

Hartford Ad-Hoc Committee on Emergency Shelter

03/18/21 Meeting Minutes - 5:00 PM

Committee Attendance: Simon Dennis, Becca White, Tracy Yarlott-Davis, Tom Peltier, Michael Redmond, Ally Tufenkjian

Community Attendance: Martha Hafner, Brett Mayfield

Becca White called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM and took attendance.

Becca moved passage of the minutes of 3/4/21. Bryan seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Becca suggested that the committee should consider adding two items to the agenda: election of a new Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk, and review of our existing charge. There was no objection, and the Agenda Amendment was made.

Election of Officers of the Board

After much discussion Simon moved to elect Becca White as HADCES Chair. Ally Tufenkjian seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Becca moved to elect Ally Tufenkjian as the Vice-Chair, Simon Seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried. Simon agreed to continue on as Clerk.

Review of Committee Charge

It was discussed that the Selectboard had recently moved to amend the HADCES Charge. The most significant aspect of this amendment was to extend the end-date of the Committee to March 1st, 2022 and to make some minor amendments to the Committee make-up.

Discussion of the Sunsetting of the Hotel Voucher Program

Michael Redmond reported on the transfer the GA Assistance to Local Programs: The Appropriations Committee is not in favor of making this change and Human Services is also opposed so there seems to be little chance that this will go forward. The changes re hotel eligibility will not go forward.

He further reported: Yesterday, Economic Services Division released a note that there would be no changes to tighten eligibility on April 1st. in July it was projected that there would be a change regarding cost participation, perhaps involving asking for 30% of

income as a contribution towards the housing voucher program. There is no clear plan for winding this down.

He further reported: People have been leaving the hotel and entering at the same rate. The ERAP program will be helping to balance this out by providing money directed to keep people from losing their homes. The Governor may end the program when FEMA is no longer footing the bill. The HAVEN will likely expand its bed capacity in September. There are possibilities of some of the current hotel residents to go back to their communities of origin. Michael says that the camping population will normally be approximately 20 individuals. Michael predicts that there will be approximately 30% of the existing hotel population that may become unsheltered at the end of the Voucher program.

Brett reported that the money that is coming in is for people who are back on their rent. There are many landlords of people who have already filed that are filing for other reasons than non payment of rent. He reported that he is aware of 22 open cases. This is much more than usual. We are at the tip of the iceberg regarding evictions. Brett is getting a call a day. There was an eviction today from the Hampton Inn.

Michael mentioned that the community will break down by thirds. $\frac{1}{3}$ will find housing. $\frac{1}{3}$ will find other less secure places to go. $\frac{1}{3}$ will likely be unsheltered. Brett's numbers could be added to this. Brett mentioned that the Hampton Inn is currently reluctant to take new vouchers.

Martha mentioned that if we applied the 30% rule to the 2700 currently in VT, that would lead to 900 unhoused. There have been other shelters closed that may be coming on line. We don't have additional capacity for shelter at this time. It is typical that cold weather exceptions will be in effect during the winter.

Subgroup Reports:

Utilities and Permitting Subgroup Update and Discussion

Simon mentioned that the Committee could recommend an adjustment to the Town's definition of a Campground to be 4 or more Recreation Vehicles.

Tracy suggested that perhaps the HADCES Chair could write an email to the Planning Commission to ask about the process for changing the regulations. It was agreed that Becca would send an email to Bruce.

Tom Peltier reported on the Town of Hartford Site Protection Plan for Site Development Approval. This has aspects for emergency service access and fire protection approval. We would need to have access and water supply.

The review of Planning and Zoning would discover whether water extension or sprinkler system would be necessary. When a new home is put up outside of the Hydrant Area there are requirements for water availability. Pre-manufactured tiny homes were approved using alternative fire suppression units. Tom supposed that these structures would fall under the statute for a public building.

Tom is not 100% sure if a sprinkler system is going to be needed. It would be through Zoning and Planning.

Tracy asked about separation of dwelling in RV sites. Tom confirmed that separation was a part of the fire code requirements.

Michael: There were some shelters put in place to provide shelter that were not legal. The initial inquiry was about how to meet the need with small housing. I wonder if it is worth revisiting the problem rather than starting with the solution. A longer-term solution is about creating affordable housing. Are there other models regarding where people can stay, for example mobile home parks, campers, campgrounds? Becca said that she felt that this may be a good opportunity to review other options other than tiny dwellings, to include motel retrofits.

Becca recapped the meeting and reviewed next steps.

Our next meeting will be on April 1st at 5:00 PM. Please use this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81522347053>

Ally moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:23. Michael seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Simon Dennis, Committee Secretary