



JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

Critical Quality of Life Issues Special Committee: Homelessness Working Group Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2022

9:00 a.m.

**Lynwood Roberts Room
First Floor, City Hall
117 W. Duval Street**

Topic: Critical Quality of Life Issues Special Committee: Homelessness Working Group

Attendance: Council President Freeman; Council Members Howland, Boylan, Salem and Carlucci; Elizabeth Payne and Noel Comeaux - Northeast Florida Regional Council; Phillip Peterson - Council Auditor's Office; Colleen Hampsey - Council Research Division

Subject Matter Expert: Dawn Gilman, CEO Changing Homelessness

Convened: 9:00 am

Council Member Howland welcomed the group and called for introductions.

CM Boylan explained the working group process, that will include input from subject matter experts and entities within the public, private and nonprofit sectors. The group will examine the scope of homelessness in Jacksonville, what is being done to address it and by whom, and the best practices or policies other communities are utilizing. He also noted that council's role in this process is to convene the relevant parties to affect change by making evidence-based policy recommendations in the committee's final report.

Dawn Gilman, CEO Changing Homelessness, reviewed the meeting schedule for this working group and discussed the goal to evaluate the overall system of care to identify areas of need with possible solutions. She gave an overview presentation of homelessness in Jacksonville and gave a description of various housing options for those in need: prevention/diversion, transitional housing (temporary, with no lease), emergency shelter (short term, temporary), rapid rehousing (rental subsidies, time limited, lease), permanent housing (lease, ideally rent is 30% of income or less).

Ms. Gilman said that the number of unhoused people in the city varies and is difficult to measure. Some methods for measurement include HUD performance measures, the number of first time homeless, length of time being homeless and the number of those who return to homelessness after being housed. She said

that the financial cost is higher to leave someone on the street than it is to assist with housing placement. When asked what ends the problem of homelessness, she said that the simple answer is a home. Ms. Gilman talked about identifying where and how to invest in services that garner results, identifying who is out there doing the work, the time it takes to get it done and who pays the expenses.

Katie Ross, Changing Homelessness, explained the rules to the Homeless System Simulation Game which was on the agenda to be played by the group. Three teams of seven were given the pieces and cards to play. The game models the system of care for the homeless population and was designed to teach how homelessness assistance systems work using actual data for outcomes of programs in different communities across the country. The game is intended to encourage thought and discussion regarding the local homelessness assistance system, the impact of decisions and strategies to reduce homelessness, and system-wide outcomes.

Following the game, there was a discussion about the realism involved. The ‘players’ indicated that the volume of individuals going through intake, the number of those repeatedly homeless and the complexity of the process for all parties were realistic. One participant suggested converting vacant buildings and city-owned properties into housing. CM Howland talked about increasing the permanent housing stock and prevention measures. One participant talked about root causes and how/why individuals become homeless. One participant spoke about the daunting list of requirements for assistance from some agencies that can be barriers to getting help. Another participant talked about the years long waitlist for Section 8 housing.

There were questions about how much funding to address this issue comes from the City and the state currently. In upcoming meetings, the group will look at what other cities are doing and what works for them, what barriers exist and how they can be removed, and further analyze of the scope of the problem to eventually get to where the group can make policy recommendations. CM Howland thanked everyone for attending and for what they are doing in the city to address homelessness.

The next meeting for this group is September 30, 2022, at 9:00 am.

Public Comment

Carnell Oliver talked about how small policy changes can make big differences, and about the importance of voting.

Adjourned: 10:59 am

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

Posted 9.16.22 5:00 pm