

Boise Neighborhood Association General Meeting
March 14, 2016 7-9 pm – Q Center

Attendees:

Board members: Katy Wolf, Stephen Gomez, Kay Newell, JP Castiaux, Sarah Cantine, David de la Rocha, Karis Stoudamire-Phillips, Ted Buehler

Absent: Garner Moody

Non-board: Matt Teske, Anna Teske, Jan Landis, Jason, Cindy Shipley, Ben Perrins and son, Adam Lyons (NECN), Sarge (Assistant EC for Forgotten Realms), Sylvia Castiaux, Marshall Runkel, Michael Huffman, Marc Jolin (Director, Home for Everyone), Ross and Annie Danielson, Eric Gewirtz, Pdray (sp?) Johnson Pennix

Agenda:

7:00 Introductions

7:05 Chair's Opening Remarks

1. Portland 2015 Point in Time Homeless Count - Demographic context
2. Strategies addressing Homelessness
 - a. Safe Sleep Policy
 - b. Long term solutions
 - i. Housing: shelter - transitional - supportive - permanent
 - ii. Services
3. Who does what?
4. Homeless Camps in and Near Boise

Discussion: What outcomes do we want?

7:20 Guest Speaker: Josh Alpert (City Chief of Staff),

8:50 Adjourn/Discussion

Meeting Minutes:

Note: Rotating Chair for March is Garner Moody but he is out of town today so Stephen Gomez is stepping in.

7:05 Acting Chair's Opening Remarks on Homelessness

- Important to understand the people that are affected, the strategies in place, who are the organizations and service providers, what are the Boise resident's perspectives.
- Encampments in/near Boise: Forgotten Realms camp behind Legacy Emanuel, encampment on Cook by BEH School, tents at Unthank Park.
- Stephen served for 11 years on New Avenues for Youth board.
- Stephen presents "point in time" homeless counts for 2015 for all major Western cities. Shows that homelessness is pervasive in many cities. Seattle has a similar population to Portland but a much larger homeless population.
- Stephen presents highlights of the Portland 2015 Point in Time Count Demographics
 - Count:

- Unsheltered: 1,887 people
 - Emergency shelter: 872 people
 - Transitional housing: 1,042 people
 - Total: 3,801
- Demographics
 - 41% people of color
 - 17% families with children - 369 children total, under 100 unsheltered
 - 31% women - 500 women in January were sleeping outside
 - 7% youth 24 yrs or younger
 - 12% veterans
 - 57% with disability conditions - physical, mental disability or addiction
 - 46% chronically homeless - been outside a year or more and has a disability
- Marc Jolin has been working on issues of homelessness in Portland for 20 years in various roles. Every two years they do a census. Federal gov does the count on a set date in January. Survey all shelters, transitional housing, hotel room subsidies. Send scores of volunteers out for a week. Work with county and city agencies. Doesn't count people that are "doubled up" - such as people living on couches of family member or friend. With that definition, it is more like 16,000 on any given night experiencing a severe housing crisis. But for our purposes we will talk about HUD definition/population.
- There is a "no turn away policy" in the family shelter, but there are still families living outside. They are looking at ways to address this and serve families and children better.
- People of color - 6% of Portlanders are African American. 24% of HUD homeless pop are African Americans. There has been a dramatic increase (42%) in this population, primarily male, adults. They are looking hard at how to address this.
- Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are also overly represented.
- 20% increase over 2 years for population of people over age 70 who are now homeless.
- Have had some success partnering with federal and local agencies (and federal funding) to address veteran population issue.
- Chronically homeless - 130% increase in last 2 years. This is tied to low federal aid and the nationwide housing crisis.
- Sarah asks about this neighborhood's displacement and if they track which neighborhood people came from. Marc: Gentrification and displacement has an effect on homelessness, they limit people's resilience. They don't track by neighborhood.
- Jan: Is it tied to lack of mental institutions? Marc: Lack of mental health resources is definitely a factor. Question of whether de-institutionalizing is the issue, but definitely a failure as a community to provide adequate mental health care and housing. Josh: A new behavioral health emergency drop off center, Unity Center, is opening in October. Staffed by a union of 4 hospitals who realized their ERs were over-capacity. Comes with 80 beds. Will be the old Holladay Park hospital in Lloyd area, which was at one time was the state mental health hospital.
- Kay: At one time the city closed a housing area and did not provide an alternative housing solution. In Boise, we used to have lots of nonprofit low income housing. They

were consolidated, the City got rid of them. Why did that happen and why were they not replaced? Jubilee was closed a few years ago. Josh: Don't have an answer on those. But affordable housing, specifically inclusionary zoning, was the number one legislative agenda for the City this year. Kay I would like to know how many units are still affordable housing? At one time it was 10% of Boise's units. Can you find out? Josh: Yes, I can find out. As far as I know, we have not closed down any low income housing while I have been there. In fact, we're trying to buy more housing.

