



# **CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE - SUB-COMMITTEE**

## **on Eviction Crisis Plans and Protocols**

### **3/22/2017**

Public Safety Subcommittee

Re Eviction Crisis Plans & Protocols

March 22, 2017

Minutes

Public Safety Committee Representative: Councilor David Hartnett (DH)

Additional City Staff: Deputy Chief Shawn Burke (SBu), Burlington Police Department; Richard Haesler (RH), City Attorney's Office

Also Present: Laura Wilson (Cathedral Square); Sarah Russell (BHA); Donna Walters (Wharf Lane); Sandy Baird (Caroline Fund); Jessica Radbord (Vermont Legal Aid); Trine Bech (Lawyer); Nadine Scibek (Attorney); Sandra Steingard (Howard Center); Susan Ainsworth-Daniels (CHT); Lynn Martin; Tammy Boudah (Howard Center)

At 5:07 p.m. Councilor Hartnett commenced the meeting. Discussion of establishing an "action" board for purposes of setting agendas and approval of minutes. Chair Hartnett requests proceeding with Sandy Baird (SB) of the Caroline Fund and Donna Walters (DW) from Champlain Housing Trust (CHT). Given no objection the Action Board is establish for the balance of the sub-committee's meetings.

The attendees were invited to introduce themselves. Then discussion as to how to proceed. Chair Hartnett has invited Deputy Chief Burke for purposes of participating in discussion of how service providers interact. Suggests the Tammy Boudah from Howard Center – Outreach is key for this as well.

The group consensus however is that the Housing providers need first to present their standard operating procedures around lease enforcement and eviction protocol as the basic background for everything prior to discussion of other service provider interactions.

As such the discussion is agreed.



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### **3. Public Forum – at 5:15**

DH explains that any one is free to speak on any matter but that he always will run meeting to permit open discussion throughout the meeting. No one speaks at public forum

### **4. DISCUSSION: Service Providers – Housing Providers – Protocols to precede Discussion re Communications between Service Providers.**

Jessica Radbord (JR) reminds all that privacy concerns are in play – re specifics of any actual incident/client.

DH: turns the floor over to Sarah Russell (SR) from Burlington Housing Authority to present protocols.

SR: Property Mngmnt is required to make referral to Main Office for any action re intervention – to the Housing Retention Team (HRT). HRT will make assessment & service plan within 14 days – will reach out to casework if assigned and authorized – to coordinate.

Each year the tenant must sign a release – re Caseworker/crisis/on-site staff.

Look to the file for other people to reach out to.

Example: Tammy (TBo) at Street Outreach.

Tool – Tenant has a right to a hearing – but they can refuse it.

So then – BHA may look to see who they can bring in to help – looking to engage tenant in services where needed

Trine Bech (TBe) - So here is where I see a problem – example – contact DCF worker – even with release – isn't the tenant like to resent the fact that the services are being forced – not voluntarily sought?

(DH) Can we hold off on dialoguing this? Prefer if we get the presentation and then have discussion.





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(SR) So we try to bring in the resources in the form of support – so the tenant views the resource as someone who is there to help and is welcome. We want our tenant to succeed.

Staff with special focus

- For hoarding
- Domestic violence
- Offender re-entry

And a generalist

(JR) Do you have methods for assuring services for both parties where there is an internal conflict – e.g. violence/harassment/conflict between a couple of residents.

(SR) We might split out our staff or service providers.

People need to understand and recognize the reach out available to them

(JR) What sort of results to you find you get?

(SR) Well. Obviously – there is still the non-compliance problem. Not engaging. And then we kind of have to end up waiting for something next – something which permits EE – Emergency Examination – residential – a permissible intervention based on circumstances.

Donna Walters (DW) – What about substance abuse? Is some sort of Housing Retention Team effort made?

(SR) How is it weighing on the community? Isolation abuse – drinking alone inside the apartment? Maybe not –but if it leads to belligerent behavior with other residents – then maybe a possible outcome of intervention from the team is that we help that person with the underlying substance abuse problem.

(JR) And always there is a need for balancing the confidentiality issues of someone's problem with the community concerns



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which may or may not rise to issues of safety.

Laura Wilson (LW) – And safety – then we need to step up – call police – commence intervention that way.

(SR) – Sometimes it may feel like nothing is happening – when actually a lot is being done – we just can't divulge because of confidentiality – so there needs to be some trust.

Lynn Martin (LM) – I don't see how residents are supposed to just trust – when there is an ongoing problem and absolutely no sense that something is being done to make things better and no one is even acknowledging the problem.

SB: Would email basically providing courteous acknowledgement work? 'We have received your letter of blank date. We take your concerns seriously. Please understand that such matters are confidential but that we follow up on each request.' Something stock like that?

LM: No. It needs to be personal. Face to face.

SR: Again, it's tough and I know it's frustrating – needs a solution.

LM: It ends up being told "call the police", 'call the police', 'call the police'.

SR: The property manager is responsible for enforcing the lease. So the issue goes to them. But criminal conduct is another matter.

LW: A tenant pushes another down the stairs – the response is call the police.

DH: And does that result in eviction.

SR: It can, but not necessarily – there is still process – example where throwing a wooden box out of rage – and move to evict – but Legal Aid can enter an appearance and build a case on reengaging with services and meds and the person might stay.



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LM: But I am here to tell you that we are told to call the police and then we call the police and nothing happens.

SR: Police need a basis to take action – just because they come to the scene doesn't mean someone gets arrested – there has to be evidence that give rise to bringing a case.

DW: What is the process for bad behavior – say drunk, belligerent behavior?

SR: We can do a lease violation – usually a takes a series of violation before there is an eviction notice but it depends on severity.

See “peaceful enjoyment of the home”

LW: The reason I am here is to engage in the discussion – because we have – all of us – limited resources, and we need to use them wisely.

SBu: This might be a good place to discuss – Officers are briefed at rollcall every morning by Street Outreach – we have a chance daily to be folded in, told what to look for, and who may be in crisis.

LW: Our process is a little different – working with SASH – thought is that lease violations are generally driven by a need for social services and we try to identify that need.

TBe: So we are looking at two different models employed by Housing Services – one a property management model and the other has more of a social services bent.

Sandy Steingard (SS): So we have to be careful how we characterize things – examples are abundant of policy and facts around provision of services to the disenfranchised being reported in an incorrect manner.

LW: Understood – so the point is to engage in a positive discussion around the struggles of residents in crisis and of how to best leverage limited resources to assist them.

SS: Contacts with services documented. CRT applies to the adult population that meet criteria for mental illness -





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primarily of the psychotic variety – who also have a documented treatment history – chronic problems – impairing function

And with that program comes career problem – and housing options – so there are people fighting to get those beds/those services

We also have transitional case management – might not meet criteria for CRT – but qualify for short term case management to get them help.

SR: Can't emphasize how great these programs are if you can get someone into them.

DH – Great – Now we will use this as the backdrop for next meeting – police and outreach – how they work together – how they work with providers.

DW - Do police have the ability to provide outreach for residents pre-crisis

LW – Police did do that for us

JR – Please be prepared to speak to the privacy issue policy and protocols you utilize.

#### **4. Other Business**

DH \_ Richard Haesler to send draft minutes to action board and let us know if we can confirm this room for next meeting on April 12 @ 5:00 p.m.

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

DH – Move to adjourn at 6:33



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Hearing no objection - meeting is adjourned