

The Bitterroot Valley Homelessness Task Force

November 15, 2016

Meeting Notes

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Next Task Force meeting plans:

Tuesday, December 20, 2016, 9:00 am – Noon

at Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital, 1200 Westwood Drive, Hamilton

Our initial ideas and agenda suggestions:

1. Analyze the existing membership and identify who and what constituencies are missing, and make plans to recruit them.
2. Dropbox 101; how to use it – Tim and Kris
3. Point in Time Homelessness Survey – Tina, Casey, Richard and Elaine
4. Continuum of Care – Stacey will orient us to this opportunity, one of the tools in our toolbox, and perhaps send us their meeting minutes if it makes sense.
5. Review of the reorganized Task Force Vision Statements – Richard, with a draft sent in advance
6. The Roaring Lion Fire fund of \$4,000 decision – Casey
7. Short-term action planning

1. Second draft Mission and Vision Statements

a. Mission Statements describe the purpose of our work, the reason we exist, what makes us unique in the County, and what we're all about. *The Steering Committee will consider edits to this at their meeting on November 29.*

The Bitterroot Valley Homelessness Task Force exists to develop and facilitate affordable and safe solutions for Ravalli County's housing needs – from emergency to permanent and for citizens of all ages, abilities and circumstances.

b. Ideal vision for the future ... third *draft* Vision Statements with today's input Vision Statements name the outcomes we seek, the results we are striving for – in an ideal sense, what we want to accomplish for and in our community.

Action Step: Richard offered to edit and organize these prior to our next meeting.

The community as a whole

- All sectors of our community – local government, state government, non-profit organizations, businesses, and citizens – are on the same page about the status of housing needs and gaps, and committed to finding solutions.
- Local government regulations allow for and encourage innovative approaches to meeting the housing needs.
- There is a face on homelessness; the stigma is reduced. People understand it and have overcome their fear about people who are homeless.
- Neighborhoods with a broad range of incomes are a norm.

Citizens

- No one experiences homelessness; a safety net exists for people in emergencies exist in adequate numbers and capacity for men, women, and families.
- People can access housing with their current income; affordable housing is available.
- People can age in place with caregivers nearby, the necessary adaptations, and services on-site or in close proximity.
- Housing exists for seniors and people of all ages who don't drive.
- There are housing options available for people coming out of incarceration.
- Supports are accessible to help people to avoid losing their current home or rental housing.
- Multi-income, un-related households can co-purchase and co-rent, are aware of the options to do so, and know how to go about it.

Housing stock

- The whole continuum of housing stock exists in adequate numbers.
- Emergency and short-term housing is available, and the local providers of such housing have sufficient capacity to provide it.
- Affordable housing is available to meet the needs; people with modest incomes can find and keep housing that costs no more than 30% of their income.
- New building incorporates accessible features that allow people to age in place.

Universal design concepts are a norm.

- Housing is located with walk-ability and public transportation in mind.

- In any new construction, energy efficiency and sustainable sources are a norm.
- There are multi-generational, synthesized housing complexes that resemble the European village look of housing. Neighborliness is encouraged through the design resulting in the sharing of perspectives, life skills and experiences.
- Auxiliary Dwelling Units (ADUs) are legal.
- Renovations that take place and the design of any new housing incorporates accommodations for multiple families and universal design.

2. Review of the short-term plans we made in October, our progress reports

- a. Maintain an e-mail list of all of us. *Tim and Kris set up a Dropbox folder.*
- b. Put all our research in one accessible-to-us-all location. Explore using Google Docs for sharing research. *Tim is doing this, and Becky/Mary will check to ensure it is accessible for people with disabilities.*
- c. The Human Resource Council offered to gather the data and baseline numbers about homelessness, coalescing all the affected households. *We will work with Bob Buzzes, coordinator of the Point in Time Survey. We will convey to him that we want to use zip codes in our data collection.*
- d. Form a Continuum of Care Committee, and qualify for the case management, building, operations service dollars. *Stacey volunteered to be the Committee Chair, and will propose that this Task Force be the local Committee.*
- e. Commit to participating more fully in the Point in Time Survey of homeless people in January. Form a committee to meet in early December to ensure the entire Valley is included by providing free meals, free haircuts, and the Stand Down model to attract veterans. *Tina Shay at SAFE and Casey at the Human Resources Council committed to making this happen. The plan is underway to train volunteers, including people from the food pantries, and other organizations. The Veterans Stand Down will be involved; it is scheduled for January 27th. Tim, Richard, and Elaine volunteered to help.*
- f. Form a Steering Committee to look at the RC&D proposal. *Jim Morton, John, Gary, Stacey, Pam and Tim did this, and recommend we proceed with their offer, with roles clearly identified.*

3. The blueprint and process offered by RC&D

This outline was provided by Tim.

- a. Bitterroot Collective Impact be the backbone of the effort if we don't have to recreate the wheel (Principle of Practice). It avoids a rigid process to proceed; it's a framework of best practices that result in successful social change.
- b. The spokes of the wheel
 - I. Common agenda – Mission and Vision

- II. Common measures of success – reducing housing insecurity
- III. Reality of the situation; we need to develop a baseline and then develop SMART, measurable goals. Doing so avoids isolated efforts, and instead coalesces the expertise we have for successful outcomes.
 - A. The need
 - B. Available housing
 - C. Developing property inventory
 - D. Policy (zoning)
 - E. Infrastructure costs
 - F. Rural community (at least 2 10 year plans and county-wide plans)
 - G. Current units with tax credits expiring
 - H. Demographics
- d. Mutually reinforcing activities
 - I. How diverse / inclusive is our Task Force?
- e. Continuous communication
- f. The backbone organization provides the structure, but doesn't DO these things, but facilitates the discussion and decisions by the Task Fore.
 - I. Guide vision and strategy
 - II. Support aligned activities
 - III. Establish shared measurement practices
 - IV. Build public will.
 - V. Advance policy, such as zoning.
 - VI. Mobilize funding.

