



Tri-City Joint Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness
Somersworth Middle School, Media Center
7 Memorial Drive
Somersworth, NH 03878
December 6, 2018
6:00 PM

MAYORS

Chairman
Jeremy Hutchinson

Mayor Caroline McCarley
Mayor Karen Weston
Mayor Dana Hilliard

Vice Chair
Marcia Gasses

Rochester Members

Elizabeth Atwood

Rev. Eliza Tweedy

Jeremy Hutchinson

T.J. Jean

Dover Members

Phyllis Woods

Betsey Andrews Parker

Andrew Howard

Marcia Gasses

Somersworth Members

Todd Marsh

Laura Hogan

Rick Michaud

Dina Gagnon

Alternate (Dover):
Lindsey Williams

Homeless Liaison
Terra Stewart

Survival Shelter Sub-Task Group	Master Plan Sub-Task Group
Marcia Gasses	Betsey Andrews Parker
Todd Marsh	Todd Marsh
Elizabeth Atwood	Dina Gagnon
Andrew Howard	Eliza Tweedy
	Phyllis Woods
	Lena Nichols
	Laura Hogan
	Rich Michaud

MINUTES**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Hutchinson called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

2. Roll Call

Cassie Givara, Deputy City Clerk of Rochester, took the roll. The following members were present: Betsey Andrews Parker, Andrew Howard, Todd Marsh, Rick Michaud, Eliza Tweedy, Jeremy Hutchinson, and Mayor Hilliard. Lindsey Williams & Phyllis Woods both arrived shortly after rollcall.

The Following members were absent/excused: Dina Gagnon, Laura Hogan, Terra Stewart, Marcia Gasses, Mayor McCarley, Mayor Weston.

3. Clergy Remarks – Rev. Eliza Tweedy

Reverend Eliza Tweedy of the First Church Congregational in Rochester gave inspiring open remarks and spoke about breaking down the “us. Vs them” barrier, learning to view humanity as one people, as one community and taking care of our community.

4. Update: Current Statistics on Homelessness in Strafford County

Tory Jennison (Director of Population Health at Integrated Delivery Network), Betsey Andrews-Parker (CAPSC) and Todd Marsh (Rochester Welfare) gave updates on the current statistics on those waiting to be sheltered in the seacoast area.

5. Public Input

Chairman Hutchinson invited members of the public to address the Task Force.

George Maglaras, Strafford County Commissioner, informed the commission that The Strafford County Commissioners have decided to open a temporary shelter at the Strafford County Complex. This temporary shelter is intended to be a stop gap measure to shelter those in need while the Task Force and Salvation Army struggle to get a cold weather shelter open in Rochester. This shelter is not intended for long-term use. Commissioner Maglaras stated that the County doesn't have to deal with the same code or zoning issues with which the municipalities have to deal, so they are able to step in and assist without the red tape.

Commissioner Maglaras stated that the shelter would be able to open almost immediately, prior to the holidays. The facility can likely house up to 40 individuals. The Commissioner said that the details would be released shortly, including transportation which will be provided by the County. The County hopes to offer integrated care for those

staying at the shelter to ensure there is no wrong point of entry for those seeking help. The County will take care of all costs, although the costs will be lessened due to the existing resources available. The shelter will be low-barrier, sheltering those in need overnight but not during day time hours.

He stated that the Commissioners are of the belief that Government shouldn't be doing anything that the private sector is willing to do. Government should be a tool to augment what the Task Force is doing, not replace it. This shelter may or may not be part of a longer term solution. Ideally once the Mayors and Task Force come up with a coordinated effort, a nonprofit or an organization from the private sector will step up to offer help.

Commissioner Maglaras strongly suggested that the Municipalities suspend the code enforcement aspect of the shelter process in circumstances of an emergency or cold weather; there should be more compassion for people than for rules and regulations.

The Commissioner said he was researching other programs throughout the country with the hopes of bringing information back which may help the Tri City Mayors in regards to behavioral health issues. This warming shelter at the Strafford County Complex will allow for the statistical analysis on this population to begin.

Commissioner Maglaras spoke about a program developed by the State of Utah Government in which they created delivery networks around government-run shelters which had fewer rules and restrictions, and with which there was no wrong point of entry. The shelters were open for those with substances misuse issues, behavioral health issues and others. These issues were dealt with in an integrated fashion. The Commissioner stated he planned to travel to Utah to learn more about this program and see if it would be plausible to do something similar in NH and how such a program could be funded.

A resident spoke about the struggles her family has been enduring with an unethical landlord who is not taking care of the property in which she lives or keeping the house in a safe, livable condition. The resident also addressed the committee about her inability to get assistance from code enforcement due to her landlord not allowing them in the building. The resident spoke of the lack of affordable housing in the area and inability to secure housing through HUD due to prior evictions. Following Public Input, members of the Task Force from various community resource organizations stepped aside with the resident to further discuss her situation.

6. Approval of Minutes

- 3.1 Tri-City Mayors' Joint Task Force Meeting October 18, 2018 (revised)
consideration for approval

- 3.2 Tri-City Mayors' Joint Task Force Meeting November 15, 2018
consideration for approval
- 3.3 Tri-City Mayors' Joint Task Force Workshop November 29, 2018
Information Only

Andrew Howard **MOVED** to accept the minutes for October 18, 2018 as revised as well as the minutes for November 15, 2018. Eliza Tweedy seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

7. Communications from the Mayors

**Agenda change – Communication from mayors held following the review of the draft Master Plan*

8. Communications from the Task Force Chairs

Chairman Hutchinson reported that the Salvation Army is in a holding pattern with the City of Rochester in regards to the variance issue. The Salvation Army is still waiting on approval from the Zoning Board of Variances, but missed the deadline to be placed on the December agenda. They are now scheduled to appear mid-January.

