

# **BALLARD COMMUNITY TASKFORCE ON HOMELESSNESS AND HUNGER**

## **Minutes of meeting of May 28, 2015**

*Meeting facilitator: Karen Studders*

**Attendees (apologies if your name is not listed or is spelled incorrectly):**

*Chelsea Millin, Cheryl Chow Court, Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI)*

*Arthur Warmoth, Cheryl Chow Court, LIHI*

*Frank Scarabino, Compass Housing Alliance, Road to Housing*

*Erin Rants, Compass Housing Alliance, Road to Housing*

*George Ramirez, GED tutor, Re-Entry Program*

*Katie Truelove, Seattle Municipal Court*

*Mary Ann Hagen, Central Ballard Residents Association*

*Karen Studders, community advocate and member of justice organizations*

*Bill Kirlin-Hackett, Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness*

*Nancy Loverin, Employment and Education Resources, King County*

*Anne Masters Job Driven National Emergency Grant, WorkSource*

*Brad McGuire, Integration Coordinator, WorkSource*

*Alex Ebrahimi, Compass Housing Alliance, Road to Housing*

*Jen Muzio, Ballard Food Bank*

*Rex Holbein, Facing Homelessness*

*Joshua Liljenstolpe, Church Council of Greater Seattle and BCTHH planning team*

*Jean Darsie, Scofflaw Mitigation Team and BCTHH planning team*

*Jenn Adams, Bridge Care Center volunteer and BCTHH planning team*

*Sally Kinney, Lake City Task Force on Homelessness and BCTHH planning team*

### **1. Introductions**

### **2. Announcements:**

- Joshua relayed that there was considerable positive reaction to the statement expressed by the Committee to End Homelessness's Interagency Council (comprised of service and housing providers and representatives from funding organizations and municipalities) recently cautioning municipalities not to promulgate laws making it more difficult for homeless people to survive. (Thanks to Karen for urging the IAC to make a statement, which is appended at the end of these Minutes.) We're currently pressuring the City of Seattle regarding street parking lost to vehicle residents – 2 major areas were recently lost in Ballard -- and to end the placement of No Parking 2-5 AM signs. Joshua proposed that the planning team and BCTHH volunteers draft a letter to the Mayor and the City Council urging them to review residential land usage for vehicles, as well as City land. Moved, seconded, and passed.
- Sally Kinney reflected that there are 3 active advocacy groups in North Seattle: Ballard, University District, and Lake City. However, we don't always know what each other is doing. Next month she will start briefly noting what each group is concentrating. We hope that at some point, we can actively collaborate on advocacy.
- Chelsea Millen announced that she will be leaving her position as case manager for LIHI's Cheryl Chow Court to return to school, and introduced Arthur Warmoth who will assume that position.
- Bill Kirlin-Hackett said the City is looking at another downtown loo (similar to that of Portland's), and Jenn Muzio said that Ballard has been considering the placement of a public loo.

### **3. Job-driven national emergency grant (through WorkSource) and potential employment and education opportunities**

Nancy Loverin, Employment and Education Resources Manager for King County, introduced Anne Masters, WorkSource Social Services Specialist, Employment and Training, and Brad McGuire, WorkSource

Integration Coordinator. For those persons who have been on long-term unemployment insurance and have exhausted their benefits, Anne offers case management at North Seattle WorkSource, including resume review, job coaching, marketing, training, and funding for short-term training projects. Occupational areas emphasized are manufacturing and aerospace (areas that will continue to have jobs available). She said schools have a lot of funds for training. She also works at downtown WorkSource with veterans. Brad McGuire performs in-community outreach for WorkSource, with the objective of finding more community partners offering employment and training/education.

WorkSource has a menu of services available to fit where a person is on a continuum of help needed: 1) find a job; 2) sharpen job-search skills; 3) learn and refresh skills; 4) link to community resources; and 5) on-line services.

#### ***4. Real-World Examples of People Experiencing Homelessness and Status of SDOT Posting of No Parking 2-5 AM Signs in Magnolia/Interbay (discussion continued from last meeting)***

Regarding the elderly man and his son who, through the assistance of many volunteers and City departments, had their towed vehicle returned to them, Jean said they are still living in the vehicle and working with Road to Housing. They have been ordered to move the vehicle frequently. What has happened to the young couple who were expecting a baby and lost their vehicle is unknown.

Jenn said that the parking areas along 20<sup>th</sup> W north of Dravus and W. Commodore Way, now barred for parking, formerly held 21 motor homes. Those vehicle residents are now scattered, and included 3 men who worked at Fishermen's Terminal. Approximately 21 spaces have also been lost in Fremont due to redevelopment up and down the Canal. A map exists showing new parking cost signs; Jenn will attempt to access.