- David: You say that numbers have gone down but we've experienced it going up. Josh: Chronically homeless is going up. We're victims of our own success. We've overdeveloped the City for past few decades. There used to be places to go, and we don't have those places anymore. Now we see it all the time. There has also been a rise in tents. They are more visible with tents now, rather than no tents.
- Josh: Every year, we consistently get about 3,000 people into shelters. While numbers of homeless stays flat, consider how different it would be if we weren't getting that consistency. We have been consistent in our efforts, but we haven't kept up with the demand. The vast majority of homeless in Portland are Portlanders. Some are from Washington County.
- Josh - Safe Sleep Policy:
 - We have been getting more and more calls and emails to our office. What galvanized the effort to the Mayor was the White House's veteran's effort. Then we focused on veterans, and we proved that we can do this. For himself, Josh had an eye opening experience on Dec 10 2015, the same day as a West Coast Mayor's Summit on homelessness. He got a bunch of calls asking why we were sweeping homeless camps during the Johnson Creek flooding. That's when they discovered they were doing sweeps 15x a week over many bureaus that own land, which have policies about trespassing. They also learned that the Police had developed a policy over time about stopping people from taking root with big camps over long periods of time. Usually crime comes from the large encampments. They never had the ability to figure out who was out there because they were constantly breaking them up. Vast majority of homeless seemed to be people who aren't chronically homeless, and needed help finding a place to sleep for a short period of time, to get back on their feet. They stopped sweeps until they had something better to tell people, about what they could do next. Here's what they came up with.
 - Phase 1
 - Day Storage Pilot - started today, two spots: under Steel Bridge on west side, Hazelnut Grove
 - High intensity street engagement plan
 - One point of contact system - 503-823-4000
reportpdx@portlandoregon.gov
 - Phase 2
 - Safe Sleep General Guidelines
 - Tents 9 pm - 7 am on rights of way

- No more than six people per location
 - Organized City Sanctioned Camping - Right to Dream is in process of moving to Central Eastside, will be about 100 people. Been meeting with neighborhood board and stakeholders, mostly a camp for women. Only camping the City allows are in sanctioned camps. Want to use what we learned in existing camps for future camps.
 - Organized City Sanctioned Car/RV Camping - Seeing more of this. Dusting off an old ordinance from 7 years ago to have churches use parking lots. Last time it was more under the radar and churches didn't have support of neighborhoods they wanted. This time they want to work with churches and neighborhoods together. Also looking at potential for camp for cars/RVs.
 - Shelter - goal to have 700 new shelter beds by end of year, will probably exceed that. Looking at other cities, innovation in shelters we can replicate. Close to deal to build a new type of shelter - SF has a "Navigation Center". The old way of shelter had a lot of barriers. New type is more inviting, you can bring your things, your friends and pets, you can get case management.
- City has an incremental plan for camp rule enforcement. City will have brochures with pictures, in English and Spanish, showing rules. Police have bought into this and are working to educate.
- City has been working closely with Overlook NA and campers at Hazelnut Grove on rules for that sanctioned camp. It's month to month. City needs to provide services like toilets, water, trash pickup. Trying to perfect that, then go to Forgotten Realms. City is considering the camps to be temporary, meaning 3 years. The City doesn't consider the short term efforts to be a "solution"; the only goal or solution is permanent housing.
- City has been asked many times how they would deal with this if it was a natural disaster. This administration's goal is to figure out enough that the next administration has a good foundation. The city/county/nonprofit coalition of partnerships also creates stability. Home for Everyone committees are big, representative population of stakeholders.
- Average time for a person to wait for housing, from asking for help to permanent housing? Marc: Right now a person with a voucher for affordable housing has to wait about 90 days to find an apartment. Waitlist for vouchers is up to 48 months. Housing affordability is a huge issue: 16% increase in rents last year. Can be 3-5 years, many kinds of barriers.
- Ben: Friend of his is living in an RV on Cook. Friend started the Forgotten Realms camp. Cindy: We've gotten two \$150 ticket which we can't afford, looking for a job. The RV is a place for her kids. The family shelter isn't a good solution. Her kids can't sleep there, they have dogs, the conditions aren't good - there are 26 people in one room. Her life goal is to open a shelter for families and dogs.

