

Community & Economic Development Committee Report

RE: Family Shelter – Local Government Support

Date: April 24, 2017

Chair: Christopher Etori

Other committee members present: Aldermen Cook, Humphrey, Larson, Ryan

Other Aldermen present: President Davis

Others present:

Mayor David Allaire

Deborah Hall, Homeless Prevention Center

Elisabeth Kulas, Housing Trust of Rutland

County

Tom Donahue, BROOC

Avaloy Lanning, RC Women's Network &
Shelter

John Longworth, Lutheran Church

Alan Keays, VTDigger

Staff Members from HPC (see sign-in sheet)

The meeting convened at 5:30 to discuss the history and progress of a family shelter to be located in Rutland City. Deborah Hall discussed the current model for addressing homelessness in the county whereby families are given vouchers for motel stays and of whom only about 40% receive services from the Homeless Prevention Center. In the past five+ years a Shelter Committee was formed so that the appropriate agencies could develop an understanding of the needs, work collaboratively to identify what resources are available and being utilized so as to not duplicate services, and identify areas for improvement. They identified stability for homeless families as our area's greatest need. The group researched various models for addressing the needs of this particular group such as COTS in Chittenden County, Harbor Place in Shelburne, and Upper Valley Haven in WRJ which has a congregate living/pod model.

Recently the group became aware of the former Red Cross building becoming available and approached Joe Giancola about purchasing it for this specific purpose, which would put it back on the tax rolls. The Shelter Committee identified this property as being able to provide the most homelike atmosphere in a pod model. The building is about 8500 sq ft and will be remodeled into 3-4 modular pods that could accommodate about 10 households. It would be communal living with a shared bathroom & kitchen per pod with each family having their own personal space as well. The building would also accommodate office space and conference rooms so that existing programs could be provided at the shelter, "Joe & Barb's Place." There would be 24/7 staffing, with approximately 6 staff members including an intake case manager and housing navigator. Families staying there would be responsible for general chores, developing a self-sufficiency plan, employment assessments, etc. The model is a person-centered approach to help families develop the life skills necessary to prevent future homelessness. The group is hoping to have at least some of the renovations done by September with about five families being able to stay there.

Alderman Larson moved to recommend that the full board authorize the mayor to sign the Certification of Local Government Approval to accompany the application for the Housing Opportunity Grant Program Funds from the State of Vermont. The motion passed 5-0, and I so move.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Christopher Etori, Chair

NAME

ORGANIZATION AND/OR TOWN

Heather June Hendley, Landlord Liaison HPC

Ashlee Chalmers, Housing Support Specialist HPC

Karlyn Brewer, Housing Support + Outreach Specialist HPC

Jessica Mahela, Supervisor HPC

Samantha Green Housing Support Specialist w/ Family HPC

Tara Chandler Re-entry Case manager HPC

Cynthia Fortier Housing Support Specialist HPC

DU DONAHUE BROOK COMMUNITY ACTION RUTLAND

Araby Lanning, Executive Director, Rutland County Women's Net

Alan Keays, VT Digger Rutland

DAVE ALLARD, Mayor Rutland City

Family Shelter (Joe and Barb's Place)

4/06/17

The Shelter Committee, a sub-committee of our CoC, has been meeting since 2011. Our initial goal was to map area resources and gaps of Rutland's homeless system to provide us with an understanding of need and areas for potential growth. Since then we've worked collaboratively to develop programs and systems of care to target families and individuals experiencing homelessness.

During our mapping process we discovered Rutland County's greatest gap in services is stability for homeless families that enter through the state funded General Assistance (GA) hotel program. Families entering the GA hotel program do not have the best possible outcomes for families living in poverty. The most detrimental piece of this gap isn't the motels themselves, but the immense adverse experience associated with being homeless. The challenges of emergency resources combined with the lack of affordable and safe housing leads to costly cycling through crisis-driven systems. If a family cannot be diverted from homelessness then their experience should be as brief as possible.

The Homeless Prevention Center (HPC) is an agency that provide services for people already experiencing homelessness or at-risk of losing their housing. HPC's staff are trained in trauma informed practices, motivational interviewing techniques and utilize best practice models of housing support services such as Rapid Rehousing, Shelter Plus Care, Housing Plus Care, Family Supportive Housing Program, Coordinated Entry and the Landlord Liaison Project. HPC was an early adopter of the "Family Connection" framework developed by the Interagency Council on Homelessness and support four key components of an effective homeless Continuum of Care:

1. Develop a coordinated entry system
2. Ensure interventions and assistance are tailored to the needs of families.
3. Connect families to benefits
4. Develop and build upon evidence-based practices for serving homeless and at-risk families.

HPC is the designated agency for coordinated entry and has established a successful track record of stabilizing formerly homeless families and individuals. It is with the support of the Shelter Committee and the Continuum of Care that HPC develop and operate the family shelter in Rutland.

HPC will hire several new staff so the shelter can operate successfully and provide the best possible services for shelter guests.

- Shelter Manager – Oversee daily operations, manage client services and work with executive director regarding finances. Ensure local and state regulations covering health, safety and capacity requirements are met. Create, monitor and maintain policies & procedures and ensure all staff are trained. Schedule regular program meetings with staff to ensure the facility is in-line with HPC mission, vision and values, shelter staff are

working effectively and monitor program data. Meet with Executive Director monthly. Full-time and on call.

- Intake Case Manager – Attend 4PM staff meeting, work within the Coordinated Entry system, and accept prioritized referrals to fill vacant shelter rooms. Work one-on-one with residents, triage family needs and facilitate applications for health care, ReachUp, 3SquaresVT, etc., organize adult programs (employment, parenting support, cooking, stress management, etc.) and children programs (reading, crafts, activities) recruit & train volunteers, coordinate services with community partners, maintain community bulletin board, plan for and organize transportation for guest when needed, work closely with Coordinated Entry staff & Housing Navigator. Full-time.
- Housing Navigator – Complete Housing Assessment for each family, collate information collected from Intake Case Manager and Housing Assessment to develop a plan of care for each household member and housing plan for the family, schedule meetings with community partner support team and family in shelter, ensure families are taking advantage of programs and supports in shelter and in the community, work with Landlord Liaison to house family in most appropriate housing, provide 90 days of after-care support to ensure family is settled. Full-time and on call.
- (3) Shelter Staff Member – Work one-on-one with shelter guests, welcome families into the house, orient new families to the facility, prepare the rooms for new guests, inventory and organize material goods donated to the house, facilitate Rental 101 as well as other groups and programs. Responsible for demonstrating emergency procedures to Shelter Manager and organizing evacuation drills. Covers vacancies of other Shelter Staff Members. Full-time, overnights and weekends.

“Joe and Barb’s Place” will be a 24/7 home-like, communal living environment meaning there are shared living spaces but private sleeping quarters. Each guest will participate in maintaining a safe environment and completing daily chore assignments.