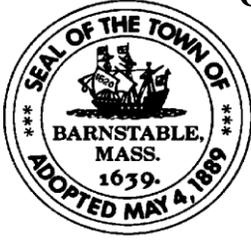


TOWN COUNCIL
Committee to Assess Homelessness in the Town of Barnstable



Selectmen's Conference Room

September 18, 2018

6:00pm

MEETING MINUTES

I. BUSINESS

A. Roll Call:

Members present: Chair of Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum; Councilor John G. Flores; Vice President of the Town Council; James H. Crocker Jr.; Councilor Britt Beedenbender; Member at Large, Deb Krau; Barnstable Police Chief, Matthew Sonnabend; SGT Jennifer Ellis; LT Jean Challies; Mark Ells, Town Manager; Councilor Debra Dagwan **Others in attendance:** Laura Wentzel
Absent:

Chair of the Committee opened up the meeting at 6:02; Public Comment: seeing none

Chair of the Committee wants to make sure that we have captured and really expressed enough the concerns of the residents that have come before the Committee, Chair Cullum had a conversation with our Town Attorney today regarding the current ordinance we have on file today having to do with rental registrations and if any of the Social Services had to register under the Town of Barnstable current ordinance under rentals, and it seems in the beginning conversation we might be able to enforce that, but discussions are ongoing with that. Ms. Krau mentioned that it was her understanding that if it was a health and safety issue and the people are renting, then it fell into the bucket of tools we could use to manage without appearing discriminating because we do this Town wide with every rental we have registered and with every person who has a rental to rent.

Chair of the Committee mentioned to the members of the Committee a new direction the Town Council President would like this Committee to look at which is moving the shelter, there is momentum in moving Baybridge, and there have been concerns about the ongoing bad behaviors that are happening at the shelter and right now there seems to be an appetite to start talking about re locating the shelter.

Ms. Krau said that if the plan is to relocate into another area of Hyannis, then we have to ask the FAA about regulations pertaining to building close to the airport, because that is virtually the only place in Hyannis that has land available to re locate to, Ms. Krau would like to see a map of land that is left, and the FAA regulations that pertain to building near the airport, and as well ask asking for Federal funding with regards to the FAA, she believes it would be helpful to have this prior to discussing of relocation of the shelter.

Councilor Flores asked why the discussion seems to be picking back up again. Chair Cullum explained that at the last meeting SGT Ellis gave a report that things have changed at St. Joseph's House since it changed management again and the way it is now allowed to operate since guidelines have changed. This Committee was told it was going to be a dry shelter when Catholic Social Services took over and the longest stay would be 90 days. When the head of Catholic Services left, Arlene, everything has all changed since the State and HUD released new guidelines that stated the shelter has to accept everyone and the length of stay was relaxed and put as "when the client has shown they can be on their own" approach coupled with the lack of staffing and Arlene and her staff going to their New Bedford shelter.

Town Manager Mark Ells has had discussions and has asked Susan Mazzerella as well as the State if they would be interested in re location and the response was that they are interested in working

with us to re staff the current facility and to go through a re location discussion process with us, they too have concerns about that building, and there has been a lot of discussion on various sites for the shelter to be located, and every time we were close to closing in on another location there was a barrier we had to look at, so he agrees with Ms. Krau that we need to look at land possibilities before we look at relocation of the shelter. The shelter currently leases from Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC) and there has been talk about not renewing the lease because of the concerns they have. SGT Ellis gave an update on the staffing levels currently and reported that they are fully staffed now, there was some wage increases done to get more staff hired there, and some of the longtime employees agreed to stay, SGT Ellis added it is a very tough job and a very tough environment to work in, so retaining good people and keeping them on staff is really difficult.

Chair of the Committee will ask GIS department if they could supply such a map and will make sure the Committee receives the same.

Councilor Flores asked if we are to assume that HAC is not going to renew the lease. Town Manager Ells said he was not assuming that, but are open to the option of discussion, but will not displace people if there is nowhere for them to go. SGT Ellis wanted to remind everyone that if the shelter is relocated and no longer there, keep in mind the Salvation Army is still going to be there because they own that land and building, and it is their mission to continue to serve the underprivileged and homeless, so if the shelter is moved it will not solve the homeless problem. The food is what draws the people to the area, so as long as they are there the people will be too. Ms. Krau also mentioned that the Salvation Army is not a social service agency, or they do not see themselves as one, they identify with the church and the church's mission to serve the poor. MS. Krau also believes that they receive state money for a day program they do not have or run currently, so we may want to look into that.

Town Manager Ells spoke about Baybridge and part of their goal is to integrate individuals back into society, so them being on Main Street and the work opportunities that Main Street offers is their objective of their facility. Baybridge wants their participants to be back into society and be working jobs and being successful, and Main Street allows the individuals that opportunity; so if they were to move it would constrict the opportunities and successfulness of the individual.

