



We Are Columbia

**COLUMBIA TASK FORCE TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS MEETING
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2022**

The Columbia Task Force to Prevent and End Homelessness met on Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at the Busby Street Community Center, 1735 Busby Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29203. The Honorable Aditi Bussells, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Aditi Bussells	Chair	Present
Edward H. McDowell	City Council District II	Absent
Will Brennan	City Council District III	Present
William "Skip" Holbrook	Police Chief	Present
Matt Kennell	City Center Partnership	Absent
Steve Cook	Five Points Association	Present
George Whitehead	Department of Probations, Pardon and Parole	Remote
Allison Farrell	SC Department of Mental Health	Present
John Wilkinson	Elmwood/Downtown Coalition of Neighborhoods	Present
Bret Kloos	USC Department of Psychology	Present
Antonio Flores Jr.	Wal-Mart	Absent
Kieley Sutton	Assistant Public Defender	Present
Treacy Dobbins	Inspire Real Change	Absent
Matthew Brock	Associate Probate Judge	Present
Doreen Skelton	Advocate	Present
Jamar Ogburn	Advocate	Present

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approval of August 17, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Upon a motion made by Dr. Bussells and seconded by Mr. Brennan, taskforce members voted unanimously to approve the August 17, 2022 Meeting Minutes, as amended to correctly identify comments made by Julie Ann Avin.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

2. Meeting Overview - The Honorable Will Brennan



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Councilor Will Brennan said this is the third and last formal meeting. We have come a long way. I appreciate learning from service providers about the important quality of life services you provide to an important population of our city, in the Midlands, and our state. There is still a lot of work to be done. From our conversations, the city has stepped forward to be a stronger partner with the service providers. We are listening to you as to what you need to be successful to serve the citizens that are in need and in hope of getting back on the right path. The announcement for the Inclement Weather Center (IWC) converting to a year-long shelter was made a couple weeks ago. That was intentional because we needed to give our staff time to pull that plan together. We heard about the importance of single resident occupancy (SRO) units. We did our research and put together a plan for 50 SRO units at Rapid Shelter Columbia through Pallet. It's not going to solve everything but we hope that it starts the process for a permanent solution to help the homeless population. It is going to take Columbia, the Midlands, counties, and the state to work through this. We currently have job postings for a homeless coordinator and two staff to help coordinate and communicate with the service providers. If you have any good candidates please send them to our job portal. The input doesn't stop today. We're going to work together as we move forward to bolster our homeless services here in Richland County, Lexington County, the city of Columbia, and in the state of South Carolina.

3. Review of Ordinance Requiring Permits for Free Distribution Events - The Honorable Aditi Bussells, Committee Chair

Councilor Aditi Bussells said one of the other ideas that came out of our discussions was finding ways in which we can coordinate the multiple feedings that occur across the city especially those that pop up and don't have a regular schedule but end up being in places that the city and residents may not know about. I'd like for our legal team to provide a brief overview of this ordinance. This is a draft ordinance that we'd like your input on and then it will be formally submitted to City Council.

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said before you today is a draft ordinance that addresses the popup distribution events. Much of our discussions in these taskforce meetings have centered on feeding-based events. However, it's currently drafted in a way that's slightly broader to help accommodate for unanticipated circumstances such as the need to deliver services, beverages, or clothing items. It is not completely limited to food distribution. The ordinance itself builds on our current ordinance governing large group activities in our parks. You'll see language that mirrors what we see in the regular event permit process. From there it builds on a program that stemmed from the city of Miami. We incorporated aspects that we felt



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were hitting on some of the points that the taskforce and others had voiced. It also provides for a deposit instead of an actual fee so that the organizers are able to get their money refunded to them after responsibly holding an event. It's currently drafted with five general locations. We anticipate that staff will look at the current facilities that we have available and where they are located in proximity to the unhoused or other individuals in need of services. This a starting point and if there are points of departure or areas of concern, we welcome any feedback that we can get.

Matthew Brock said it mentions designating five public places but no less than two. Are organizations allowed to bring their own public places or are locations going to be designated by the city as the only places that they are allowed to do these type of free distributions.

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said people can organize a free distribution event under the current permitting plan. That plan requires deposits and fees and a whole lot of other things that are not always the most practical when you are trying to hold an event with purely altruistic purposes. Modifying the timetable should be able to help us to address immediate needs.

Matthew Brock asked if the city is going to designate these places or can organizations do it where they feel is appropriate after they get the city's permit.

