



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
TASK FORCE ON HOMELESSNESS & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES  
FULLERTON POLICE DEPARTMENT MURAL ROOM**

**THURSDAY**

**DECEMBER 1, 2011**

**4:00 P.M.**

- CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kennedy at 4:05 P.M.
- PRESENT:** Members: Deloof, Gallagher, Harvey, Jaramillo, Jennings, Johnson, Keller, Kennedy, McInerney, Mugrditchian, Serbin
- STAFF PRESENT:** Council Member Bankhead, Asst. to the City Manager Ferrier, Captain Basterri, Housing Programs Supervisor Morad, Clerical Assistant Radding
- MINUTES:** Minutes of the November 17, 2011 meeting were APPROVED as written.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

- Member Gallagher – Surprised that Cpl. J.D. DeCaprio could name 200 people that are homeless in Fullerton, which was a number she had not heard before
- Member Mugrditchian – Community is not aware of how the system has changed over the last five or six years
- Member Jennings – Also surprised by the number of chronic homeless in the area that Cpl. J.D. DeCaprio was aware of, and the need to have a second such person in the area
- Member McInerney – The need for year-round shelter and homeless facilities
- Member Johnson – Cpl. J.D. DeCaprio and his identifying the need for a year-round emergency shelter
- Chair Kennedy – Year-round emergency services for not only homeless, but also family and friends
- Member Deloof – Would like to have a drop-in center in Fullerton, similar to the one in Santa Ana
- Member Serbin – Have people from some of the successful programs, such as Step-Up in Santa Monica, come and speak on what does and doesn't work
- Member Jaramillo – Need for year-round facility in Fullerton, created as some type of non-profit; not police officers responsibility, more appropriate for social workers

**EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS**

**Madeline Leon** – Currently a resident at Diamond Apartments in Anaheim (operated by HOMES Inc. in conjunction with OCHA and Jamboree Housing), she explained the mental health and case management services she receives through Telecare Corporation. She was originally assisted by WTLC and participated in their transitional housing program, but due to his need for mental health services she was not successful on her own and could not retain employment or care for her two sons. She next participated in the Peer-to-Peer classes offered by NAMI which helped her understand her mental health challenges, and also connected her with Homes, Inc. and Telecare. She now has her two boys living with her.

Don Haylock – Don explained that he suffers with Bipolar Disorder and described a number of “dark” years during which time he was institutionalized, and then spent time on the street. He described circumstances of physical, mental and emotional pain, with an outcome of “survival”. Don stated that he found it therapeutic to tell his story to others, but now feels it is more effective to talk about how he feels today.

Don was asked what turned things around for him. He responded that earlier in life he never truly understood his own disorder, and was improperly medicated. When he arrived in Orange County he met people in the community that reached out to him and provided him with services that made him feel confident in himself, and loved.

In later comments Don stated that he felt the economy had made homelessness a permanent issue that was no longer preventable. He expressed hope that there could be more locations like the Diamond Apartments made available, particularly for people that have some ability to pay (SSI, etc). He also wondered if the City could purchase foreclosed homes and make them available for housing individuals that have some ability to pay a small amount of rent.

Joy Torres – Joy shared that she was diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenic at age five. She arrived in Orange County in 1989 with a one-year-old child, and pregnant. At that time she was not aware of any services or how to find them, and she became entrenched in life on the street, spending most of her time at the Salvation Army in Santa Ana. Joy has had eight children, which have all been placed “in the system”. She described circumstances in which she feared the police, but ultimately was helped by a police officer that took her to the Drop-In Center. It was through the services she was offered at the there that she became stronger and began to trust the people that wanted to help her. She now feels that if you want something in life you can get it, but the right person has to come along and reach out to you. Joy now has shelter, sees a doctor regularly, and spends time volunteering to help others. Joy also stated that “you cannot force a program on people” and that some people find support and family among their homeless peers on the street rather than through a program.

