story captured on the security camera was a man walking up the stairs and his loaded needle fell, and a four-year old girl almost scooped up the needle. Called the police, the needle was tested, and it was loaded with meth.

A small percentage of patrons are causing the issues.

Success stories happen too - we help people re-activate phones, get access to Medicaid, they bring us artwork. It may be the only time of the day to have a private space to watch a movie, or to have community and be with others.

2. What do you see as the main challenges in dealing with homelessness and people experiencing it?

- Addiction issues - Kyle often finds meth pipes, needles, baggies or casual conversation about daily use - strong grasp of drugs impacts everything they do - the root of the problem cops deal with is substance abuse
- Mental health, addiction and loneliness - library can help a bit with social isolation - may be the only smile, normal conversation they get, but can't help with other stuff
- Psychological stew - trauma, mental health. North Fort Collins perceived to be the poorest part of the city - people leave messes behind. Don't let the North be overloaded with more of the same - people who are down on their luck and don't know how to get out of it
- Conflict of wanting to help and having a job to do of keeping things clean and tidy. A difficult job to maintain public spaces - sadness when you come across a camp - trash vs. personal belongings - hard to see a lot of it day after day

3. What has surprised you or shifted your thinking/understanding around homelessness?

- When I started downtown, Jefferson Street Park was active and populated by folks daily. It seems like the numbers have increased year after year and the amount of people in cars overnight has been increasing
- Different areas of city could help a lot instead of putting all the services in one area. Coming into the city from North of Fort Collins didn't used to be visually appealing and now it is finally cleaned up.
- When I was a young cop and I used to vent about the people I would arrest, my mom used to say, "All of the people you arrest have mothers somewhere." That shifted my perspective. These people have kids and families of their own, just like I do. The addiction is so strong that it makes them choose the street lifestyle - destroying them, destroying their families. Can't solve homelessness but may be able to make a difference in an individual life.

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- Very little surprises me about what could happen in the library -I have seen most of everything. The resiliency of these people continues to surprise me - operating under harsh conditions, and still regular people. I am connected to the issue on a personal level: last June I lost my brother who was homeless, and I see my brother of all these people who come into the library.

4. What gives you hope?

- My interactions often start with arrests. I'm called a lot of names, but I know what's in their futures - spend some time in jail, get clean, sober, and sentenced to community corrections. When I see them again, many are back to healthy weight, smiling, and making eye-contact. They return and say thank you. It's powerful because it affects them, their family, and the community members that live here. It gives me hope when people get the treatment that they need. Sometimes see folks who are now employed, no longer living the street life.
- Folks are willing and ready to offer help. This community cares.
- Hope we don't just move the problem somewhere else.
- Every day is a new day at the library. Start fresh. Outreach Fort Collins. A caring community - seeing success stories too.
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Questions from Community

- **What's the impact of de-felonization of D1 and D2 drugs?**
 - o Comes into effect next month
 - o Charged and booked to jail - not sure what the protocol will be a few months from now - can be a necessary thing at times, but jail is not always the solution
 - o Need to have the ability to take law-enforcement action - writing tickets doesn't have the same impact
- **You mentioned folks have resiliency. What do you mean? What does that look like?**
 - o The library is a space that's welcoming and open as long as you follow behavior rules.
 - o Folks can come in and feel like regular part of the community - use computer, connect with family, use study-room, connect with other people, life can be normal for a few hours a day
 - o Problems are probably 2-3% of patrons - causing big impact to our jobs
 - o Survivorship - cold, not clean, hungry - go to bathroom, fill water bottle, then good to go for the day - it's amazing to see
- **We don't live in a vacuum. Have you observed trends in how other communities are managing their shelters and how that can impact our community?**
 - o In the library world - many are hiring social workers. We are contracting with Outreach Fort Collins. The big buzz is about trauma-informed care -

we integrate this approach from a space of compassion.

- **What is the day-to-day cleanup for parks? How have things changed in the last 5 years - better, worse, or stayed the same?**
 - The scope has gotten bigger - still do the same job everyday
 - More aggressive behavior - physical abuse - spitting, cursing
 - Syringes have gotten worse - 5 years ago we didn't have sharps containers, now all vehicles do
 - Bathrooms at Oak Street aren't managed by Parks - every day is a new day
 - We work in pairs (that didn't happen 5 years ago) - have to hire more staff
 - You never know what you're going to see - legitimate and illegitimate uses
 - Increase in staff to make sure we are staying safe and increase in hours in general maintenance

- **What proportion of people arrested are homeless/ how many on meth?**
 - 210 arrests last year x 3 years = about 600 people, conservative estimate is 90% are homeless. 80% of those people finding drugs, paraphernalia, under influence or talk openly about meth addiction (it's cheap and easy to find - they laugh when we ask about how easy it is to get), some heroin
 - Talk openly about what it's like to be high. Meth is numbing agent

- **When you're dealing with folks dealing with addiction, what tools do you have as a resource to offer those folks?**
 - More education and awareness - we need treatment facilities - most resource information comes when they're sentenced
 - Out on the street, we can talk to them, most are pretty heavy into the addiction by then at Remington and Oak Street - our best ability to share info is if they have a warrant or probable cause put them through the scenarios with the courts
 - If interactions start with a municipal ticket, and people plead guilty, they can go through voluntary specialty session - get assigned a resource specialist and meet with cop to talk about what goals would they like to accomplish - driver's license, counseling, etc. - They can go through the process, show up to court and are helped along the way.