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said distribution events will be at specific locations within the city that have appropriate facilities like bathrooms, parking, and hand washing stations. They will be selected by the city ascertaining the locations that are most appropriate and also the locations that have appropriate features like lighting and security.

Matthew Brock asked if his permit will be denied if he organizes an event at a location that is not at one of the designated areas.

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said absolutely; if it is not in one of these approved locations. If there are locations that providers are currently utilizing, please voice that to staff. We can try to make sure that the designated locations are going to suit the most amount of people and purposes and serve the community that we're trying to address.

Matthew Brock said the draft requires me to disclose all of my affiliates. I'm assuming it's not for double permitting.



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Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said I think we can just modify the language to make sure it's clear. We don't want people double dipping. There are a lot of organizations that want to provide services. There will likely be a limited number of locations to do that. Depending on the volume of requests we can make modifications to best suit the city's needs.

Matthew Brock said it's dependent on the availability of the locations.

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said Finlay Park is up for a lot of renovations. In the future, that location may not be suitable for free distribution events year-round. We want to make sure that we're accommodating that.

Matthew Brock said there's a provision in here that says that if you're having a free distribution event, you need to have your organization's name on the plates, cups, bags, etc.

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said the name and the date. This helps us to track litter and it helps the people who are receiving those food items to know the date that they were originally distributed.

Matthew Brock said I understand that point. I want to make sure that it's not an undue burden for the people that are trying to have these events.

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said it just requires labels to be printed.

Dr. Bret Kloos asked what risk the city takes with this ordinance. There's always a risk analysis in law in terms of freedom of assembly. What's the boundary between an event and people gathering and sharing food that they bring in? Who will be enforcing this?

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said the enforcement should be through Parks and Recreation. This should be a civil infraction so it's not going to be enforced by law enforcement. There's the freedom to assemble but the city has the right to implement appropriate time, place, and manner requirements. It's only governing the free distribution events.

Elaine Cooper, Food Not Bombs and Homeless Helping Homeless said the newspaper reported that there is no forward momentum on Finlay Park. Finlay Park is open to the public and to the right to assemble and feed hungry people and have picnics. Do churches have to pay a fee?



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They're going by their religious beliefs: feed the poor, help others in need, and love others. How much will they have to pay?

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said they would have to pay what everyone else pays.

Elaine Cooper, Food Not Bombs and Homeless Helping Homeless asked what would they have to pay if they just go ahead and have an event out of the right moral compass that leads them.

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said religious groups will be treated just like everybody else; not worse, not better off. They would need to pay a deposit which would be refunded to them.

Elaine Cooper, Food Not Bombs and Homeless Helping Homeless said Miami ran into a lot of civil courts and problems. Food Not Bombs, churches and other non-profits took them to court. I want the city of Columbia to be aware that it's still an ongoing situation in Miami. I can supply you with that information from the national and international founder of Food Not Bombs who is based in Miami.

Councilor Aditi Bussells said the Miami case was focused on eliminating feedings altogether and that's not what we are doing. This is simply creating parameters to ensure that we don't have duplication. There are over 44 services that are dedicated to feeding already so it's not that we don't have those services. If you are a church and you have private property that you choose to feed on, this does not affect you. This is simply public spaces that the city has to take on the burden to clean up litter and deal with the aftermath of people coming in doing a kind thing but leaving a lot of consequences for us.

Elaine Cooper, Food Not Bombs and Homeless Helping Homeless asked how many containers the city supplies for these sites to handle the litter.

Matthew Brock said if you are approved through the permitting process, the city will then know what you are doing and they will provide the necessary resources. That's the point of the process. The city would be informed enough to be able to help and assist. The point of the permitting process is for the people that are going to do the free distribution events to come with as much information as they have so that the city can plan accordingly. The ordinance asks for you to estimate how many people are going to be there and it doesn't say that you can't overestimate.



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The city is trying to do everything that it can to help with resources because the burden is on the city to clean up if you don't. There is a good balance here. There may be a future problem with the two days' notice especially when you're asking for resources.

Kieley Sutton asked if the designated locations for these events will also be hosting other city events. Will free distributions be competing for time with other organizations and city funded events? Will that then reduce access? Will that interfere with availability or will these locations be specifically designated for distribution events? This is a beautiful and well-located facility but it has a lot of city events. If we're looking at spaces like this, think about that availability competition that didn't exist prior to this ordinance and make sure that places are not only convenient but available. Has there been any kind of consultation with folks who typically do meal service or free distribution events? While we've had service provider input for this taskforce, a lot of the meal service providers have not been able to have input. I'm sure they've had hurdles or obstacles that were not identified by this group and may need to be considered.

