Tri-City Joint Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness
Somersworth Middle School, Media Room
7 Memorial Drive
Somersworth NH 03878
February 8, 2019
6:00 PM

MAYORS

Chairman	Mayor Caroline McCarley Mayor Karen Weston Mayor Dana Hilliard	**Vice Chair**
Jeremy Hutchinson		Marcia Gasses

Rochester Members	**Dover Members**	**Somersworth Members**
Kila Downum	Phyllis Woods	Todd Marsh
Rev. Eliza Tweedy	Betsey Andrews Parker	Laura Hogan
Jeremy Hutchinson	Andrew Howard	Rick Michaud
	Marcia Gasses	Dina Gagnon

Alternate (Dover):
Lindsey Williams

Homeless Liaison
Terra Stewart

Survival Shelter Sub-Task Group	**Others Present**
Marcia Gasses	Paige Farmer, GSCTEH
Todd Marsh	Tory Jennison, IDN
Andrew Howard	Julian Long, Rochester Economic Dev.
	Dave Carpenter, Dover Community Dev.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Hutchinson called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

2. Roll Call

Cassie Givara, Deputy City Clerk for the City for the City of Rochester, took the roll.

The following members were present: Kila Downum, Dina Gagnon, Todd Marsh, Rick Michaud, Terra Stewart, Eliza Tweedy, Lindsey Williams, Phyllis Woods, Chairman Hutchinson, Vice Chair Gasses, Mayor Weston and Mayor Hilliard.

The Following members were excused/absent: Betsey Andrews Parker, Laura Hogan, Andrew Howard and Mayor McCarley.

3. Public Input *(3-minute maximum and/or submit a statement*)

Paige Farmer of the Greater Seacoast Coalition to end Homelessness, addressed the Committee regarding the Master plan. Ms. Farmer discussed techniques and phrasing to more clearly define the action which needs to be taken for each strategy as well as clarifying who would be responsible for carrying out each action. Ms. Farmer recommended using more definite action terms and attempting to be more concise and specific when describing action which needs to be taken. The concern is that with the way the Master Plan reads currently, Councilors or those unfamiliar with the intent and the process may be overwhelmed and not understand where to start or how to move forward.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 Tri-City Mayors' Joint Task Force Meeting Jan 17, 2019 *consideration for approval*

Eliza Tweedy **MOVED** to accept the minutes of the January 17, 2019 Task Force meeting. Phyllis Woods seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

5. Communications from the Mayors

Mayor Hilliard and Mayor Weston reported on the meeting which the Tri-City Mayors had attended with the City Managers from each respective City, relevant City Staff and the Strafford County Commissioners. It was a productive meeting where a tentative agreement was reached on what the Cities needed to accomplish moving forward. The Mayors both related that there are two trains of action running concurrently; the imminent need for a cold weather shelter, and the long-term solution for homelessness in the Tri-City area.

Mayor Weston said that there was discussion at this meeting of having designated warming shelters in each of the 3 cities for daytime use, with the overnight shelter remaining at the County Complex.

Mayor Hilliard stated that the meeting was focused on cooperation and collaboration between the three cities and the commissioners. Mayor Hilliard addressed the misconception that

the Tri-City Mayors' Task Force had been formed for immediate action. In reality, the Commission was formed to develop a long-term, sustainable plan to deal with the issue of homelessness in the region.

Mayor Hilliard acknowledged that the problem of homelessness is certainly not limited to the seacoast area, or even the state. It's a country-wide epidemic and it can be very easy to become overwhelmed with the scale of the issue and discouraged with the progress being made. He reminded the Commission that they can focus on what can be done; to talk about what can be done to resolve the issue of homelessness by working together and discussing the best avenues for change, while leaning on the experts available who have been battling this issue from the beginning.

Mayor Hilliard emphasized the need for some other appointed body to oversee the fidelity and execution of the Master Plan moving forward. This will ensure that once the Task Force has completed their work and potentially disbanded, there will be an established plan in place to carry out the intent moving forward.

Mayor Weston reported that the Commissioners had asked for some form of agreement so that it's not one group waiting for another group before moving forward. There had been consensus that the most important aspect at this stage is completing the Master Plan.

6. Communications from the Task Force Chairs

Chairman Hutchinson reported that he had informed the Rochester City Council that there would be a presentation forthcoming. The current plan is to develop a presentation to be given to each Council in March.

The Chairman also reiterated that the Master Plan in its current draft form is not a public document. It can be shared in spirit and intent, but it cannot be shared publicly at this stage in order to protect the integrity of the work being done.

7. Review: Draft Master Plan

Chairman Hutchinson requested an update on the work which was accomplished at the January 31 Task Force Workshop meeting.

Phyllis Woods reported that the Task Force had decided collectively to eliminate strategy #7, "Public Health and Safety Ordinances." There was a good deal over overlap between this strategy and several others, so the decision was made to remove the strategy and disperse the items contained within to other strategies. The Chairman took a sense of Committee and it was determined that removing former Strategy #7 "Public Health and Safety Ordinances" and dispersing the action items within to other strategies would be beneficial.

Dave Carpenter, Dover Community Development Planner, reported that he had filled out man of the fields in Strategy #2 "Transportation" and had worked directly with multiple Transportation Stakeholders to more thoroughly complete the strategy. The focus of these meetings was more on the "what" needing to be accomplished and not the "how" of the action items included in the strategy. The "how" of each action item may need to be worked on

individually in each municipality based upon the staff and resources which would need to be utilized in that particular City.