SGT Ellis believes it would be beneficial to have Susan Mazzerella come in to speak to the committee about what is currently going on and the programs that are being done and the policies they are currently operating under. SGT Ellis does not understand how and why everything changed from when Arlene was in charge, but it is a whole different shelter now, like she mentioned earlier, they are considered a low barrier/low threshold shelter and what that specifically means she is unsure of. LT Challies mentioned that it currently does not operate as a dry shelter, when Arlene was here that is what she ran it as, so that part has changed.

Chair of the Committee asked the Town Manager to invite Susan Mazzerella to one of our meetings so that we can ask these questions to her and get clarification.

The following are the questions that were submitted to Attorney Batt for answers by Attorney Ruth Weil. Chair of the Committee would like to make sure that the Committee members have asked everything that needs to be asked, or addressed everything that needs addressing before these are submitted to him for review.

From Laura Wentzel:

1. Define "Group Home" and add it to definition section of the Town zoning ordinance. John and I have already given our feedback and thought on the definition but it was never acted on by TOB (see below – our original request for the amendment to zoning ordinance).

Section 240-10E:

Except as otherwise specified here under: The following are prohibited;

E. Group Homes in Residential Districts

240-128 - To add the following definition:

Group Home - is defined as a home where a small number, of at least three, unrelated people in need of care, support, or supervision can live together.

Chair of Committee had a conversation with our Town Attorney about identifying a particular group in an ordinance; it opens the Town up to litigation, so we have to be conscious of identifying or targeting certain groups.

Ms. Wentzel suggested that we look at how other Towns have defined it, because until you define it, you can't come up with a solution or address it, so at the very least a definition of "Group Homes" is necessary. Councilor Flores asked if there is a legal definition somewhere that we abide by, what does the State use. Legal stated that if we identify a certain group and ask for a definition, you're pinpointing a certain group and it will open up the litigation.

2. Statistical support of Police/Fire dispatches to the 4 Homeless Not Hopeless (HNN) homes in Precinct 13. We have to establish a reasonable resident & public safety issue based on actual violent incidences at the homes which could have been prevented by onsite supervisor or organization personal. Are they required to carry liability insurance if a resident in their home is harmed or emotionally traumatized due to an incident like the break in at 22 Main Street?

1. 22 Main Street
2. 45 Newton Street
3. 119 Baxter Street
4. 95 Chase Street

Chair of Committee explained the above properties are in Hyannis, and are frequented often by the police, so are they or do they have liability insurance in the event something happens. Ms. Wentzel explained why she asked this and it was to protect the individuals in the home, if something was to happen to one of the individuals in the home does HNN really have liability insurance that protects them.

3. Because the individual residents pay rent, is HNN subject to the same guidelines that a bed & breakfast or boarding house is? Application for license to operate/potential revoking of license if violations occur and fines for repeat violations in a calendar year?

Ms. Krau said on one of the Committees she was on they had pulled a lot of the regulations regarding rooming houses because of the alarming rate homes are being bought up and turned into bed and breakfast or Air B&B's, and our own zoning in the town regarding these types of homes varies from one page to the other and is very confusing, and some are not covered at all. Ms. Krau suggested maybe we define the home that three unrelated individuals reside in and pay rent to stay there, and it should cover lodging, rooming houses, etc., where people pay rent to stay there, we should have a category of homes that have these types of tenants in there in our zoning, make the definition broad enough to cover these types of homes where people pay rent to stay there.

Chair of the Committee stated we can't just target Homeless not Hopeless, that is wrong and we can't and should not, we are looking at these homes as anyone living in it and paying rent that are non-related be looked at.

I truly believe if this is not dealt with in a manner that at least protects our village/Precinct we are opening the flood gates to more of these homes and organizations taking over our town and not contributing taxes to an overburdened system.

From Fred LaSelva

From what I heard the attorney was very focused on the "why not" of the situation.

The perception I took away was that he was being supportive of the town council at the expense of the citizens.

Chair of the Committee suggested that we look at the rental registration process and walk carefully when we look at it and take the approach of crafting an ordinance.

Chair of the Committee asked the Town Manager to have Susan Mazzerella come to our next meeting; Town Manager Ells will ask Ms. Mazzerella as well as Alyssa to come and will also invite Ms. Krau to join him in a meeting before they come here to speak to the Committee.

Chair of the Committee asked for a motion to adjourn, Councilor Flores made the motion to adjourn, Vice President Crocker seconded the motion, all members voted in favor of Adjournment

ADJOURN: 7:00pm

NEXT MEETING: October 2, 2018 at 6pm Selectmen's Conference Room