



CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

1/3/2017

Public Safety Committee

January 3, 2017

Minutes

Committee Members: Councilors Sara Giannoni (SG) (chair); Selene Coburn (SC); David Hartnett (DH) (arrived at 5:32 p.m.)

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

Also Present: Laura Wilson (Cathedral Square); Sarah Russell (BHA); Michael Monte (CHT); Wilda White (Vermont Psychiatric Survivors); Lynn Martin; Michael Ohler (BHA); Jessica Radbord (Vermont Legal Aid); Jess Aloe (Burlington Free Press); Katie Jickling (Seven Days); Alexandra Leslie (Local 22/44 News)

At 6:36 p.m. Chair Giannoni commenced the meeting.

1. **Agenda:** motion to adopt by SC, second by DH – passes 3 to 0.
1. **Approval of minutes of 10/27/16:** Motion to Adopt by DH; Second by SC – passes 3 to 0.
1. **Public Forum:** None
1. **Committee Discussion – Draft proposed resolution re evictions: crisis plan and protocol for public housing agencies**

SG invites intros and then provides background – referencing earlier meeting of the committee on September 23, 2016 on this issue – and references an understanding that this is a piece of a huge puzzle.



CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

1/3/2017

DH: I brought forward the resolution – not saying it's perfect – but it's a start – we need to do something – we need to do better – felt there was a need to establish protocol –

Possible discussion areas:

- Alternative housing
- Family notifications?
- Acknowledging that there are a lot of Phil Grenons out there
- Can you better organize/coordinate when addressing mentally ill

Jessica Radbord (JR): How do you propose identifying the individuals you believe you want to address here?

DH: Individuals experiencing severe mental health crisis facing eviction

Here the discussion focused for quite a period of time on the privacy issues and the potential stigmatizing effects of calling out/targeting specific individuals or diagnoses.

The conversation then was re-directed toward stakeholders (to include parties present at the meeting as well as parties not present at the meeting) engaging in discussions of procedure and process in general terms without a focus on any one specific individual or type of individual – and whether there are opportunities for collective betterment of process and procedures and whether a series of discussions might serve to foster discovery of those opportunities.

Sarah Russell (SR); Laura Wilson (LW); Michael Monte (MM) all spoke about their respective organizations and the efforts they make and their willingness to engage in the discussion

Wilda White (WW) spoke of her concern about potential discrimination from tagging individuals with a psychiatric label – encouraged precise use of language and a focus on a process that does not discriminate or stigmatize.

LW: wants to piggyback on those comments – we need to recognize the uniqueness of each individual

Lynn Martin (LM): I lived at 101 – I was there when Phil died – I think there needs to be assessments of behavior versus



CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

1/3/2017

diagnosis of ailment

MM: My experience is that our landlords are generally really focused on providing support – example – there is staff effort for all to read the book “Eviction” right now. There are a number of responses we can take – perhaps though a general focus on eviction and the trauma it invites – It means poverty – and that is one of the greatest trauma for an individual.

JR: I feel we are sometimes talking past each other but when we peel it all away, we are all talking about steps to assure humane treatment in trying circumstances

DH: Agrees and clarifies that this is his position

JR & WW discuss issue re what should be protocol when competency is questionable and potential for misunderstanding and escalation is greatest

SC: This committee is looking to be a conduit for a discussion amongst service providers to accomplish exactly that – first thing we did as a council was direct the police commission to investigate. We are here asking you to self-examine – do we know how many evictions occur in a twelve month period.

CHT believes approx. 12; BHA approx. 9; Cathedral Sq. approx. 6

MM: I invite you all to look at a link set up by the South Carolina Housing Authority where funding was linked to establishing protocol

Here we might inquire of the Housing Retention Team

- Keeping people in their homes
- See stages of engagement (a) the letter of termination goes out; (b) the complaint is issued (C) the complaint is filed. Note that at each stage there is a tendency for some of the tenant to vacate. Example a copy of the complaint is received and the tenant moves out before the landlord has filed the complaint in court to initiate the court process.

The group then took up a discussion of next steps and agreed to form a sub-committee comprised of a city council rep from the committee; reps from the agencies present; as well as police; fire; Howard; perhaps Vt. Apt. Owners rep or Nadine Scibek (frequent landlord counsel in eviction cases). The make-up could meet approx. twice a month to report out to the





CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE 1/3/2017

full council in May.

Reps of the Housing Agencies discuss w committee members and agree that the committee will sponsor a resolution to go to council affirming this intent and including the four focus areas described in the alternative resolution which was submitted this evening.

DH moved to approve proposed resolution.

SC seconds.

Motion passes unanimously.

1. **Other business**

None

1. **Adjournment**

DH move to adjourn.

SC seconds. Passes unanimously – Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.