Karen said the proposed letter to the Mayor and Council is only one step; we also need to lobby. We received responses from CMs Bagshaw, O'Brien, and Sawant; no other CMs responded, nor did Catherine Lester, head of Human Services. Bill said the CEH Single Adults Committee will be looking at vehicle residency at their upcoming meeting. Frank indicated that Scott Lindsey, Mayor's Office and Sola Plumacher, Human Services Department, will develop public policy re parking and vehicle residency and produce a report to the Mayor. He said the City has finally realized that they've got to do something, and asked for specific examples: streets and names. It's felt that Parking Enforcement is on our side but has been told to step aside; SPD seems to be handling enforcement.

#### ***5. Introduction of On-Vehicle Noticing (OVN) of Vehicles in Scofflaw Status***

Katie Truelove, Seattle Municipal Court, said the Mayor's Office is assembling a work group regarding vehicles out of scofflaw compliance. Jean had noted that many vehicle residents don't have mailing addresses. Thus, the Court has devised two separate notices to be placed on all vehicles: 1) a courtesy notice which states that the vehicle has had 3 or more overdue tickets, and if one more ticket is accrued, the vehicle may be booted or towed; 2) a 30-day notice for vehicles with at least 4 tickets in collections stating the vehicle will be towed in 30 days unless payment is arranged with the Court. The City law office vetted the notices. Notices are triggered by Parking Enforcement's checking lists of unpaid parking tickets.

Frank asked about people who live in vehicles they don't own; Katie didn't have an answer to that situation.

#### ***6. Companionship with People Experiencing Homelessness – Facing Homelessness ED Rex Holbein***

Rex asked attendees if they think it's possible to end homelessness. He does, but do we really want to -- that's what's important. Nationally, 1 in 45 children are homeless; 600,000 people are homeless. But most people aren't close to the question; it's emotionally and intellectually overwhelming and they want to push it away with negative stereotyping, which harms those who are homeless. He described several people he came to know who were sleeping on benches outside his office. Becoming friends with them emphasized to him that *every single person* is worth ending homelessness.

Why aren't we ending homelessness? Because we are playing a passive role. We need to not stop at simply knowing the statistics, but become heart-smart about ending homelessness; it means we have to change ourselves, not homeless people. The average death age of a homeless person in King County is 47. What do you do with that fact? Do you simply file that fact in your mind? If you see photos of actual people, and learn about their lives, and their lives' moments of beauty and pain, and then you are told that they are now dead, their loss reaches you in your heart, not your head.

What can we do? Ask yourself what in this issue pulls you, and what you're good at. He related examples of his organization drawing together people of all talents, providing what's needed: a professional hairdresser first simply cut hair, but is now tuned into organizing complete services: food, massage, etc. Check your own feelings – if you see a person sleeping on the street in the snow, do you say “She must be OK; if she weren't, she would be in a shelter”? But there are many reasons shelters don't work for everyone: a person may be kicked out because of snoring, or late to the shelter, or fear bedbugs, or fear being that close to other people.

His overall goal for Facing Homelessness is to challenge ideas about homelessness and homeless people. Helping can include actions anywhere on the continuum between bringing food and individual companionship. He urges people to figure out where they fit – it's OK to be anywhere. Look at the human being who's homeless: when you're with that person, forget about the issue and see the person.

Facing Homelessness is a “marketing company” trying to rebrand homelessness, he said. He's developed a Code of Kindness (which will be posted on the BCTHH website). Facing Homelessness has 4 staff members, including Rex, and raises money on Facebook to fund assistance projects, including help for people living in their vehicles. He's talking with Craig Rennebohm, retired King County Mental Health minister, about companionship trainings, with the aim of developing a group of people who can help with financial and other needs.

Read and see more about Rex and his work at <http://www.facinghomelessness.org/>

Notetaker: Sally Kinney

**NEXT MEETING: 10:30 AM, Thursday, June 25, Nyer-Urness House**

*FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT JOSHUA LILJENSTOLPE, [BALLARDHOMELESS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:BALLARDHOMELESS@GMAIL.COM)*

Articles of interest are posted on our Facebook page, [facebook.com\ballardhomelessness](https://www.facebook.com/ballardhomelessness)

### **IAC Statement on Bans on Overnight Parking for Oversize Vehicles:**

The IAC calls on all cities to not ban the overnight parking of oversize vehicles due to the disproportionate impact these bans have on people who are experiencing homelessness and living in their vehicles. Nearly one third of all unsheltered people experiencing homelessness live in their vehicle and banning the parking of oversize vehicles overnight is less effective than addressing the reasons why a person might be living out of their vehicle.