Councilor Aditi Bussells said the three new folks that will be coordinating our services will also collaborate, align and engage different stakeholders with this new rapid shelter and they will have that opportunity for input. We're not passing this tomorrow. We want to be very thoughtful and intentional but we also know that there's a certain level of urgency. We've seen that there are multiple services. We've heard from people even on this committee that have experienced homelessness saying that there are so many options in duplication of services around lunchtime that we're not spreading out our resources well. The intention behind this is to make sure that there is something available every single day and you don't have 10 groups doing the same thing between 11 and 1 on a Monday. If it's a private property, a coffee shop, or a church they can do whatever they want. This is specifically for city-owned property and spaces.

Kieley Sutton said I respect and understand that. I'm just trying to think of what we might have missed in our discussions. I'm sure that there are others that are going on. I've been a part of meal services where the donation of protein got delayed by a day. We haven't talked about that kind of hurdle. I'm just making sure that's put into consideration with this ordinance because there are things that are unique to free distributions that are different than generic homelessness issues that we've talked about.

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said there is language in the draft ordinance requiring at least 24 hours advance notice regarding cancellations. However, we may need to be more flexible on that or provide different parameters.



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Kieley Sutton said talk about how to reschedule and navigating conflicts. A lot of the food services that I had been participating in were working on doing more collaborative events because if folks are coming for meals then why not throw in a flu shot, talk about how to apply for insurance, or schedule your mental health screening. Partnerships were being developed. If this is going to disqualify affiliated agencies from pursuing their own permits within that week, then I think that would discourage collaboration. I am trying to figure out how to eliminate the city having the final and only say on a denial and having no recourse outside of the people who enacted the ordinance. Will the definition of free distribution in Sec. 15-6 include only goods or is this going to be for information. The definition is broad enough to include the distribution of information and that is something to think about and address.

Dr. Bret Kloos asked if a coordinating function is included in the ordinance.

Councilor Aditi Bussells said that will fall under the three new positions that we are hiring. We are taking back the coordination of services that the city funds. The Parks and Recreation Department will have a role as well. This is an existing ordinance that we are modifying to include this event. We already have a permit system for large events in parks, whether it is relating to feeding or not.

Allison Farrell said the Department of Mental Health has an RV that goes out. Is there a way to consider permanent or intermittent types of permits? I'm interested in the frequency of applying for a permit.

Jacqueline M. Pavlicek, Esq., Assistant City Attorney said a permit would not be required for events done in partnership with the city of Columbia. There is a provision to allow the city manager to waive the deposit.

John Wilkinson asked how many distribution events are on private property versus public property.

Councilor Aditi Bussells said there are about 44 faith based organizations that were identified as providing regular weekly feedings based on the cataloging of services. That doesn't include the popup feeding events.



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Kieley Sutton said Be Kind, Be Great Inc. doesn't have funds for operational overhead. All of their food and volunteer services are donated. The requirement to have labels and to-go boxes could be cost prohibitive for some organizations who are regular providers of meals. Is that type of financial limitation being taken into consideration? Will there be other waivers for these financial requirements?

Councilor Aditi Bussells said this is to make our services better. There are always different events and context. There is always a certain level of discretion and conversations that we have and we have always been able to adjust accordingly. If we are able to come to a mutual agreement, I don't see why that would be an issue. The end goal is to have a clear understanding and coordination of events in our parks.

Kieley Sutton suggested that the level of openness be included as language on the city's website, not in the ordinance.

Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we do that now and most of the time because there hasn't been a tone set about the massive amount of resources. We are more than friendly and more than compassionate. We are trying to strike a balance. I don't know that the tone of any city ordinance is always meant to be touchy feely.

Matthew Brock suggested that the application provide space for an organization to express any limitations they may be experiencing.

Doreen Skelton said my understanding is that the city wants to hold providers accountable for cleaning up. The ordinance mainly talks about food and trash.

Councilor Will Brennan said let us talk about where the ordinance draft will go and the timeline to continue receiving public input as the ordinance makes its way to City Council at a work session and then to City Council for the readings.