- **Role that Murphy Center and default day shelters - What are your thoughts on the fact that library has become default shelter and other options are not available?**
 - Great trend when Murphy Center extended day-hours, significant decrease in incidents occurring at the library
 - Had to hire additional services on Sundays at the library - off-duty officers, when day-shelters are closed - increase in behavioral incidents
 - Newer folks coming in - don't know rules and expectations are causing the incidents - we want the folks we know - new influx is hard on us
 - Feedback from patrons that they don't feel safe, kids don't feel safe - so they don't come to the Old Town location
 - Hours between 1 and 5 pm - higher incidents - try to close at 9 pm

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- Catholic Charities shared a correction that they do have public day-shelters through the week and on Saturdays

Responses from Amy Setterfield, owner of Wadoo Gifts (shared by Honore as Amy couldn't attend)

- Last Saturday, several people disruptive - set fire to potting soil in front of the plants - people uncomfortable coming to the store front - if she calls the Police, then that interrupts the relationship with them - she's then seen as the antagonist in future
- Sheer number of layers of problems that cause people to live outside their homes - drug addiction, no hope, no support system, it all compounds
- Lonely and frightening without street community - hard to take steps even when people have options
- When she can develop relationship, can establish one of respect it makes a big difference. Unfortunately, two of the people she had relationships with died this summer - now the corner is open again to people she doesn't know.

Group Discussion

Gaps in service / Local needs assessment

- Polled committee members using cell phone technology to gather inputs regarding gaps
- Identified themes that came up more than two times
 - More shelter care
 - Common spaces
 - Central coordinator
 - Continuum of Mental Health Services and Substance Abuse services
 - Transitional housing
 - Emergency shelter needs
 - 24/7/365 care
 - # of beds
 - Case Management
 - All populations
 - Youth and Family
 - Couples
 - Non-binary
 - Pets
 - Housing
 - Transient population
 - Choosing homelessness as an issue
 - Data on actual shelter utilization - capacity on system to get data
 - Programs ready for funding - lower hanging fruit - effective use of resources

Poll Responses

What is Fort Collins missing when it comes to homelessness? What gaps should be addressed?

Mentimeter

- We have a major Drug problem!
- Supportive housing Housing inventory for 0 to 30% AMI Case management capacity Additional employment training/ education opportunities City-wide outreach Adequate shelter space Adequate day shelter space Adequate basic needs facilities
- Expanded mental health treatment and services. Increased number of shelter beds and ability to serve different populations. Fully built out of continuum of homeless services. Aggressive housing search. Community wide trauma informed care protocol.
- Sufficient transitional housing. SRO or dorm style units.
- Drug and mental health treatment facilities, case workers, emergency and temporary housing
- addressing the drug problem and mental health issues

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What is Fort Collins missing when it comes to homelessness? What gaps should be addressed?

Mentimeter

- Emergency shelter beds #?
- Couples. Young adults, respite care. Homeless with pets
- Affordable housing Case managers
- Case management; agile response systems to address issues; common spaces for people experiencing homelessness to congregate that aren't tied to accessing services; youth services
- It seems many groups are in the space and the need for a single coordinator is paramount.
- A solution that reduces and discourages transients
- Comprehensive shelter for all hours, all populations
- Supportive housing, funding, case managers, behavioral health care, willing landlords, larger shelter with robust services
- There is a hope finding gap

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Can we hear from experts on transient homelessness - do we separate this group?

- What is the sub-population and the definitions we use?
- Five years ago, national data said 85% of homelessness experienced their first incident of homelessness in their hometown - aren't sure if that's still true
- We can create local preferences for priority
- According to Outreach Fort Collins calls come from people of all backgrounds - time in the area isn't a limiting factor - we try to determine if they know what services are available to them
- Many housing programs do differentiate in types of services available
- Homeward 2020 Point in Time - In 2014 done in June - at that time 438 people surveyed, 59% indicated that they had last residence outside of Larimer County

People coming into Fort Collins - do what extent to they come to access support networks or services?

- At Murphy Center, starting to see decrease in traffic - spike in public places not matching spike in people accessing services - we ask why they came, what sorts of resources they have here, make attempts to reconnect to family - it doesn't spike in the summer
- Don't often hear from people that they come here for the services - they come for the reasons we all live here - free concerts, outdoor lifestyle

How do you reconcile homelessness to negative, disruptive behaviors (may not be a homeless person)?

- Context - a very small percentage of population causing very big portion of the problems
- We need different responses for different people
- Impact of the issue is affecting many layers of the community - cost is really hard to monetize - i.e.. Librarian, bus driver, police, defacto social workers, emergency room, business owners

Group Discussion

- Committee recommendations format
- We will start to think about different possibilities for how the committee can work together to present recommendations to the City

Wrap Up

- Future topics discussion - look back at the list and gaps identified

Ask about Behavioral Health services - what is it and what is it not

Shelter usage data requested

Next Meeting

Notes for HSHO Advisory Committee Meeting #4

- Feb. 24th 4:00pm - 6:00pm, City Hall, 300 Laporte Ave.

Topics: Learnings from other cities panel discussion; further gaps analysis

Note

Charter for Advisory Committee Meetings prescribes the following themes/focus areas for the 12 meetings:

- Understanding current conditions
- Considering response models
- Opportunities and tradeoffs of a co-located services model
- Strategies to address and mitigate challenges
- Determining criteria for site feasibility
- Considering potential locations