

Venice Neighborhood Council
Homeless Taskforce
March 17, 2007

Meeting Notes on Decisions

Stakeholder Attendees: **Chair**, Steve Clare; Judy Alexander; ~~Eden Andes; Carol Bodlander;~~ Rochelle Branch; Erma Darling; ~~Rand Dehny;~~ Sylviane Dungan; Robert Feist; Steve Freed; ~~Don Geagan;~~ Barbara Gibson; Ivonne Guzman; ~~Keetoowah;~~ Peggy Lee Kennedy; Aurthur Kessler; Chris King; David Martinez; Bill Maniscalco; Jenn Ma-Pham; John Mc Manamy; Bill Megalos; Dr. John Michel; Calvin Moss; Mike Newhouse; Stewart Oscars;-Deborah Payne; ~~Elena Benassi~~ Pupillo; Marc Saltzberg; ~~Jesse Sandler;~~ Douglas Stockel; ~~David Straiton;~~ Abby Templeton; Scotty Todd; ~~Natasha Watson;~~ Chris Williams; Valerie Lynn Williams; Becky Wolfe; ~~Ryan Wolfe; Michael Vann.~~

Guests:

Sharing Contact Information: All present agreed to share their contact information with other Taskforce members.

Taskforce Goal: To review solutions presented and others not mentioned in the meeting and recommend for consideration by the VNC those that:

1. Recognize that unhoused neighbors are members of our community;
2. Address concerns of either/both housed and unhoused community members;
3. The VNC can accomplish within a reasonable period of time either by collective action of community members or with realistic support from others including nonprofits, corporations, foundations and local government.

Taskforce Organization: Four areas of discussion:

1. Housing - Steve Clare, Rochelle Branch, Ivonne Guzman & Valerie Lynn Williams to facilitate discussion
2. Social Services (including job training) Judy Alexander, Don Geagan & Rand Dehny to facilitate discussion
3. Community dialogue/education and outreach – Becky Ryan & Valerie Lynn Williams to facilitate discussion
4. Advocacy –reviewing and making recommendations for changes in existing laws. Mike Newhouse & Calvin Moss to facilitate discussion

Housing Subcommittee Report

The Housing subcommittee made 13 recommendations upon which the Taskforce took several actions as follows:

Recommendation 1: that the VNC identify two sites in Venice where shelters with up to 30 beds can be located to serve homeless youth, families and/or the mentally ill for up to 6 months. [Note: the Housing Subcommittee also recommends that these shelters be designed to be safe and secure and permit sustained occupancy with supportive services on site or nearby.]

Action: Taskforce returned the recommendation to the Committee for further refinement. Included in the concerns were: that temporary housing was too specifically defined, that zoning considerations should be in the recommendation, that sub populations of homeless should not be specified or that all subpopulations should be specified, that conformity to the Venice Specific Plan be expressly included.

Recommendation 2: that the VNC identify at least two sites in Venice where transitional housing facilities to serve youth, families and/or the mentally ill for up to two years can be located.

Action: Taskforce returned the recommendation to the Committee for further refinement. Included in the concerns were: that temporary housing was too specifically defined, that funding for transitional housing was being eliminated, that zoning considerations should be in the recommendation, that sub populations of homeless should not be specified or that all subpopulations should be specified.

Recommendation 3: that the VNC identify at least one site in Venice where permanent supportive housing can be located.

Action: Taskforce returned the recommendation to the Committee for further refinement including the possibility that Recommendations 1, 2, and 3 could be combined into one Recommendation.

Recommendation 4: that the VNC advocate that every parcel of City property in Venice that can feasibly be developed for low income housing and/or supportive services be reserved for those uses. This shall include City owned parking lots where housing may be feasibly built above parking.

Action: This recommendation was rejected by the Taskforce but there was general agreement that the VNC should support Councilman Rosendahl's efforts to secure the two firehouses and the animal shelter (all vacant) in CD 11 for affordable housing.

Recommendation 5. that the VNC conduct outreach efforts to inform and educate Venice stakeholders about the Housing Element of the General Plan for the City now being prepared by the Planning Department and to make recommendations as appropriate including where shelters, transitional housing facilities, permanent housing with supportive services and other affordable housing should be located in Venice per Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 4 above.

Action: In light of action taken on Recommendations above, the Taskforce tabled this recommendation.

Recommendation 6: that the VNC Identify and publicize all of the shelter and transitional housing resources in and around Venice.

Action: The Taskforce unanimously approved this recommendation.

Recommendation 7: that the VNC advocate for more homeless Section 8 vouchers for St Joseph Center and other Westside homeless services providers.

Action: The Taskforce unanimously approved this recommendation.

Recommendation 8: that the VNC conduct outreach and education efforts to identify landlords (including owner-occupants of single family dwellings) in Venice who will consider accepting tenants with homeless Section 8 vouchers.

Action: The Taskforce unanimously approved this recommendation.

Recommendation 9: that the VNC identify a location in Venice where homeless people can be encouraged to sleep and where restroom facilities are provided, and further that homeless people be employed to provide security and unrestricted access to those facilities.

Action: The Taskforce approved (13-1-1) the recommendation as modified below:

Recommendation 9: That the VNC identify locations in Venice where restroom facilities are provided 2/7 and where security is provided.

Recommendation 10: that the VNC purchase lockers for use by homeless individuals and work with local nonprofits and the City to identify places in Venice where they can be located.

Action: No discussion

Recommendation 11: that the VNC identify a location or locations in Venice where homeless people may lawfully park and sleep in their vehicles.

Action: No discussion

Recommendation 12: that the VNC identify (or advocate for in the event that none can be found) facilities in Venice where vehicle holding tanks can be flushed.

Action: No discussion

Recommendation 13: that the VNC support the repeal of all laws that operate to criminalize homelessness.

Action: Some discussion but no decision

Housing Subcommittee suggested that the Homeless Taskforce create a Fundraising Committee to identify funding to assist in the implementation of these and other recommendations of the Homeless Taskforce.

Action: No discussion

The Housing Subcommittee will meet at 6:00pm on March 25, 2008 at VCHC for further work on proposed recommendations in the area of housing.

Next Homeless Taskforce Meeting: March 24, 2008 at 6:00pm at VCHC

Agenda to include discussion of proposed recommendations in the area of supportive services (including job training).