Teresa Wilson, City Manager said that would be the recommendation that I have. The taskforce has done a great job of providing input. Legal took a great stab at it and we need to put it before all of your colleagues in a public meeting. I need to review it more in the context of things that have been said today. Director Davis for the Parks and Recreation Department and Assistant City Manager Simons will need to review this, too. There are a lot of additional steps and we will make sure that all of the input is taken into account.



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Councilor Will Brennan asked for the best contact for the taskforce, service providers and the public to send feedback to.

Teresa Wilson, City Manager said we have been setting up a database in my office. We may need to standup a homeless services page on the website to include a compilation of what has come out of the taskforce. That may also be a place for questions, suggestions, and observations.

4. Long-term Strategies and Final Report to City Council - The Honorable Aditi Bussells, Committee Chair

Councilor Aditi Bussells said I want to recap some of the strategies that you all have determined in terms of what you would like to recommend to City Council and then I will open it up to see if there is anything else you would like to add. In addition to the short-term changes Councilman Brennan announced, here are some of the strategies that came out of this discussion:

1. Identify and create an infrastructure for services after 5:00 p.m. There is a gap. Most services are provided from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. While we have expanded our mental health clinicians within our Pathways Unit, there continues to be a need for us to create a system where a business owner or community member can call and be directly connect to a set of services after 5:00 p.m.
2. Increase beds and single occupancy beds for the chronically unsheltered. Some of that will be addressed through Rapid Shelter Columbia and the 50 Pallets, but our work continues in terms of identifying permanent housing solutions for those triaged through the Rapid Shelter.
3. Continue to streamline and coordinate feedings (meal shares) that are occurring across the city.
4. Revisit and address competency with the state and local courts and how to move forward.
5. Increase regional and state cooperation in support of all that Columbia is doing. We learned from the United Way of the Midlands (the continuum of care provider) that out of 19 counties in the Midlands, Columbia is the only city that has a low barrier shelter like Transitions. The funding formula is lower in South Carolina than a lot of other states. We need to push to our delegation the importance of getting more funding to address those needs.



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6. We don't want law enforcement to be the first point of entry. We want to see a greater presence of beat cops within the hospitality districts, use our Yellow Shirts Program, and ensure that we have resources to help people that may be experiencing a mental health crisis and address those individuals who may be engaging in criminal activity.
7. The 2013 Homeless Taskforce wanted to have the Main's Best Convenience Store (The Blue Store) shut down. We were able to do that and we have seen drastic improvement in terms of the criminal activity that has occurred there.
8. Coordinate our services as a city. That is where you are seeing the approach of having homeless coordination housed in the city to help develop outcomes, shared understanding of success, and collaboration with our providers. We hope this will be a way to resolve issues that result from working in silos or not having a shared understanding of the things we want to accomplish.
9. Having an appeal process for The Comet's trespass notices.
10. Tracking and accountability: Compiling annual data on the number of individuals using sheltering services. Currently, the data for the emergency shelter is reported through HMIS. This should be included in the job descriptions. Track where people go when they leave. This can be linked to the affordable housing taskforce.

Dr. Bret Kloos said I want to know that the money is going to something that won't move problems somewhere else. I don't know if Chief Holbrook was informed that the Sheriff was going to close down the field near Wal-Mart. That's a coordinating function. The 50 pallets will expand our capacity greatly.

Chief Holbrook said there was coordination. We share similar processes for when we identify a homeless camp. We engage our service providers and we provide notice in order to get people into the service they choose. We can't force that but we give them ample time to vacate from the property. These properties have significant public health issues and oftentimes criminal activity. It is important to know where folks are going on the backend but I am always curious to know how they got here on the front end.



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Dr. Bret Kloos said the United Way tracks the conditions people came from and the type of services they have accessed.

Councilor Aditi Bussells said as Jamar has openly shared, he has engaged in a lot of different services for the homeless. Oftentimes, we would have reflections after the meetings. He wanted to share a little bit of his story and give strategies that he thinks would make sense in terms of moving forward.