Curtis Gamble – Curtis has been homeless for approximately 2½ years. Prior to that time he lived in Anaheim for 16 years and worked as a bus driver for the OCTA. He stated that he became a taxi driver after he was fired by the OCTA as a result of his union activities. Curtis was unable earn enough money to keep his licensing current and ultimately lost his taxi business when his vehicle was impounded. It was at that point that he became homeless and lived in local parks supported by handouts offered by friends. One day a bus driver handed him a flyer about Mary’s Kitchen. He spoke very highly of the services offered by this shelter including: food, shelter, showers, laundry facilities, an address to use to receive mail, and a telephone. A woman volunteering at the shelter took him to her own dentist and paid for him to get dental work done.

Curtis was asked if he still lives on the street. He responded that he sleeps on bus benches and camps in the river bed with other homeless. He stated that he does not choose to use the Armory because of the time restrictions.

When asked what would help him to get off the street, Curtis felt that (1) Transportation, such as 30-day bus passes would help him to get to the locations that offered the services he needs, and (2) a place to sleep overnight, such as hotel voucher. Curtis explained that sleeping on the streets means staying out of the way, and thus staying up late until businesses close and getting up before they open again. Sleep deprivation is a problem. Rest is very important, especially for those struggling with mental illness.

Kimmy Kadera – Also a resident at Diamond Apartments, Kimmy receives services through Telecare that have allowed her to keep her two children with her. She expressed a desire to return to her hometown of Fullerton if the City could provide a similar development.

Mike – Age 57 and homeless, Mike described “pioneering” as camping in two locations in Fullerton (near the 57 Freeway and on Rosecrans). He explained that without a residential address a person cannot obtain a post office box, or register for school. This has made things difficult for him to progress out of his situation. Previously Mike lived inside the garage of a friend, which he noted is illegal in Fullerton. Mike chooses not to use the Armory facility because he fears getting sick from people that come there that are ill. However, he does think it would be beneficial to have shelters like the Armory available in other parts of town so that people do not all have to go to one place. In later comments Mike added that it would be helpful to have storage lockers for personal possessions (such as the bike lockers he previously utilized). He explained that is hard for people to move around with their belongings, or to leave them behind during the day without them getting stolen or cleared away before they return.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The following people spoke on the noted topics:

- Unidentified Man – homelessness here to stay; previously homeless, now works with homeless; suggestion - a way to develop homes, or purchase foreclosed homes, for the homeless community who have some sort of income;
- Susan Wright – homeless advocate; would like to get on agenda to make a presentation; Fullerton College and/or CSUF to offer classes that would enable people to work, or serve as mentors or interns
- Unidentified Woman – Five things needed by homeless – transportation, housing, assisted living, school, and work; use empty houses to house the homeless; the armory is just a band aid; offer homeless work to earn bus passes, etc.
- Sandy – Not sure if there is a clear picture of the homeless in Fullerton; not all homeless are mentally ill; recommends Task Force prepare a more precise definition and depiction of the homeless population (would like to work with Community Development Director Zelinka to prepare)
- Unidentified Woman – Where is the program for single adults; programs not working the way we assume they are; armory serves some purpose
- Christine Walker – Not just homeless, they have names and are people; need transportation options for homeless; come up with chores they can do to earn bus passes, etc.
- Unidentified Man – Passed out flyer about Mary’s Kitchen
- Cathy – Explained Mary’s Kitchen, which serves meals, allows homeless to use their address and phone number to receive mail and calls; showers; hygiene products; laundry
- Susan Wright – Coordinate with cooking schools to come up with meals for the homeless at the armory

### **STAFF/COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

- Member Keller – Different agencies serve different needs and different types of people. Still need more services.

- Member Gallagher – Last listening conference will be held on Tuesday, December 13, at 3:30 p.m. outside of the Hunt Branch Library. The format will be one-on-one conversations rather than small groups. She asked for volunteers.
- Chair Kennedy commented that the next meeting would be at the Library Conference Center and Member Mugrditchian would be coordinating. The following meeting would be coordinated by Karen Roper and Member Jennings.
- Asst. to the City Manager Ferrier – Mindmixer posters available.
- Member Deloof – Add Mindmixer website to the City's website.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Kennedy adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m.

### **AGENDA FORECAST**

The next Task Force meeting will be December 15, 2011 at 4:00 p.m. in the Fullerton Library Conference Center, 353 West Commonwealth Avenue, Fullerton, California.