

**CITY OF NEW HAVEN
HOMELESS ADVISORY COMMISSION
DECEMBER 11, 2008
MINUTES**

PRESENT: N. Hogan, W. Johnston, B. Reisfeld, G. Spinner, V. Wilson, R. Plattus

EXCUSED: D. Ecton

ABSENT: J. Goldblum, K. Lum

EX-OFFICIO: N. Torres-LCI for A. Rizzo (Absent), R. Manning-CSA (Present)

STAFF: R. Manning (for J. Huettner)

INVITED GUESTS: Fred Morrison, New Haven Plan to End Homelessness

OTHERS PRESENT: Eliza Scheffler, Simon Goldstein, James Cersonsky, Jessica Cole, Joan Cass, YHHAP, Jacky Yu, Agape Church, Becca Allen, Columbus House, Seth Extein, Roosevelt Institution, Ben Stango, Yale College Democrats, Chris Alexander, John Bethke, Consumers, Molly Clark-Barol, Andrew Feldman, Michael Jones, Matthew Ellison, Gabriel Zucker, Ed Mattison, SCBHN

Meeting called for 6:00 P.M.

Meeting called to order at 6:06 P.M.

G. Spinner called the meeting to order, and after introductions, asked for a motion to approve the November 13, 2008 Meeting Minutes with W. Johnston making the motion and N. Hogan seconding. The motion passed: YES-7: N. Hogan, W. Johnston, B. Reisfeld, G. Spinner, V. Wilson, R. Plattus, **BY PROXY:** D. Ecton (12/10/08). NO-0.

Next, G. Spinner discussed the agenda item on recent restoration/fund-raising activities to help cover the cuts in the City's homeless budget. He highlighted the "Tent City on the Green" event (November 20, 2008) which was very successful due to wide community participation (commission members, Yale students, CSA, non-profit organizations, a variety of groups and individuals) with current expectations that the goal set by CSA for the event of \$25,000 will be surpassed. He added that a lot of people turned out and it "raised a spirit" and awareness toward the immediate needs of providing homeless shelter for this winter season. In addition, to date, Yale students have raised a total of \$32,000 for this overall effort, through a variety of activities and events, in coordination with Tent City event. Ed Mattison stated that additional funds are needed for the possible need of a

“second” overflow shelter or a church site in the event it is needed, and that he is pursuing this.

Also, a youth church group in Guilford is interested in a “sleep-out” to raise funds for homelessness, and Yale students are working with them to organize the event, for early March, 2009. G. Spinner reported that he had a meeting in Hartford with the Director of the Governor’s Budget agency and that they are projecting 3 billion dollar shortfalls for both 2009 and 2010. We need to be advocates for supportive housing and other programs that support those who are homeless. Currently, 11 states are close to bankruptcy.

Next, Fred Morrison reported on the 10 Year Plan. First, he indicated that 14 projects in progress to add new supportive housing units are in jeopardy of being terminated by state funding sources. This is a primary plan objective and requested that all urge the Governor not to do this, because it will have little impact on the state budget situation and a heavy impact on the availability of housing for persons who are homeless, as currently, affordable housing unit supplies are almost non-existent. He requested that the Commission contact the Governor to urge her not to proceed with this action. He added that they are working on the issue of how to create more housing stock. He discussed the federally-funded Neighborhood Stabilization Program with the state receiving 25 million and the City, 3.2 million of the total, with income level restrictions, which allows us to access some of these funds for those who are homeless. The funds need to be committed within ten months. Also, DMHAS has issued an RFI for the CT Mental Health Center to deal with the problems generated by those who are showing up in hospital emergency rooms with severe mental health and substance abuse issues. Hopefully, DMHAS resources can be used to move some of these individuals into housing. In addition, there is property on Wintergreen Ave., owned by the federal government which is becoming available, that as its’ first priority, can be used for those who are homeless (such as the development of supportive housing units). He added that they are working on a new governance structure and process for the implementation activities of the 10 Year Plan Steering Committee and the Continuum of Care. They are also working on funding for Fred’s position and HMIS homeless data system support that is currently supported by DSS funding.

After some discussion, G. Spinner called for a motion to send a letter to the Governor and her Budget Chief expressing the Commissions’ strong opposition to terminating the 14 new supportive housing unit projects, with W. Johnston making the motion and B. Reisfeld seconding. The motion passed: YES-6: N. Hogan, W. Johnston, B. Reisfeld, G. Spinner, V. Wilson, R. Plattus. NO-0. Members were reminded that January 7, 2008 is the opening date for the CT General Assembly and a good time to be contacting state legislators on this and other issues related to homelessness.

The Homeless Children's Collaborative report was tabled until the next Commission meeting.

R. Manning gave the Overflow report by emphasizing that there is a misperception that the City of New Haven is not involved in the funding of the Overflow Shelter. Separate and distinct from the previously discussed fund-raising activities, \$83,000 is currently under contract with Columbus House, which includes the lease of the facility, security at the facility and program dollars, in addition to another \$20,000 available to Columbus House at its facility on the Boulevard tied to both internal and outside security.

He added that CSA receives daily census counts from Columbus House, the Overflow Shelter and Immanuel Baptist Shelter, and reported on those stats for November, 2008. Further, he reported that the monthly averages at both the Overflow and Immanuel Baptist shelters have not reached their operating capacities.

Next, G. Spinner indicated that he added the 90 Length of Stay Policies to the agenda at the request of Becca Allen from Columbus House. She stated that some clients refuse to be engaged by a case manager. G. Spinner provided a brief summary of the history and background of the 90 Day LOS policies. E. Mattison stated that the intention was fine, until the City dropped its 'No Freeze' policy. He was critical of the lack case managers and the dropping of the "No Freeze" policy. He further claimed that the capacities at both the Overflow and Immanuel Baptist shelters had been exceeded. G. Spinner stated that Kica Matos, Community Services Administrator, has scheduled a meeting to discuss the "No Freeze" policy.

The 3rd Annual Homeless Person's Memorial Day, scheduled for Friday, December 19, 2008, 1:00 P.M. at City Hall was announced and a flyer with specifics was handed out.

V. Wilson indicated that she had an announcement and would fax specifics to R. Manning or J. Huettner for distribution to the Commission.

With no further business, G. Spinner entertained and received a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:26 P.M. (Motion passed unanimously).