

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

Homeless Services Committee Wednesday, March 8, 2017 Meeting Notes – NO QUORUM * By Jennifer Zivkovic LaMarque

*Quorum's of SBCCOG Committees constitute a minimum of 4 elected officials

Welcome & Introductions-Councilman Jim Osborne

Elected officials in attendance: Lawndale Councilmember & SBCCOG Chair, Jim Osborne; Hermosa Beach Councilmember Hany Fangary

Others in attendance: City of Torrance, Domenica Megerdichian & Jan Wierzbicki; City of Lawndale, Deborah Holland; Redondo Beach Police Department, Wayne Windman; City of Rolling Hills Estates, Greg Grammer; City of Los Angeles-CD 15, Nicole Deering; Office of Supervisor Janice Hahn, Erika Velazquez; LA County Public Works Department, Jolene Guerrero; South Bay Coalition to End Homelessness, Nancy Wilcox; Harbor Interfaith Services, Shari Weaver; LAHSA, Saba Tekle; PATH, Meredith Berkson; Kiran Magiawala; SBCCOG, Jacki Bacharach, Jennifer Zivkovic LaMarque & Cierra Washington

Councilman Osborne announced that he would be chairing the meeting since Councilman Buscaino would not be able to attend due to a family emergency.

Approval of minutes from January 11, 2016 meeting- held until next meeting due to lack of a quorum.

Recent Events and Updates

Announcements were made:

- South Bay has received renewal of the funding through June and that the County Measure H (quarter-cent sales tax) passed.
- Saba Tekle, Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and Nancy Wilcox, South Bay Coalition to End Homelessness, gave a brief update on the South Bay participation in the 2017 Homeless Count. 575 volunteers participated which was 100 more than last year. There was wide participation among law enforcement. It covered more than 247 census tracts in the South Bay. The data will be available in May.
- Meredith Berkson of PATH gave an update on LA City Measure HHH. The RFP was released and is due later in March.
- The group debriefed about the February 8 First Annual Homeless Conference. Ms. Berkson commented about the active participation of the cities. Lt. Windman of the Redondo Beach Police Department said he made connections and learned about best practices from listening to the experiences of other attendees. Deborah Holland of Lawndale commented about participation of the faith-based community, noting the importance of engaging that community. She mentioned a success story from the conference. Jennifer LaMarque of the SBCCOG reported that she discussed the SBCCOG homeless program in the breakout group focused on the county and cities working together.

Overview of PATH services-Meredith Berkson, PATH

Ms. Berkson of PATH gave a Powerpoint presentation and answered questions from attendees. The presentation covered an overview of activities since January and what is happening in the field and statistics, The presentation is available at www.southbaycities.org

Key points covered:

- Ms. Berkson discussed the extension of funding through June (prorated) and reviewed program/contract goals.
- 79 people have been placed into permanent housing with an additional 219 referred. 49 people have been placed in shared housing.
- Housing success story of Mr. Jordan given.
- More calls are coming into the hotline from businesses and the faith-based community. A survey was given to businesses and presentations made at Chambers of Commerce.
- Review of PATH participation in Homeless Count, special operations in Carson.
- Discussion of landlord workshop-great response from the cities so far. Want to keep the attendance to mostly landlords.
- Need to advocate for renewal of funding.

Update on meeting with Redondo Beach faith-based community and first meeting of LA Regional Homeless Advisory Council

Lt. Windman gave an overview of the approach to addressing homelessness in Redondo Beach. They started noticing an increase in homelessness in 2012, noting that 8 officers did a survey in which they contacted 160 people. More than half appeared to have mental health issues. He noted the diversity in the people they contacted. (Variety of ages, cultures, situations, living in cars, etc.) He said between 2012 and the present there has been a very sharp increase. He noted that the City of Redondo Beach contracts with PATH to provide services. He discussed how the faith-based community provides meals. He said that people were (unfairly) blaming the faith community for the increase and that while the city does not want to try to force the faith community to do things, they want to help them be able to offer more than the meal services. They enlisted the Monsignor from St. James Catholic Church to run a meeting of the faith community. The faith leaders will be helping to develop a messaging plan for their members and the general public. He encouraged other cities to work closely with the faith communities.

He gave a brief update on the first meeting of the LA Regional Homeless Advisory Council. It was an organizational meeting and the by-laws are being developed. The group will make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

CES update for SPA 8 – Shari Weaver, Harbor Interfaith Services

Ms. Weaver said that she is now in a new position which oversees the CES system for families, youth, and adults. A new benefits advocate has been added to help people obtain SSI/SSDI. She worked on an RFP for the family system that would provide service coverage in the northern part of the SPA for families. It would also add a domestic violence provider and 3 bridge housing providers. She reported on a Harbor Gateway outreach event along the 110 freeway corridor. 24 workers from 10 organizations made 32 contacts in which 4 were connected with mental health services, 1 veteran was reconnected with services, and 1 placed into community service to deal with traffic tickets.

Since October 2016, 68 people have been connected to permanent housing. She mentioned new housing opportunities that have become available, a new 9-bedroom youth housing unit in LA and a motel in Wilmington willing to do month-to-month for \$640 a month. She is working with employers such as the San Pedro Fish Market to provide jobs. She gave a success story of a young couple who had been living in a vehicle who were now housed. She mentioned that 300 people were living near Machado Lake in Harbor City and that when the big storm came in January the lake overflowed and one person died.

Q& A/Follow-up discussion

Councilmember Fangary raised the point that not all housing authorities offer landlord incentives to rent to tenants using Section 8. Ms. Berkson said that the LA City and LA County housing authorities offer incentives and that smaller housing authorities do not currently offer incentives. Ms. Berkson reported that the overall federal HUD budget faces a proposed 6 percent cut and that there is a proposed cut of 24 percent for HUD administration/staffing.

LA County Homeless Initiative: Approved Strategies to Combat Homelessness

A brief discussion was held about how to approach review of the LA County Homeless Initiative strategies. Ms. Berkson suggested that the Committee limit the review of the Homeless Initiative to the strategies that affect cities.

Other Business

Councilman Osborne referenced an article in the League of California Cities' magazine, *Western City*, about how cities are addressing homelessness. Ms. Weaver discussed the challenges in addressing RV homelessness. Ms. Berkson said the issue will be discussed at the LA Regional Advisory Council. Councilman Osborne noted that state legislation limiting what cities can do relative to RV parking did not advance but may come back.

Next Steps and Follow-up Actions

Next meeting:

- PATH and SBCCOG staff will review list of Homeless Initiative strategies to plan an item
- Chris Cagle of South Bay Workforce Investment Board will present on job placement services

The discussion finished at 4:10 pm. The next meeting will be May 10.