She is on a waitlist for transitional housing but right now she has nowhere to go and no idea how long it will be. Ben: We have lots of setbacks and barriers.

- Stephen: I did go talk to Sarge at Forgotten Realms, and Sarge is here tonight. Speaking for myself, I'm not trying to move anyone or push anyone out.
- Ben: And we don't want to make anyone in the neighborhood angry.
- Kay: Can we give vehicles a week to move after they get ticketed? Josh: We don't have the police enforcement to deal with abandoned autos. The list of complaints is long. Kay: The vehicles are ugly, but they're shelters. They're a dry place to sleep. It isn't fair to ticket RVs and not cars. Josh: We devised our 1 Point of Contact system - we are a complaint driven system. Our abandoned auto staff goes out, and they do triage. They try to ensure it's not a person like in Ben's situation. They're looking for actual abandoned autos. Eventually they will tow that. They will also look for things that are of criminal nature. If it's someone like in Ben's situation, they will allow that person to stay there. It is not a perfect system, since Ben has gotten two tickets. Kay: Can you take away those tickets? Cindy: What should I tell the City rep who ticketed us twice? Stephen: We will let Josh handle these specific concerns outside of the meeting.
- Marc: Program coming for hosting RVs in church parking lots, working with community. The program will likely roll out will identify folks in church lots, and connect them to services. it's a model they're using in Eugene very successfully for 15 years.
- Josh: We're in a different place now than when we rolled out the Sears center shelter. Now we're working with neighborhoods more closely.
- Stephen: There is no city or county property in Boise. There is ODOT property by highways, but that means it's off limits. One possibility for this neighborhood to consider is a partnership with churches, as a specific action.
- Jason: I live on Fargo and notice a lot of cars being prowled or being broken into near Ecliptic. But I've noticed that since the homeless population, the break-ins have ended and it's safer.
- Marc: The Eugene churches have noticed that there is increased security.
- Josh: Once block in the downtown core that has had zero police calls is the one with Right to Dream on it. They do an incredible job of enforcement. It's that and it's just eyes on the street. They recognize that they are your neighbors.
- Kay: If we allowed RVs and car camping at Unthank Park, and we had rules in place, it would help us enforce against the crime happening there. There are bathrooms there. Josh: We have a parks policy currently, where sleeping in the park is not allowed. Selective enforcement where police and parks dept enforcement use discretion. We are also having meetings with PPS too. They are incredibly concerned about their homeless student population. Kay: People feel harassed, but they could be allowed to park in the parking lot. SEI is a private charter school.
- What about ODOT? Marc: We met with regional ODOT folks to start conversation. They were reticent to do anything like what the City is doing. It is

entrapment when they don't give notice whose land is whose, so they need to put signage out. At least now they are doing signage "ODOT land, no camping". WASHDOT is 180 degrees, and pushing Seattle mayor to allow homeless on WASHDOT land. ODOT gave a list of property they're willing to give to the City. I'll add the land on Cook which was used at one time for a community garden.

- Jason: I have a landscape permit from ODOT, on Fargo - Fargo Row Homeowners Association - thinking about working on a project there, with BNA. Thinking about putting a mural there. Josh: Let us know if we can be helpful there.
- Marc: Welcome Home Coalition works on affordable housing, coalesced on finding sustainable revenue stream. Discussion now is about bond measure. A Home for Everyone: They're a great community organizing effort right now, and anyone can get involved. There are a number of work groups, addresses housing issue broadly, rent assistance, advocacy, support. One recommendation we're doing now is a landlord recruitment program. Healthcare, health insurance, hospitals. Employment, Street Roots to college education. Shelter strategies, such as you heard tonight. We've set a target for ourselves to reduce the unmet need for housing by 50% by 20. Mayor has set aside \$30 million to address homelessness crisis. We invite people to come around the table and work on these issues. Josh: You can also come to budget meetings and advocate for housing money. There will be 6 budget hearings coming up. BNA will share those dates/locations. (<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo/57268?>)
- Stephen: Jes Larson will ask BNA to endorse the November ballot measure, she will come to BNA to present.
- Stephen: In next April meeting, we can talk more about the ideas we heard tonight and what we can do. In the meantime we should all think about what we can do.