

TOWN COUNCIL

Committee to Assess Homelessness in the Town of Barnstable



Selectmen's Conference Room

June 19, 2018

6:00pm

MEETING MINUTES

I. BUSINESS

A. Roll Call:

Members present: Chair of Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum; Vice President of the Town Council; James H. Crocker Jr.; Councilor Britt Beedenbender; Member at Large, Deb Krau; Barnstable Police Chief, Matthew Sonnabend; Mark Ells, Town Manager; Councilor Debra Dagwan
Others in attendance: Chief Burke, Hyannis Fire; Adam Burnett, Executive Director, CHAMP Homes; Alisa Galazzi, CEO, Housing Assistance Corporation on Market Rate Housing. **Absent:** Councilor John G. Flores;

Chair of the Committee opened up the meeting at 6:02; Public Comment:

- Mr. Dan Scaletti a resident of the Yachtsman Condominiums at 500 Ocean Street, full time resident, 26 years, is a CPA has a business in Hyannis for 30 years, he spoke about the camps in the Kalmus Beach area, and he is here because of an incident that happened about a week ago regarding a resident of the Yachtsman Condo who was walking her dog at the time at Kalmus and a nude man came out of the woods and approached her. The incident was reported right away to the police who came down and handled the situation very quickly and the man now faces several charges. The residents are very concerned about their health and safety of the residents of the Yachtsman condo, a picture of the sign there that is clearly posted, so he has concerned about enforcement in that area. He spoke about a sting about a year ago in the same area, it was in the paper; we as the resident have no standing in this particular area, but all the residents are afraid to walk at night in this area, you can hear voices at night in the woods. The residents are looking for enforcement of the clearly posted sign with what you can and can't do in this area, and these people are in violation of the posted sign every day. The residents would like to see enforcement on a regular basis.
- Laura Wentzel asked if the group home definition has been defined and looked at, and if there is any update on an outside attorney regarding the Dover Amendment.
- John Julius, just to echo the first speaker, I sell a lot of real estate in this community, it's pretty sad that the home values in Hyannis are so low here because of these types of incidents, but if you move the very same house to Osterville it goes up a million, Hyannis is an area that is plagued, the old saying goes don't feed the seagulls, if we have enforcement, the more enforcement there is and the more visible the enforcement is, the message will eventually sink in that we don't want you here anymore any you need to move on, I am sure that most of you heard about the incident over the past weekend with the group home here in Hyannis, it was awful to read, it was awful it happened, but these are the types of things Hyannis now has because we allow it to happen, but if we enforce the laws, the less of problems.

Councilor Jennifer Cullum, Chair of the Committee asked Chief Sonnabend to address the first speaker and his concerns of the residents of the Yachtsman Condos. Chief Sonnabend explained that the police are in and out of there all the time, at least 30 times in the past year alone. That's just the CIU unit, there

are also additional patrols, the individual that you spoke of regarding the incident with the person walking her dog, that individual is not a homeless person, and he owns a house in Hyannis and has a full time job, so he is not part of the homeless population you refer to. He was someone in the area that was taking advantage of the area and the trees and brush that were there, so the sign that is posted would not pertain to him, because he was not doing any of those things on the sign. We have removed someone from there who chronically lives there Bo Chu, he has another place over by the KMART Plaza that he frequents more often than the camp he once had at Kalmus. We have removed his camp from there, and the cleanup you're referring to a couple of years ago, where we had our local Department of Public Works (DPW) come in and clear the area of debris. We did do that a couple of years ago, and as far as I am aware they are not scheduled again to do that, but we have done those types of clean ups in other areas in Hyannis, but it is not as easy as it appears, we have a legal path we have to follow when we find a camp and want to clear the area. Chief Sonnabend explained the police have to obtain a court order first, then they have to identify the individuals that are in the camp and serve them notice on date certain they have a certain amount of time to get their personnel items out, or the consequences are, it will be hauled away by the DPW.

