

**CITY OF NEW HAVEN  
HOMELESS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

February 10, 2022

Meeting Minutes

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:** D. Ecton, C. Spears, C. Mendez

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

**Staff:** S. James- Marquis, T. Jefferson

**Guest:**

**Members Excused Absent:**

**Members Absent:**

**YHHAP: R Handler**

Chair D. Ecton called the meeting to order at 6:07pm

**Minutes:** January meeting minutes were reviewed. The vote on the minutes was postponed due to lack of quorum.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

V. George informed the commissioners that the Homeless Bill of Rights (HBR) is still at Mayor's desk and in committee at the BOA. All further action was disrupted due to Covid-19.

The Commission agreed to the following recommendations:

- ❖ HAC chair will form a subcommittee to draft a letter to the Mayor and Board of Alders to check on status of the Homeless Bill of Rights
- ❖ The proposed HBR will be reviewed at next month's (March) meeting's agenda
- ❖ No changes can be made to the proposed HBR, just a letter stating the importance of the bill to the committee

VG will forward copy of HBR so that new members can review it.

V. George informed the committee of the new Alder assigned to the commission, Shafiq Abdussabur WARD28.

**Commission Target(s) for this year**

V. George began the discussion with the concern of families and individuals having a tough time finding housing units even with a voucher and or housing services in hand. She informed the committee of some of the barrier's clients are facing when searching for units, low credit score, prior evictions, and high rent. She emphasized the need for deeply affordable housing options which include making homelessness a preference at the housing authority. The focus should be placed on working with the New Haven Housing Authority to make Homelessness a preference. She informed the committee of the other areas that falls under the criteria for subsidized housing, however homelessness was not one, she shared some of the ways preference can be achieved through collaboration and education, they are as follows:

- ❖ Next Step: Invite Executive Director of New Haven Housing Authority to April's meeting so that she can share insight on how chronic homelessness can become a preference at the Housing Authority.

**COLD WEATHER UPDATE:**

V. George shared that both New Haven Village and New Haven Inn hotels are full even with the expansion in number of beds. Shelter beds have since pass the numbers of beds allocated from 250 beds to 350. Since numerous cold weather protocols went into effect, DESK and Hamden warming center have seen continuous high numbers of clients seeking refuge from the cold. All family shelters are full. Hence, there are 33 families are currently in hotels with no where to go and waiting for a permanent place to go. With the high demand for shelter, moteling cost for families has far exceeded the budgeted

allocation. She also shared that families are staying longer in motels due to limited income and, high-cost for units.

### **Landlord Incentive Engagement**

V. George informed the commissioners that HUD gave permission to pay landlords up to 5 months of payments as an incentive to attract partnership in leasing up clients. The 5 months payment would include two (2) security deposit, first month's rent, and a two-month sign on bonus. As a region we offer a mitigation fund that allows up to \$1000.00 for damages that surpass security deposit. Even with all these incentives, landlords are not jumping at the opportunity to work with us.

D. Ecton talked about the need for clients to learn how to be good tenants and landlords to be held accountable in providing decent apartment for people to live in.

### **One Stop Shop Pop Up**

V. George shared that the One stop pop-up is an initiative that will serve unsheltered individuals. There two locations, Fair Haven and on the green downtown with one more location in planning. The services that will be offered are:

- ❖ Shower- Mobile shower van
- ❖ Medical Service- Yale Outreach Mobile van service
- ❖ Harm Reduction
- ❖ Basic essential take away bag

A press conference will also take place.

**CAN: K. Fitzgerald - absent**

**YHHAP:** R. Handler informed the committee of different kinds of fun raisers and speakers that are being planned but not finalized yet.

**Meeting adjourn at 6:51pm.**