Ms. Woods also reported that it had been decided at the Workshop that the "who is responsible" field would be removed from each strategy. It was stated that this was done because the issue was too broad and it may be different in each City. There was also concern about assigning tasks and responsibilities to staff or resources without their prior consent.

Chairman Hutchinson suggested there be a chapter added regarding who would take responsibility, or which department or organization would typically take primary responsibility, so the cities are not locked into something which they cannot execute.

There was discussion in Committee regarding arranging the Strategies in order of priority. The Task Force had started with two primary strategies; the forming of a cold weather/emergency shelter and the more long-term need more affordable housing. It was determined that these two strategies should be moved to the front of the Strategy portion of the Master Plan. There was a consensus that these are the most important items to which all other strategies are connected, and that the lack of affordable housing would minimize the success of all the other strategies. "Create Cold Weather Shelter" was left as Strategy #1 with "Create Affordable Housing For all" being advanced from Strategy #5 to Strategy #2. All remaining strategies were moved down in the order accordingly.

Chairman Hutchinson asked for a motion to re-order the strategies of the Master Plan. Phyllis Woods **MOVED** to re-order the strategies of the Master Plan as follows:

1) **Create Seasonal Cold Weather Shelter**
2) **Create Affordable Housing For All**
3) **Increase Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Programs**
4) **Support Access to Transportation**
5) **Enhance Access to Quality Healthcare, Mental Health and Education**
6) **Support Efforts to Decrease Substance Use Disorder and Increase Prevention**
7) **Engaging the Community**

Vice Chair Gasses seconded the motion. The **MOTION CARRIED** by a unanimous voice vote.

Mayor Hilliard clarified that this adjustment to the order was strictly a reorganization of the document itself. It is not indicative of the order in which the Cities should be working on items or dealing with homelessness.

Chairman Hutchinson spoke about the strategies which remained unfinished. He stated that there needed to be a decision made on how to move forward. Strategies should not be eliminated because they are incomplete, but the Commission could consider delaying the adoption of the Master Plan in order to finish completing the strategies. Alternately the Task Force can work on filling out the strategies for completion on the currently established timeline.

Kila Downum addressed the Task Force regarding the work she had done with Eliza Tweedy and Barbara Holstein amongst others to fill out the "Decreasing SUD" strategy. She stated

that she would work on completing the edits and formatting and would send out the edited copy on Monday to be integrated into the Master Plan.

Chairman Hutchinson inquired about the "Costs to the Community" section of the Master Plan which remains blank currently. He asked the Committee if they felt the section should be removed, or if should be workshopped to add more detail and remain included in the final plan. It was agreed that gathering the data needed for the section would be a difficult and intensive project.

Lindsey Williams stated that she felt the topic of costs of homelessness to the community needed to be addressed, at least in concept, within the Master Plan. The section can be reconfigured to include a summary paragraph as opposed to the specific details, but it is important to keep the section.

The Committee discussed the Costs of Homelessness on the Community. It was stated that there are different types of costs, both direct and indirect. Some of these costs are immense, and often immeasurable. There are costs to local hospitals, school departments, welfare departments, local community resource agencies, police and fire, etc. There will also be different measurements of costs both currently and change to costs after the Master Plan is implemented and has gone through at least one full fiscal year cycle.

It was stated that there is not a large amount of thorough local data from hospitals, but data can be gathered from surrounding communities. The Task Force can source information from local welfare, planners, and community resource organizations in order to give more detail to the summary statement.

Ms. Williams spoke about the view within communities that the municipalities do not have the money to tackle the issue of homelessness. She stated that this view isn't necessarily accurate because the communities are already spending the money. The community just doesn't realize the costs that are already being designated every day.

It was agreed by the Committee that a summary page on the Costs of Homelessness to the Community would be best. Todd Marsh volunteered to generate this section.

8. Other

Mayor Hilliard stated that he didn't believe a legal review of the Master Plan would be necessary. The Master Plan is simply a document of goals and agreements, an adoption of the direction of goals which the Task Force is trying to achieve. The Master Plan is an agreement, but there is no legal penalty if one of the cities does not follow the plan. Mayor Hilliard suggested that when the document is finalized, it be sent to the three City Managers for review as opposed to the attorneys. The City Managers can then collaborate or make suggestions and send any potential concerns back to the Committee.

There was a discussion regarding the process of making the final edits to the draft Master Plan and having the edits approved. Chairman Hutchinson suggested that the Task Force vote to send on the completed draft prior to presenting it to the three City Councils.

The next meeting of the Task Force will take place on Thursday, February 21 at 6:00 PM at Somersworth Middle School.

The next meeting will be a thorough review of the draft Master Plan line by line to ensure that nothing is presented to the City Councils which hasn't been vetted and approved by the entire Task Force.

The Chairman stated that soon he would be developing the presentation for the three Councils and would be seeking assistance from Task Force members and contributors to help co-present and supply relevant statistics, facts and figures as well as to help develop the PowerPoint. The presentation will focus on what the Task Force is hoping to accomplish and the issues for which solutions are being suggested as opposed to going through the Master Plan page by page. The Master Plan will be supplied to each Councilor in advance. Ideally, the entire Task Force will attend each respective City Council meeting to show support.

9. Closing Public Input

No Discussion

10. Adjournment

Chairman Hutchinson **ADJOURNED** the meeting at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara
Deputy City Clerk, Rochester