



Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date/Time/Location: June 13, 2019 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM - Whatcom County Health Department, 509 Girard Street, Bellingham

WCHAC Members Present: Karen Burke, Regina Delahunt, Brien Thane, Samya Lutz, Jennifer Moon, Emily O'Connor, Debbie Paton, Mike Parker

WCHAC Members Absent: Ed Moran, Kyle Christensen, Paul Schissler

Whatcom Co. Health Dept . Staff/Guests: Anne Deacon, Human Services Manager; Barbara Johnson-Vinna, Human Services Housing Specialist; Chris D'Onofrio, Human Services Housing Specialist; Samantha Murdoch, Coordinator;
Guests: John Campbell and Helen Campbell

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action/Who
1. Call to order, introductions	Introductions commenced and quorum present.	Brien Thane
2. Agenda Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add to the agenda: Update on Health Board Meeting which was held June 11th. The meeting had no action, it was discussion and educational. A policy advocacy work team is convening in October for a work day to draft a set of policy recommendations to go to council by the end of the year, which includes housing, health, criminal justice and other areas called out in the resolution on Families with Children. 	Brien
3. Public Comment	No public comment.	Brien
4. New Business		
A. New Member - Mike Parker	Welcome Mike Parker as a new member. He will be filling the Coordinated Entry Provider position.	Ayes: 8 Abstain: 0 Motion Passed
B. April 2019 Minutes Approval	Regina moved that the minutes from the April meeting be approved as presented. Emily seconded the motion. The committee voted and the motion passed.	



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5. Reports/Discussion		
A. Severe Weather Subcommittee	<p>A subcommittee was created to look at severe weather response for opening of shelters. The group is looking at temperature, resources, vulnerable populations, partner qualifications, and what is currently available. The next step is to finalize the recommendations for the threshold and what would trigger a severe weather response. Alongside this we are also working with the City of Bellingham on establishing a winter shelter to assist Lighthouse Mission with capacity.</p>	Anne
B. Families with Children Shelter Update	<p>A meeting will be held at the Lighthouse Mission on June 18th to encourage potential partners by showing a day in the life of hosting a shelter. Discussion will focus on options and building needs to accommodate this winter with Fountain Community Church not hosting the 40 women as they have done in the past. The permitting process is extensive for non-faith based shelters.</p>	Samya
C. WHSC Update	<p>The capacity of the Whatcom County Health Department’s housing program was exceeded with the severe weather response needs and local plan update, so the Families with Children meeting has been cancelled. Once we have completed the subcommittee and local plan update we will reschedule the Families with Children meeting. The local plan update is critical to our funding. We are continuing to gather data for more accuracy at our Families with Children meeting.</p> <p>The dilemma we have is finding capacity to take this on and move forward, not just wait until one thing is completed before addressing. The conversation needs to include garnering partners that can take action without much facilitation from the Whatcom County Health Department, and figure out how we can support these partners.</p> <p>The Point in Time count has been released. Some key points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 700 participants this year, compared to 815 last year. That’s a 16% drop since 2018 which is the largest decrease since 2012. The methodology for conducting this is 	Barbara Anne Mike Parker



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D. County Update	<p>consistent from year to year to provide more accurate information, however this is voluntary. About 40 volunteers this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 700 includes 515 households, 119 are over age 55. Some of the more recent changes that could contribute to the reduction are the opening of 22 North and foundational community supports as a new resource. • Around 2/3 of the 700 reported last being housed in Whatcom County, which says it is our neighbors becoming homeless. The two top factors for becoming homeless in this self-report were economic or job loss, and untreated mental health. • With regards to families with children, we do see an increase from last year; however since we have started this annual report we have seen an overall decrease. <p>One of the challenges is counting those furthest from urban centers due to the size of the county.</p> <p>In 2018, 2281 people were assisted with Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee funding. Working on a press release to get the messaging and highlights out to the community, to assist in countering the assumption that homeless come here for our services.</p> <p>Current focus in housing is on the local plan update. At this time we have not been keeping up with our timeline to accomplish the completion of this, but have made a lot of progress. We are adding more data than previous versions, working with focus groups and a steering committee. We will send out a draft before the next meeting for you to bring feedback to the next meeting.</p>	Barbara
E. City of Bellingham Update	<p>We have received an estimated amount for the Consolidated Homeless Grant (CHG) from Commerce, but nothing is in writing at this time. It appears that all of the CHG-funded contracts will be able to maintain current levels of funding, but we will need to reassess this at the end of the year. Commerce decided to shift funding from TANF to a new category for permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless families. There has been less income than anticipated generated from the document recording fees. This could possibly be due to less financing and refinancing, resulting in lower quantity of document fees collected.</p> <p>The Housing and Services annual plan has been completed and is available online. This is effective July 1. The Washington Housing Finance Commission 9% Tax Credit Program has draft policy changes due June 14th. There are three proposed changes, and the city has</p>	Samya Lutz



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F. Legislative Updates	<p>comments on two of them. The proposal reduces points given to projects for permanent supportive housing, which is placing Bellingham at a disadvantage. When buildings can provide mixed housing it requires less operational support. The proposal also adds points for cost containment. This is not a solid methodology for total development cost, only providing a 3% increase despite cost increases along Interstate 5. Other areas get more of an increase, yet we are competing for the tax credit.</p> <p>It has been a challenge to sell the 24 single family homes to make room for the Samish Way development. Once this is complete it allows for 24 more housing vouchers that the Bellingham Housing Authority can use.</p> <p>The new housing bill HB1440 requires landlords to provide a minimum of 60 days notice for rent increases and pay or vacate notice is now 14 days. It also directs plain language about civil legal aid to tenants. The housing bill HB1406 is a potential revenue source as less funds collected through tax will be directed to the state, allowing it to be used locally. According to the 2018 statistics it could be around \$650,000 a year. There are specific criteria to this; the city is interested in the county collecting on their behalf provided there is an agreeable MOU in place.</p> <p>HB1923 offers a \$100,000 grant for cities to be used for planning purposes if they make certain commitments.</p> <p>Housing Essential Needs increased a little.</p> <p>Housing Trust Fund received a small increase.</p>	Chris
6. ANNOUNCEMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ferndale has convened a North Whatcom Poverty Taskforce. Riley Sweeney is the contact. 	
7. ADJOURN	9:59am	Brien
NEXT MEETING	<p>Next regular meeting August 8th , 2019 , 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. Whatcom County Health Department - Admin. Conference Room</p>	

WHATCOM COUNTY
Health Department



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