- Tim is offering to volunteer 30 hours a week and be our Executive Assistant.
- The Dennis Washington Foundation provided \$15,000 for the first year and \$12,000 for the second year. Their focus is non-profit advancement and the facilitation of social change. The funds are to identify shared interests and leverage resources around a certain subject.
- Question: Where will the budget be allocated? Coffee, donuts, advertising, the Point in Time count, copying, etc. RC&D/Tim will tell us about the budget we have to work with, and share that initially at the Steering Committee meeting scheduled for Nov. 29.

4. Our meetings, and making them as effective as possible

- a. What has been helpful or satisfying to-date? What features do we want to continue and repeat?
 - Building on the previous meetings, continuity, and the review of recent tasks.
 - Review the action steps to ensure good accountability.
 - Continue the methodology and processes we've been using, including:
 - Facilitation
 - Minutes and agendas
 - Name the outcomes of each meeting on the agendas
 - Starting and ending on time.

– Coffee and food.

b. How can we make them better, more satisfying, more interesting, and more likely to help fulfil our mission? Think format, processes, meeting times, location, anything!

– Agendas in advance, a week at least.

– Provide water.

– Provide sugar-free food options such as cheese and fruit.

– Add other constituencies to our group.

– Ask different relevant organizations to send service recipients / representatives to speak to us about challenges and how they overcame the challenges. Make these brief and at the beginning of the meeting.

– Share what each organization at the table has in mind and is planning on the short-term that is relevant to our mission. Specific organizations we had in mind initially are the Human Resources Council, SAFE, and something about the Roaring Lion fire money.

– Provide committee reports in writing in advance of the meetings.

5. Steering Committee assignments

1. Discuss and finalize a recommendation to the Task Force about the name. Ideas floated today were:

- Housing and Homelessness

- Housing Insecurity

- Housing Security

2. Phone calls to members who missed today's meeting

3. Review Tim's findings and data

6. Our running list of ideas, actions and initiatives to meet the needs and achieve the Task Force vision

What could we do if we had more resources or opportunities? What have you always wanted the Valley to be able to provide relating to affordable housing needs? What have you heard about in other communities that we might be able to duplicate and implement here?

- Involve the individuals, the people affected by homelessness and un-affordable housing.
- Get the Commissioners’ interest and buy-in to this issue.
- Educate the public and decision makers.
- Involve the City Commissioners.
- Include the whole County in our thinking.
- Integrate the housing market; mix ages. Provide assistance to people wanting to sell their homes and those who want to buy homes. Empower and provide subsidies so that people of all ages have opportunities.
- Add property owners, property managers and realtors to our conversations.
- Make tiny houses legal; address the zoning and infrastructure regulations to allow them.
- Legalize auxiliary housing units, those that might fit on the existing residential lots.
- Meet with domestic violence survivors, people who are homeless, people coming out of jails and prisons, and create panels of people who can meet with and educate the community and decision makers about what they’ve experienced in trying to find housing and what they need and want.
- Organize fix-up teams to make repairs to the existing sub-standard housing stock, and find money for the materials.
- Build affordable housing.
- Create “dream panels” of people who currently live at SAFE, in jail, and other shelters to actively inquire about their needs, wants and wishes regarding housing. A “Nothing about us, without us!” attitude.
- Conduct a more comprehensive assessment of our current housing assets, the existing stock, etc.
- Gather data on available building lots, their availability, and the current zoning picture.
- Research affordable and successful in-fill models from other communities.
- Utilize and involve Bitterroot College.
- Gather the existing research about housing needs in the area. Access the research, for instance already done by the HRDC and in the work to renovate the Valley Villas Apartments in Hamilton.
- Assess the number of houses that are empty, including those that are empty parts of the year.
- Recruit retirees who might be interested in our subject.
- Emphasize the importance of education about life skills.
- Protect and preserve the existing subsidized and affordable housing.
- Look at using cargo containers for short-term housing.
- Prevent and deter homelessness.

- Expand the available emergency shelter opportunities.
- Provide a housing safety net for people with mental illness and/or chemical dependency and who frequently have no income.
- Write a 10-year plan.
- Research and share all the existing housing funds – USDA RD, Veterans Administration, Mental Health / Addictions, Department of Labor, State of Montana, Community Development Block Grants, Section 8 (HRC's program).
- Involve the County Commissioners and Town Councils. Invite them to regularly attend; communicate with them. Attend their meetings with designated members to keep them apprized of our plans and progress.
- Build awareness of housing security needs by a regular series in the newspapers.
- Identify the available and vacant land that has infrastructure and zoning where housing could be built.
- Conduct a survey of people who are coming out of jail, graduating from SAFE, etc. to identify their specific challenges.
- Participate in the Point in Time Survey.
- Prevent seniors becoming engaged in predatory reverse mortgages.