Town Manager, Mark S. Ells answered Ms. Wentzel, explained that he went to the Town Managers Meeting that is held Cape wide and discuss the Dover Amendment, which he did, and discuss the House Bill(H) 3881 that was submitted, and there were already two other Bills that were submitted that goes along side this one, and directly related to the educational of designation that allows them to receive exempt from land use and the regulations that go with them, I shared with all the managers the Bills, including H1091 which was specific to designing a Committee to look at the Dover Amendment Educational purposes and define what education means, it is not always clear what the educational component is in these types of homes, but we as a town would have some sort of control over the education that is offered, most of the Managers were very knowledgeable off Cape regarding this, but the ones from the Cape not as much. The Town Manager was pleased to see that they were at least discussing it now. The Town Manager offered to write a letter to the Representatives asking them to look at all three House Bills in front of them and to seriously consider them, the other Managers at the meeting supported the Town Manager and said they too would support a letter and send them to the Cape Delegation as well. The Town Manager called Senator Cyr to ask him the status of H194, that bill has been tabled and it's in Committee and its where it sits, Town Manager Ells stated that in order to revive this again is in December we need to go back to our Legislators and re-invent it, and ask to have it re-submitted to the Municipal Committee, but we also need to find out who is on the Municipal Committee and get them to move all 3 House Bill's up to the top. Ms. Krau asked if Senator Cyr was on that Committee, Town Manager Ells stated he did not think so, Ms. Krau stated that whatever Committee he was on when this reached the State House he squashed it and did not move it forward, it was H3881 that he did not want to move it forward.

Committee members moved onto discussion with Adam Burnett, Executive Director, CHAMP Homes, regarding future vision for the Champ Homes; grew up in Centerville, and graduated from Barnstable High School, moved off Cape for a while and then returned and was lucky enough to be named the Executive Director, CHAMP Homes. Our program offers transitional living for those that are almost homeless, or are currently homeless; we provide them with a hand up rather than a handout so they fell like they have a stake in it. The program back in the day was a program that allowed people to stay forever, and people got used to that, now it is a program that has a plan and in so many days you should be able to leave CHAMP House and be successful. We have beefed up the staff so that we are able to address more of the issues that we are presented with; CHAMP House has redesigned the programs offered. We are currently building a Computer Café downstairs of the CHAMP House and refurbishing old computers and we are going to offer classes on computers. We are a faith based organization mostly Christian, there are certainly others in the home that do not identify with faith based organizations, so Mr. Burnett would like to expand the definition of faith when he speaks of it because first and foremost you have to have faith in yourself, it may not be of a religion, but faith in one's self

take a person a long way when they had none to begin with, so faith does not necessarily have to do with a religion, and that is why he would like to expand the definition to include a variety of meanings. Mr. Burnett is only been on the on for a couple of weeks, so he has only made the changes he has spoken of so far, but there are many more to come, and he looks forward to working with the Town. Ms. Krau asked about the supervision in the home, before it was not a 24/7 supervision, is that going to remain the same as before? Mr. Burnett answered; no we have staff now around the clock that is there for all three shifts during hours of operation seven days a week.

Do you consider yourself an educational institution? Mr. Burnett stated; no he does not consider CHAMP Homes and educational institution. Chair of the Committee thanked Mr. Burnett for coming, Chair Cullum mentioned that it was her desire to have individuals from Hyannis involved and have a say in what happens in Hyannis so thanks for stepping up and becoming part of the solution. Ms. Krau asked if there are any clear objectives set for CHAMP Homes, or are they allowed to stay forever. Mr. Burnett stated that once they define that length of stay which he has not done yet, and it will be pass the 60 days that currently St. Josephs house sets, but he is going to look at that, but also wanted to mention that because they are faith based, they do not kick anyone out of the program if they stay past the time set, and he will hold his ground on that point. Vice President Crocker asked what Mr. Burnett's background is, he was a Restaurant Manager for 10years and a Financial Planner for 6, then went into doing the financial books for nonprofit organizations; he came across the posting for the job and applied, and here he is. Vice President Crocker asked if they had any goal and objectives in place yet or any type of measurable goals for the clients. Mr. Burnett explained that they need to get the finances in order first, when he arrived they were all over the place with the book keeping, and once we find out what we truly have for operating expenses it will define what I can do with other projects that I have in mind, but the first hurdle is straightening out the finances, then we need to make sure that we have the proper staffing levels, because they were never correct. Councilor Beedenbender mentioned that she has worked for non-profits for years and what you should consider doing first is to set your metrics to see what measurable goals you have, once you define what your major goals and objectives are, that will impact everything else you do for the future. Ms. Krau also wanted to mention that CHAMPS Homes ever decides to expand or you need more space that maybe you could look elsewhere to expand to rather than just Hyannis. Mr. Burnett said he would.