Jamar Ogburn said I was homeless over a number of years stemming from living in New York and moving to South Carolina. Back then, the Salvation Army and Oliver Gospel Mission were the providers. It was a cold and dark experience. You are living in filthy conditions. The showers were nasty. The facility was nasty. In 1995, I remember being in a small hotel room with four bunkbeds and eight grown men. We shared a small shower and a toilet. Only two people out of the eight overcame homelessness. The odds aren't great. There weren't many places feeding individuals. I last experienced homelessness in 2014 and I was at Transitions. If Transitions wasn't there, I don't know if I would be sitting here today. I had some bad experiences, but it wasn't all bad. My reality was based off of a foundation that came from my parents that told me that I could be anything that I wanted to be. In remembering what they shared with me, I knew that I could overcome it. I just had to do something about it. I worked and in the process I became friends with the social workers. They truly cared about the individuals but because of politics, their hands were tied. After I left, they asked me to come back to facilitate the Men Making a Difference group. That was my pride and joy. I didn't want to do it because I wasn't that far removed. There is hope and there is always that fire. I was a manager at the IWC and people want me to come back. Homeless people are not bad. If you look past what they are doing, you will find out that they are good people in a bad situation. I hope that the city, community, and services can somehow get together to formulate a plan. I believe wholeheartedly that we will be able to formulate an active plan that doesn't put a band aid on the wound but allows us to heal as a community and grow from there. I hope that when the homeless come to our city they say I may not be homeless for long.

5. Looking Ahead: Potential Partnership with Richland Library - Ms. Melanie Huggins
Executive Director / Richland Library

Councilor Aditi Bussells said the work does not end here. There are going to be plenty of opportunities to stay engaged. I would like to introduce Melanie Huggins and her team from Richland County Library. They have a potential opportunity for us to continue some of this



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work, come together to talk about some of the strategies, and develop a long-term plan to make Columbia a place where you can access services seamlessly.

Melanie Huggins, Executive Director / Richland Library said we serve people and meet their needs where they are. We have an opportunity that we want to bring to this taskforce. We look forward to seeing the full report because it will inform our work as well. Over the past few years, library staff has become good at service design, which is using a human-centered approach to solving community problems by putting the lived experience of the people you are servicing at the center of what you are designing. In 2017, we created Do Good Columbia. We tackled how to make our riverfront more enjoyable and accessible. We worked with 113 citizens over 2.5 days to develop ideas that could be completed within 6 to 12 months. We had 13 teams that pitched ideas to a panel of judges that included city staff. The winning team received \$50,000 to implement their idea. This resulted in the installation of hammocks, a mural, and signage at Riverfront Park. Last year, the Midlands Business Leadership Group asked us to assist with attracting and retaining black and brown talent to their organizations. We used the same process to interview over 60 employees. We drafted a report for the business community with recommendations on how to do a better job with attracting and retaining talent. We are here today, because we have grant funding for another Do Good process. We wanted to tackle how we might respond better in times of crisis, but when I found out about this taskforce I contacted Dr. Bussells about taking your recommendations to do another Do Good process. Now that you know what you want to do, we can help you figure out how you want to do some of those things.

Georgia Coleman, Chief Operating Officer / Richland Library said human center design is a collaborative process where you bring together diverse groups of stakeholders. We center people's stories, experiences, thoughts, feelings, and actions in order to design solutions that work for real humans. Design thinking teaches us to approach problems as questions. How do we collaborate and connect across agencies to serve people after hours? How can we ensure that the experience of people at the IWC is equitable, respectful and compassionate? These are the types of questions we could tackle through a Do Good process. We also know that great designs come with great constraints. Rather than thinking outside the box we build the right shape box to think inside of. You would help us define the timeline, project costs, partner organizations, and other requirements. We can customize a workshop process that would generate solutions that meet the needs that you are setting forth. Then we would develop personas or representative stories that we can design around. Additional information can be found online at <https://www.dogoodcolumbia.com>.



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Melanie Huggins, Executive Director / Richland Library said we have to spend the money by April. We just need to know if there is interest in us being a part of taking these recommendations, putting together a process, and moving forward. The city would need to be a collaborative and supporting partner and commit to funding whatever comes out of it. If not, we will find a different problem to apply these skills to.

Councilor Aditi Bussells said I think this is something that folks are interested in pursuing. We can have you work with Erika to get the taskforce members' information. We worked with several other stakeholders that are also helping us get Rapid Shelter Columbia off the ground. We can include the three new hires and members of the general public. This is another information gathering point. My only thing for us to consider is that the City of Columbia doesn't hold the dollars for homelessness; it resides with the Midlands Area Consortium on Homelessness (MACH). I would ask them to make the same commitment because they have millions of dollars that are given out every year. That is where we can move the needle.

Julie Ann Avin, MIRCI said MACH's money is already spoken for. That is HUD money and we can't just direct it to whatever comes out of this. The funds go straight into housing.

