

September 19th 2014

Priority #7- Affordable Housing Meeting Notes

Attendees: Don Shepard, Kenny Mitchell, Ann Teich, Mary Jo Hernandez, Randy Teich, Patricia Zavala

Agenda:

What do we know about affordable housing?

Ann has been working in affordable housing for the last 10-15 years.

We have knowledge of the homeless services in Austin, some of the organizations are the following.

Caritas was started by the Catholic church they do case management housing, rental assistance, refugee resettlement.

Front Steps is very well organized and they are bringing more funds to grow the organization. They run the ARCH and are contracted by the city of Austin. They have a community care clinic in one of the

Salvation Army also provides housing for homeless families.

In addition, there is a growth of single women that are becoming homeless and they feel uncomfortable staying at some of the homeless shelters.

The county is responsible for taking care of indigent people. But Travis County is at capacity.

What affordable housing contacts do we have?

Education contacts- ?

Nonprofit contacts: Ann Howard, executive director of ECHO, a coalition that started in the 70's that started working on ending community homelessness. As time went on the Bush administration there was a demand from the federal government to get together and start working on it as a broad based coalition. Money from the federal government got funneled into the state coffers and the state controls the money. If you want to show you are working on homelessness, they want to see that you are working in coalition and partnership with many groups. In order to get money you must show that you are working together and you have to show data that the work you are doing is working and it is effective. So what Ann Howard did was to bring all the workgroups together including people from housing, education, health sectors.

Foundation Communities cannot invest in an area like Rundberg anymore.

We would like to find an investor to take one unit and remodel. For example, if we could get an investor to remodel a unit and use that as a model for other investors to follow. Some of the working poor could potentially live in those units.

Community contacts- ?

City contacts- ?

State contacts- ?

Legislative contacts- ?

Federal contacts- ?

What kinds of skills we bring to the group?

Defining affordable housing for the Rundberg grant. What is our scope of work?

We need to decide what we are going to work on. We are volunteer group and we are the ones to decide what our scope going to be. The following areas have been discussed:

Working Poor. We want to build capacity for the working poor, people that are working but they still can't make ends meet. There are a lot of people that are poor and homeless but they go to school, they have jobs, etc. This may be the constituency that we want to focus on. Don is interested in housing a certain type of homeless people. He wants to get people from the dirt to being treated like humans.

"Housing First". We want to explore and possibly pursue the "Housing first" model: house them first and then work on all the other issues afterward. Giving people housing can help them start to address the other issues such as drug use, prostitution and other criminal activity.

Capacity is a big issue that we want to keep in mind. System capacity and institutional capacity, there is a lack of resources.

Education We have a education piece that we have to address just within the Rundberg area. We need to raise awareness about this issue. Many people could be homeless tomorrow, one catastrophic event could cause a lot of people to be put on the streets. An education lens we can present is: It is a lot cheaper to put someone in a dwelling of some type than to have to respond when they are in a medical crisis, in the ER, etc. Allan Graham (Mobile loaves and fishes) is doing really good work with Community First. It is worth seeing what he is doing to see the programs that he is doing.

Case Management. We need more capacity for case management. Include education into the case management, educate them about how to keep things clean and orderly.

Mental ill people and chronic homeless.

Economic development and City investment in affordable housing. We need to get a better idea of the city proposals and policies on affordable housing. We need to leverage the resources that UT has to be able get some funding allocated for affordable housing.

Follow up

Homework: Bring case studies of people that are in need of affordable housing.