Committee Chair introduced Alisa Galazzi, CEO, Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC) on Market Rate Housing. Ms. Galazzi stated that the Housing Corporation is more focused on the clients and what the needs of the clients are. We still have those that are very hard to find housing for because of past issues of renting, and we will always have those individuals, but it is the hope that housing is a huge part in what helps individuals back in a healthy path of living, without a home how can you begin a day in a positive way, so it is the focus of the Housing Assistance Corp to house everyone, but that is a lot easier said than done, we have a critical supply of housing, there is not enough housing, or landlords are unwilling to rent the second home to anyone with a voucher because it has been labeled as a bad renter. We look at housing for the clients and the needs of the client, and that is how we match them with housing, and what the client needs to move them along in the continuum of care. We have 4 family shelters that we have moved over 200 families a year through and onto a better way of living. DHCD has a focus of getting the families in and getting them out, that is all they care about, but our program knows that there is so much more that goes into the equation of these families, some do not have a car, some do not have day care, so there is a lot more that goes into the thought process, and you can't just move them in and move them out, so HAC has developed programs to make the individual feel successful in their everyday life, so you have an individual that has nothing, but at the end of the program you would have something. We have a Carriage house in Falmouth that houses only women and children, unwed or single mothers that have not reached education past the 8th grade, Ms. Galazzi was shocked that this house was full, and that we still had individuals that have not been through high school yet, so how do you make a person feel great about themselves if the very first thing on a job application is do you have a high school diploma or a GED, these women in the Carriage house already have the cards stacked against them, they are unskilled, so HAC offers a way to get that GED, the second struggle these women

have is they have no license or ability to drive, so how do they get around to appointments, to buy food or just to get out and socialize, they don't; so HAC offers programs depending on the needs of the clients in a particular housing development, in Falmouth just from the Carriage House the women who live there have to take 3 buses just to get in Hyannis for services, so why are we making it difficult for them to get the services they need, why can't we bring the services to them, so that is what Ms. Galazzi is doing. Ms. Galazzi mentioned her hopes is also to get these clients a skill so they can go to work somewhere other than Dunkin Donuts, give them skills to work in an office or a daycare center, this is what make a person do better for themselves; when they themselves have a purpose. The next focus we tend to look at is the families with the vouchers; this allows the family a set rent with a portion paid for by the Federal Government based on the family income, Ms. Galazzi mentioned that if the income of the family goes up so does the portion of the rent that is the responsibility of the client, she would like the program to set the rent due by the families when they first enter the program, and if the income tends to go up for the family have the rent stay the same, but put the extra money they earned into an escrow so that when they reach the end of the program the monies are given back to the family and they leave with a savings account they can now use on the family, it gives families a sense of pride. The other focus of our organization is housing itself, there is a huge crisis for housing, and in fact it is worse than originally predicted by the studies that have been done, we have people coming to our office that were in a market rate house, paying market rate rent, professionals, families with good jobs that are being thrown out of their homes they rent so that Air B&B can now rent out the house for twice the amount they were getting before, but it is creating homeless families and individuals at a faster rate than ever expected. Houses are sold very quickly to Air B&B and then rented out for top dollar. We as a community have to be proactive regarding housing in this area, we need housing, and we do not have them, there are zero inventories. Ms. Krau wanted to mention that she commends HAC for paying taxes on Ridgewood Ave project on the land as it is today, there are so many nonprofits that come in and do the projects you want and do not have to pay any taxes on it, so she thanks HAC for offering, it means a lot to the residents of Hyannis. Ms. Galazzi thanked the Committee for having her here to speak, and wants to make sure that anyone can call her and ask a question anytime.

Chair of the Committee asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes with an amendment to the H3881 in the first paragraph, and then a name of a public speaker changed to Wentzel and not Cronin. Vice President James Crocker made the motion to accept the meeting minutes as amended; all members voted in favor of accepting the meeting minutes of May 15, 2018 as amended. Chair of Committee asked for a motion to adjourn, Deb Krau made the motion; Vice President Crocker seconded the motion, all members voted in favor of adjournment.

ADJOURN: 7:00pm

NEXT MEETING: August 7, 2018 at 6pm Selectmen's Conference Room