

CITY OF NEW HAVEN HOMELESS ADVISORY COMMISSION

September 12, 2019

Minutes

Attendance:

Members Present: J. Huettner, D. Ecton, V. Wilson, E. Sabin, C. Phillips Jr., E. Robinson,

Ex-Officio: V. George, N. Torres

Staff: V. George, T. Jefferson

Guests: C. Gormley, M. Ferry, R. Golden, L. McCrea, T. Regan, K. Fitzgerald, M. DiStefano, G. Harris- Roberts, T. Lockman- Fine, E. Larkin, M. Castro

Members Excused Absent: - A. Roth, N. Hogan,

Members Absent: - J. Hardy,

Meeting called to order at 6:05 pm.

J. Huettner welcomed all and proceeded to introductions.

Minutes were reviewed and unanimously accepted.

Update on Unstably Housed Elderly:

V. George gave a brief recap of Part 1 of the Unstably Housed Elderly meeting which occurred in February 2019. She shared that the goal of this session was to bring together all the stakeholders that serve the elderly population to understand what resources are available for unstably housed senior citizen. She also shared that the group (50 – 64-year-old) tends to fall between the cracks of governmental safety nets. They are not old enough to qualify for Medicare, subsidized housing and social security. V. George shared that she is seeing an upward trend of individuals that fit this profile. She cited a recent case of a woman in her 60s who was couch surfing and eventually became homeless, ended up in shelter and with support from several agencies, recently was able to secure an apartment after being unstably housed for a year. V. George also shared an article “Why Americans Are Retiring Into Homelessness” by Carly Stern.

K. Fitzgerald of the Greater New Haven CAN shared that they too are seeing and increase in elders seeking shelter and needing a higher level of care.

She suggested we need to further flesh out what we are seeing and document all instances, so we can start collecting real data.

M. Ferry of Yale New Haven Hospital (YNHH) Social Work Department shared about the collaboration that the YNHH has with Columbus House and Hill Health Center to provide 12 Medical Respite beds for clients still who need extended care.

He shared that they are considering increasing the number of beds and expanding client eligibility. In addition, M. Ferry stated that they are looking to increase more prevention programs that targets homeless ages 47 – 51.

G. Harris-Roberts of the State of Connecticut Department of Social Services -Protective Services Unit shared that her unit does crisis intervention and works to stabilize the elderly that experience homelessness and self-neglect – the median age they serve is 65. They also connect seniors to Title 19 benefits.

T. Regan and L. McCrea representing the Housing Authority New Haven (HANH) shared that they have 10 developments consisting of 750 units for seniors. He shared that they are currently calling applicants from their 2013 list. There was a lengthy discussion on why homeless individuals regularly get bumped down on the list. T. Regan explained that homelessness is not a priority next to domestic violence, government action and natural disasters. The group agreed we should petition the HANH to make homelessness a priority especially for seniors who are most vulnerable in shelters. L. McCrea shared that her division assists seniors with developing plans to avoid isolation, to improve budgeting skills, and to gain access to conservatorship.

M. DiStefano of Bella Vista Senior Living Community shared that they offer subsidized and market rate apartments. The Tenant Services Division offers wrap around services to their tenants to avoid evictions. V. George shared her concerns around Bella Vista's high rate of tenant evictions. M. DiStefano stated that eviction is their absolute last resort as they really try to work with tenants.

M. Castro Director of Elderly Services, City of New Haven shared that she administers the Phillip Marrette Fund that is used to assist Seniors age 60 and up with security Deposit and first month rent.

Next Steps:

Group agreed that this commission develop and submit a resolution to the Affordable Housing Commission: to include the statement of the problem and recommendations. In the interest of time the commission agreed to work on this document next meeting. In addition, it was suggested that this commission petition the Housing Authority New Haven to give homeless individuals / families a priority status on waiting lists.

HBR Update

J. Huettner gave a HBR status update to the group. He shared that after the revised HBR was submitted to the Human Service Committee of the BOA, he was informed that the Human Service Committee cannot address ordinances so the HBR was referred back to the full BOA for review. There was a brief discussion and R. Golden and T. Lockman -Fine offered to assist the commission with any new submissions that were needed to keep the process going.

Adjourned