Councilor Aditi Bussells said there were many opportunities identified for better streamlining of the service providers that participate in MACH. They should be a part of this conversation about collaboration and alignment. There is a competitive environment of homeless services and we need to address that in order for us to have a true continuum of care for people experiencing homelessness.

Teresa Wilson, City Manager said Rapid Shelter Columbia has moved fast in order to open by November 1, 2022. There is still a lot of work to be done. I have a few pictures of what is going on down there. We are moving along steadily with the construction schedule. Site clearing began on September 7, 2022. After site clearing began, we completed engineering drawings because grading and storm drainage has to be addressed. A new service line and transformers from Dominion Energy have been installed. As the site prep continues, you will see additional things like sidewalk installation, artificial grass, and fencing leading up to the Pallet Shelters tentatively arriving on October 26, 2022. At that point, we will engage our internal forces and volunteers to assist with anchoring and electrical connections for the shelters for a tentative opening on November 1, 2022. The Pallet Shelter is a 64 sq. ft. unit that includes air conditioning, shelving, power outlets, fire extinguishers, heat, a folding bed, and an egress door with storage. The Pallet shelter units are well-equipped and safe. Over 3,000 shelters have been deployed across the



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country with us being the first in the southeast. There is a 100 sq. ft. unit as well. The site plan shows that 40 shelters will be on the left side for men and ten shelters will be on the right for women. We are sorting through administrative guidelines and the question of couples. I want to thank Colonel Craig Curry with Transitions for his insight. Through their partnership with the United Way, they have already worked at the Inclement Weather Center. We are working towards our staffing model. We take this seriously. This has to be safe and secure. We will get the work done and roll it out at the right time, in the right way, with the right staff and with the right rules. I appreciate the patience, compassion and concern that this group has shown in the work of Dr. Bussells and her colleagues to allow us to even attempt to do this.

Chris McGuire asked if there is plan for people who are going to become homeless.

Councilor Aditi Bussells said some of our great providers talked about those services at our last meeting. This taskforce is focused exclusively on addressing the chronically unsheltered. We identified that as a gap in services. We also catalogued all of the organizations that serve people and families that are on the cusp of becoming homeless.

Chris McGuire asked if an advocate is onsite to point folks in the direction they can go in when you clear out camps. I feel like I am about to face homelessness within a few weeks. I lost my job because I gave a homeless person my employee meal.

Councilor Aditi Bussells said there are service providers in the audience that would be happy to connect you with services.

Jamar Ogburn said I can direct you and help you with a few job openings.

Chris McGuire suggested that the taskforce educate employers because the homeless get a bad rap.

Tom Clements said I have volunteered at the IWC for seven years and I have seen a lot. I am concerned about how the expanded services will impact me. Clients ask why the IWC is not open all the time. Is there a way to accommodate storage of people's belongings? They stash it somewhere and it is thrown away or it is stolen while they are asleep. I hope there is a feedback mechanism for people on the ground.



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Regi Solis, Needful Things said I was homeless for six years. I am no longer homeless because I received an inheritance. I share information with the homeless. I only know of 30 groups that provide meals and not all of them do it on a regular basis. What will the \$150 registration fee cover when the Parks and Recreation Department was issuing permits for free? A lot of these organizations receive donations. They don't have money to pay that.

Councilor Aditi Bussells agreed to provide the catalog of services. They are not paying to register; it is a deposit. The cost to clean up after feedings is much more than \$150 when you factor in labor and materials. It is a way to hold people accountable of leaving the place better than they found it.

Regi Solis asked if the city is supplying adequate trash facilities. I have a list for Richland County and Lexington County. Some of the listed services no longer exist and some of the locations were not doing what the website said they were doing. There are more than 250 homeless people. Is there a law that says you have to be housed? The city has plenty of empty land to provide a place for people who do not want to be housed. Why are people being harassed? The 6th Federal District Court ruled that unless you can provide viable shelter for people, then it is constitutional for people to sleep in public and it does not include shelters like the Oliver Gospel Mission, which is faith based. It also excludes spaces like Transitions that has strict regulations.

Chief Holbrook said we are not forcing anybody to shelter. We're providing shelter for unsheltered people who may have been averse to staying in Transitions or congregate settings. This is a sheltering philosophy that gives people their own space. We are not taking people there against their will; it is an option for an identified part of a very vulnerable population.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ogburn and seconded by Chief Holbrook, taskforce members voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk