

**CITY OF NEW HAVEN  
HOMELESS ADVISORY COMMISSION  
JANUARY 08 2009  
MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** D. Ecton, K. Lum, V. Wilson, R. Plattus

**EXCUSED:** J. Goldblum, B. Reisfeld, G. Spinner

**ABSENT:** N. Hogan, W. Johnston

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

**STAFF:** J. Huettner

**INVITED GUESTS:** Fred Morrison, New Haven Plan to End Homelessness  
Mary Lou Aleskie, Director, Arts & Ideas Festival

**OTHERS PRESENT:** James Cersonsky, YHHAP, Kimberly Whitley, Life Haven,  
Malynda Mallory, Columbus House, Carmen Brown, NHHR,  
Andria Matthews, Arts & Ideals Festival, Gloria M. Hanley,  
The Sound School, Ed Mattison, SCHBN, Betsy Yagla, New  
Haven Advocate, Fernando Betancourt, New Haven Independent  
Elizabeth Benton, New Haven Register

Meeting called for 6:00 P.M.

Meeting called to order at 6:07 P.M.

In G. Spinners' absence, J. Huettner called the meeting to order, and after introductions, asked for a motion to approve the December 11, 2008 Meeting Minutes with R. Plattus making the motion and V. Wilson seconding. The motion passed: YES-8: D. Ecton, K. Lum, V. Wilson, R. Plattus, **BY PROXY:** J. Goldblum (01/02/09), B. Reisfeld (01/07/09), N. Hogan (01/09/09), W. Johnston (01/09/09). NO-0.

Next, J. Huettner updated members on the recent fund-raising efforts to ensure that the Overflow Shelter remains open during the winter months. Acknowledging that the specifics had been covered at the December meeting, he thanked all of the groups, organizations and individuals who participated in fund-raising efforts, which turned out to be very successful. He emphasized that it was not too early to start planning fund-raising efforts for next winter, as the financial picture looks as bleak or bleaker than this year and there was no way of gauging whether the community response would be as generous as this year. R. Plattus indicated the teens at a Guilford church are planning a "sleep-out." Also, that a R.I coffee shop that is moving to New Haven, which donates a

percentage of its' profits to worthwhile causes and one of the first things that its' going to be raising funds for, is homelessness. It will be opening on Wall Street, hopefully in time for the Inauguration. She added that the Board of Aldermen is planning an event to be held this Spring.

Next, J. Huettner recognized Mary Lou Aleskie, Director of the Arts & Ideas Festival, who had requested to address the Commission. She stated that they were involved in the Tents on the Green event and that she wanted to discuss with members, the fact that the Festival and homeless persons share the Green and that they would like to collaborate and share with the Commission in some positive ways. The Festival has had homeless volunteers, some have purchased tickets and participated in Festival events. The Festival has tried to create a balance with visitors and persons who are homeless. She added that they would like to be part of the dialogue that would increase participation of and interaction with those who are homeless. She mentioned dance and book reading sessions as past examples of participation by homeless persons. She singled out a book reading and poem project in collaboration with the Library as an example which could be built upon, such as the gathering of stories which could be shared and additional "open" workshops (in February and March). A writing workshop was also discussed. Also, several events are geared to disabled persons. They would request some infrastructure support from the Commission, such as, organizing and getting the word out. R. Plattus asked if homelessness, which is such a major issue could be part of the "Ideas" part of the Festival. Within the context of larger issues, with a variety of inputs, homelessness could be one of those inputs. For example, if the topic was "economics," through the Commission, a group could be developed with homeless issues as a sub-topic, with a turn-out willing to participate in such a discussion. This might be a possibility within the context of "an Obama approach" as the ideas side is as important as the arts side of the Festival. After further discussion, members agreed to add this discussion as a regular meeting agenda item, with a staff member of the Festival present at meetings. Also, it might be possible to bring in national speakers, Yale students have produced a homeless video and good material that has come out of writing workshops. In addition Yale Democrats will be lobbying in Hartford on behalf of homelessness. People stories with a face would be a favorable means to integrate homelessness into the Festival.

Fred Morrison updated members on the 10 Year Plan by stressing the researched basis and doability of the plan within the projected timeframe. Regarding new supportive housing units, he reemphasized the availability of monies with a quick turnaround, under the federally funded Neighborhood Revitalization Program (\$3 million to New Haven) locally through an organization named ROOF and the New Haven Continuum of Care. Several projects are ready to go. Also, there is a property (200 Wintergreen-5 Acres) that the federal government wants to sell with the priority for use of a homeless related activity and that is being looked at as a possibility for additional mixed use supportive

housing units. The Next Steps Initiative is in danger of being dropped by the Governor, including several “in-the-pipeline” supportive housing projects in New Haven. A summit will be held in Hartford next week of all the ten year plan efforts statewide, to hopefully develop the common areas of agreement on issues that can be resolved only by state agencies, departments and the state legislature. He added that the Economic Stimulus package in Washington offers the opportunity to include some funding for supportive and affordable housing projects that are “shovel-ready” and homeless advocates need to be involved in that process. Finally, he indicated that the need for funding sources for the ten year plan activities still exists for both the HMIS data system improvements and staffing, for the upcoming fiscal year.

The Homeless Children’s Collaborative update was tabled to the next meeting as J. Goldblum was absent.

Next, J. Huettner pleaded for volunteers for the street count portion of the 2009 New Haven Homeless Point-In-Time count, to be held on Wednesday, January 28, 2009 from 6-11 p.m. The central meeting place has been moved from Safe Haven to the First Presbyterian Church (Owens Community Center), 704 Whitney Ave. (corner of Whitney and Huntington). Volunteers are still needed to help make up the teams that will canvass the neighborhoods to conduct the count.

R. Manning provided the Overflow Shelter update, including shelter occupancy totals for the month of December. He added that the City still partially funds the Overflow Shelter, only at less than before the budget cuts.

Ed Mattison indicated that enough money was collected through the various fund-raising events to keep the Overflow Shelter open through the end of April, 2009. He also indicated that enough money was available to continue the TAP program. There may be enough money to share with the other New Haven shelters. J. Plattus requested that E. Mattison provide a full account of what was collected and how it was distributed, to the Commission, and he agreed. He commended the City on the Tent on the Green event, adding that money was still coming in. He questioned what do we do next year, as it will be more difficult to again raise this level of money (\$350,000). He questioned how the City distributes its funding. He has approached churches as an option for a “second overflow” should the need arise. He stated some donors may be available to help in this effort.

Next, J. Huettner reported on a phone meeting regarding the 90 Day LOS policies and the “No Freeze” policy (G. Spinner, K. Matos, A. Cunningham, R. Manning & J. Huettner). He indicated that the “90 Day LOS Policy” would be suspended in terms of the disciplinary aspects of the days counted, so that no one would be turned out into the cold

due to the policies. The entire policy will be reinstated when better weather prevails. Also, that all other aspects of the policies would be continued, such as, the development of and progress on action plans and day counts. Further, that because of budget cuts, that the City could not agree to continue a “No Freeze” policy as it does not have the resources to guarantee everyone shelter. Last year, the City was able to facilitate the opening of a “second overflow” because some resources were available for that purpose.

V. Wilson announced that she goes to Hartford weekly and would be willing to assist if anyone needs help.

With no further business, J. Huettner asked for and received a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 P.M. (Motion passed unanimously).