



CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE - SUB-COMMITTEE on Eviction Crisis Plans and Protocols 5/10/2017

Public Safety Subcommittee

Re Eviction Crisis Plans & Protocols

May 10, 2017

DRAFT Minutes

Public Safety Committee Representative: Councilor David Hartnett (DH)

Additional City Staff: Richard Haesler (RH), City Attorney's Office

Also Present: Laura Wilson (Cathedral Square); Sarah Russell (BHA); Sandy Baird (Caroline Legal Clinic); Jessica Radbord (Vermont Legal Aid); Tammy Boudah (Howard Center – Street Outreach); Sandra Steingard (Howard Center); Susan Ainsworth-Daniels (CHT); Allyson Laachman (BHA); Lacey Smith (BPD); Sam Walker (UVM student); Trine Bech (Burlington resident); Stephen Marshall (homeless advocate)

At 5:04 p.m. Councilor Hartnett commenced the meeting.

1 – Agenda

Motion by Sandy Baird (SB) to approve.

DH seconds.

Agenda approved.

2 – Minutes (2/15/17; 3/8/17; 3/22/17; 4/12/17; 4/27/17)





CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE - SUB-COMMITTEE on Eviction Crisis Plans and Protocols 5/10/2017

Motion by SB

Second by DH – Motion passes unanimously

3 – PUBLIC Forum – continue - to be held at time certain 5:15

None

4 – Committee Discussion – Recommendations of the Subcommittee

1. Sandy Baird – interested in the numbers of people who are experiencing eviction – seeks a Housing Retention Specialist – committed to finding new housing the person who is actually being evicted – an Ombudsman
2. Trine Bech – first, would like to second the proposal made at the last meeting by Larry Crist from the Vermont Parent Representation Center – Seeks Housing Retention Specialist/Social Service Provider by and thru Legal Aid – so as to mitigate the potential conflict/lack of trust issues which sometimes arise when using Housing Retention Specialist provided by the Housing Authority.
 - Second, need a data collection system: with (i) # of lease violations; (ii) # of notice to quit letters; (iii) # of Court summons and complaint issued; and (iv) outcome of court filed matters w result based accountability
1. Jessica Radbord – offered from Legal Aid perspective – asks for Housing Retention Specialist employed through Howard Street Outreach – for linking up tenants with services, once an eviction case is filed, the Housing Agency has a conflict as a matter of law – i.e. legal aid can no longer contact the landlord – must go through their legal representative – also, second request would be there be a requirement in the City of Burlington that all termination letters include an information alerting the tenant as to Legal Aid available to represent them with contact information – thirdly, an ideal requirement that Legal Aid be provided notice when a case is filed – as that makes the matter public at that point and assisting tenants in making the Legal Aid connection will, in the end, lead to better outcomes. Finally, no default judgment without an actual affidavit submitted that the tenant is competent.
2. Lacey Smith – Street Outreach – no specific request – just a comment in that I want people to recognize and appreciate just how much effort is made by the Housing Authorities.
3. Tammy Boudah – Response comes from a Street Outreach perspective but trying to be generalist – if a Housing Retention Specialist were to be attached to Howard as an employee, then it should be assigned to Transitional Services.
4. Laura Wilson – Request for Howard Retention Specialist to be employed by Howard and embedded in the team.
5. Sarah Russell – thinks that adding another Housing Retention Specialist makes sense. Knows that while they try to address all needs, some fall through and another would be helpful, with a focus on people who are refusing services – prevention – acknowledges also that the bureaucracy of paperwork can be daunting and another specialist might help there also – perhaps mental health/competency training.
6. Steve Marshall – believes that it is important to hire an individual who has no affiliation with any entity that has a



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property interest (to include the City of Burlington). Importance of continuity for people – believe no cause eviction should be illegal. And enforced when violated.

7. Susan Ainsworth – Champlain Housing Trust supports Councilor Hartnett's proposed recommended action as drafted.
8. Sandra Steingard – poses question: Do Housing Retention Specialists augment Social Service Case Manager role or is it something different? Because this really informs the issue of whether the new hire would be a Howard Employee.

RH – So the take-away from all of this is that there is broad consensus that there is a need for another Housing Retention Specialist but there is not a broad consensus as to how that position will be defined and more significantly, what entity will actually serve as the employer for the hire. So with that as the backdrop, I will draft a report that presents the various suggestions but ultimately the final recommendation will be that the City fund another Housing Retention Specialist position – and I believe that if that recommendation gets traction with City Council, then they will have their own discussion and ultimate determination as to those types of specifics. Any exception to my presenting it that way?

No exception taken – general concurrence to proceed.

5 – Other Business

DH – We will circulate the final report to all of you for comment before it goes to the Public Safety Committee. Public Safety Committee will meet in the end of June – prior to the June 27th City Council report – Committee will accept the report and advance it to the full council for its meeting on the 27th of June. You are all free to come to that meeting and comment as you like. Additionally, the report is likely to be on the consent agenda for the City Council on the 27th, but it could come off, in which case I will speak to it, but you are all welcome to be there as well and even if it stays on the consent agenda you are always able to speak at public forum.

DH – In conclusion thanks all of the participants for their hard work and the great efforts to discuss difficult issues in good faith and with open minds given the fact that not everyone came to this with the same mind set.

6 – ADJOURNMENT

DH Motion

All approve. Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.



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