Chairman Hutchinson stated that he is petitioning for a suspension of the rules in order to hold an emergency hearing on the Salvation Army Shelter. The Chairman said he is meeting in 4 days with City officials from Rochester including the City Manager and Fire Chief to discuss the issue.

There was a discussion regarding the need for measures which would suspend rules for extreme cold. There are measures in place for all other types of emergencies, but no such measures for cold temperatures.

The Commission discussed the difficulties being encountered in opening the Salvation Army shelter. It was asked if a shelter could be opening in either Dover or Somersworth as a Plan B if the code enforcement and variance issues in Rochester continue. Chairman Hutchinson stated that the Salvation Army stepped forward and offered to open the shelter, they were not approached by the Task Force or the Municipalities. Unfortunately, there have been no other organizations which have offered space or property.

Matt Huusko, Rochester, asked if the National Guard Armory on Brock Street in Rochester was an option, as it had been used last year for similar purposes. Chairman Hutchinson said that the Armory is State-Owned. The City has no jurisdiction over this property. Last Year the National Guard offered the space, it was not requested by the City.

Lindsey Williams, Dover, clarified for the record that the Task Force is not ignoring the Cold Weather Shelter or delaying working on this item. The Task Force meeting on November 29, 2018 had been a workshop specifically to work on the Master Plan, but the commission is still very much focused on getting a shelter in place.

9. Review: Draft Master Plan

Chairman Hutchinson stated that the Task Force was not originally put in place to open a temporary shelter. The goal is a long term solution to ending homelessness and getting a plan in place which can be approved by the respective City Councils year after year. The Chairman suggested keeping the Task Force going at least through the following fall once the Plan has gone through one budget cycle and experienced the hiccups shortfalls, funding issues, etc. At that point the Task Force will have a better idea of sustainability of the Plan and be able to make adjustments in anticipation of the next winter season.

There was a summary given of what was accomplished at the previous week's workshop meeting. The group had workshopped 4 strategies, formulating more thorough narratives including proposed action items, challenges to implementation and possible funding sources. Betsey Andrews Parker has taken all the comments and suggestions from each group and worked them into the draft master plan.

Ms. Andrews Parker reported that there are still strategies which need to be completed and there will need to be volunteers with experience in the subject matter to work on these items and reach out to relevant resources.

Matt Huusko, SOS Recovery, stated he would work on the Substance Misuse Strategy. Marcia Gasses and Todd Marsh committed to continue work on the cold weather shelter strategy.

The Committee discussed the process of the Master Plan's Completion. It was decided that it can be sent to each City's respective attorneys for review while in the draft format prior to being presented to the Cities in January. Mayor Hilliard recommended that the Task Force opens up the Master Plan for public comment in draft form. There will also be a chance for public input when it is presented to the City Councils.

10. Affordable Housing Strategy

No new updates or discussion.

11. Report from Sub-Task Groups

No new updates or discussion.

- **Communications from the Mayors (*agenda change*)**

Mayor Hilliard spoke about erasing borders; problems don't lie within borders and problems needs to be addressed regionally. Mayor Hilliard expressed the goal of having Dover, Somersworth and Rochester think of each other as partners in this process. Mayor Hilliard also emphasized the need to ensure the fidelity of the work being accomplished by the Task Force. Who will be in charge and handle funding and allocations? Although the Task Force will unlikely disband, it may need to be restructured following the completion of the Master Plan and after the next budget cycle in each City.

Mayor Hilliard stated that he felt the current timeline for the completion of the Master Plan was ideal. The Task Force will hold the next Workshop in January to further finalize the plan. Over the course of the subsequent several months, the Master Plan can be tweaked, go to the Cities' legal department for review, have an opportunity for public input and a charrette, and be finalized in April. The Mayor recommended not moving the product forward to the Councils during budget season, but rather waiting until the summer months when there is less on the Councils' schedules and the Task Force can make the Master Plan a focus before final adoption in late summer or early fall.

Chairman Hutchinson started a discussion on potentially having the Master Plan appear before the Councils for adoption prior to the approval of the budgets if there will City funding involved. Having a line item for cold weather shelters in the City Welfare budgets was discussed. The potential of coming up with a plan for requesting a supplemental appropriation from the three Councils was also discussed and how it would work.

Chairman Hutchinson cautioned that a supplemental appropriation would need to have substance and be worded carefully in order to be approved by the Councils. There needs to be specific direction and verbiage stating for what the money will be used. There will need to be discussion on how much to request and if the money will be equally dispersed amongst the three cities.

12. Supply Donation List – Terra Stewart

A list was supplied to the task force of suggested donations for the homeless community (Addendum). It was noted that these donations can be dropped off at the Tri-City Co-Op on Summer Street in Rochester. It was stated that there should be a caveat that only the specified supplies on the donation list are being requested to avoid the Co-Op from receiving unneeded or less useful supplies.

Mayor Hilliard of Somersworth said he would have the list posted on the City's TV channel.

13. Other

Barbara Holstein, Rochester Youth Reach, reported that the Knights of Columbus had just donated 192 new ski jackets to children in need.

The deadline for edits and additions to the Master Plan Strategies is due by January 4, 2018 to be submitted to Betsey Andrews Parker.

There will be no Task Force workshop meeting in December due to the holidays. The next regular Task Force meeting will be held on Thursday January 17th, 6:00 PM in Rochester, Location to be determined.

14. Closing Public Input

No Discussion

15. Adjournment

Chairman Hutchinson **ADJOURNED** the meeting at 7:49 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara
Deputy City Clerk, Rochester