

CITY OF NEW HAVEN HOMELESS ADVISORY COMMISSION

October 14, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members Present: D. Ecton, C. Spears, E. Robinson, R. Handler

Ex-Officio: V. George, N. Torres,

Staff: V. George

Guests: S. Werlin, V. Vidal, K. Fitzgerald

Members Excused Absent:

Members Absent: -

Chair D. Ecton called the meeting to order at 6:03pm

V. George welcomed R. Handler the new YHHAP representative.

Minutes:

September meeting minutes were reviewed. The vote on the minutes was postponed due to lack of quorum.

NEW BUSINESS:

Spotlight Agency 1: Fellowship Place

Program Director V. Vidal shared the mission of the agency is to serve adults living with mental illness by offering a full range of therapeutic support and rehabilitation services that promote independence, wellness, and a meaningful life. The vision of Fellowship Place is to provide creative and effective programs for adults living with mental illness, to eliminate the stigma associated with mental illness, and to promote the acceptance and integration of people with mental illness into the broader community. The Fellowship Place Social Club offers a variety of activities to help people find meaningful ways to structure their day and connect with others who face similar challenges. The Social Club is open 365 days a year, including all holidays and weekends. The Fellowship Inn also provides outreach and engagement for individuals with chronic mental illness who are staying in local homeless shelters. Services at the Inn are free and open to all city Homeless. Since the COVID pandemic, Fellowship expanded their services to serve the unsheltered homeless through a grant from United Way and City of New Haven respectively.

Fellowship Place expanded their hours to operate a navigation hub, a daytime drop-in program for the homeless, to include weekends and holidays. Hours of operation are 8:30am to 3pm Saturday and Sunday. Holiday hours are 9:45am-1:45pm.

Services include:

1. Basic Needs
 - Free breakfast & lunch

- Free laundry facilities
 - Showers
 - Lockers
 - Phone & computer access; charging stations for electronic devices
 - Clothing, hygiene products, blankets, and backpacks when available
2. Case Management Services
 - Assistance with the 211 process, housing applications, and government benefits applications
 - Linkages to employment services, primary health, and behavioral health services
 - Assistance with securing personal identification documents , e.g. birth certificate, photo ID, Social Security Card
 - Assistance with creating timeline verifying the number and duration of all periods of homelessness
 - Transportation to appointments as needed
 - Supportive Counseling and crisis intervention
 3. Information and Referral Services
 - Information & referral to other community services as appropriate, e.g. AA, NA, church programs

Spotlight Agency 2: Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK)

Executive Director S. Werlin shared that DESK provides Navigation Hub services to unsheltered homeless individuals and provides warming space for these individuals during extreme cold weather protocol. Normal hours of operation is Sunday through Friday 1:30 - 4:30pm. More specifically, DESK provides first-contact services by working to enter people into the system, assisting them to connect to shelter, housing, healthcare, mental health services, employment services, and peer support services in coordination with the Greater New Haven Coordinated Access Network (CAN). During open hours, DESK offers low-barrier, indoor space to provide basic needs in the form respite from outdoor elements, such as inclement weather. DESK also provides access to bathrooms during open hours, food, clothing, toiletries and personal care products, blankets, and other items as requested. DESK offers harm reduction interventions, including syringe distribution, collection, and disposal, naloxone, Fentanyl test strips, safer sex supplies, safer smoking supplies, and other items upon request. In the event of implementation of severe weather protocols,

DESK will provide an overnight warm space for those individuals with nowhere else to seek refuge during extreme cold weather protocol.

Shelter Update:

V. George shared that FEMA extended the use of hotels as a non-congregate shelter option through February 15, 2022 as long as there is an emergency order in place by Governor Lamont. She also shared that her office is currently reviewing proposals for agencies willing to staff additional cold weather beds (270 beds) for the warming center and overflow shelter for males, females, and couples, meal delivery to those hotel beds and a mobile shower trailer for the unsheltered. She shared that the mobile shower would be coupled with the medical van to create a One Stop Popup.

CAN:

K Fitzgerald shared that there were 500 CAN appointments attended last month for individuals and 74 appointments for families. Response time for appointments are occurring same day to next day. She also shared that there were 17 families in hotels awaiting shelter beds, while families in shelter were having difficulty finding housing units.

YHHAP:

R. Handler shared that they are preparing for their annual fundraiser and hunger week activities.

Announcements:

Adjourn 7:05