



CITY OF NORMAN, OK
CITY COUNCIL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
Municipal Building, Executive Conference Room, 201 West Gray, Norman,
OK 73069
Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

The Oversight Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in Regular Session in the Executive Conference Room in the Municipal Building, on Thursday, December 14, 2023 at 4:00 PM, and notice of the agenda of the meeting was posted at the Norman Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and on the City website at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Schueler called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councilmember Ward 2 Lauren Schueler - Chair
Councilmember Ward 1 Austin Ball
Councilmember Ward 3 Bree Montoya
Councilmember Ward 4 Helen Grant
Councilmember Ward 7 Stephen Holman

OTHERS PRESENT

Darrel Pyle, City Manager
Kathryn Walker, City Attorney
Anthony Purinton, Assistant City Attorney
Lisa Krieg, CDBG - Grants Manager
Shaakira Calnick, City Auditor
Jason Olsen, Parks and Recreation Director
April Doshier, Food and Shelter Director
Scott Martin, Chamber of Commerce
Heidi Smith, Director of Operations, Thunderbird Clubhouse
Lisa Webb, Admin Tech III, City Clerk

AGENDA ITEMS

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE REVIEW OF THE HOMEBASE PLAN.

Ms. Heidi Smith, Director of Operations for Thunderbird Clubhouse, presented information on the Homebase Plan for Cleveland County, specifically the City of Norman to help those experiencing homelessness.

The plan was developed after conducting a wide Homelessness Gaps Analysis, distributing and collecting data from a community-wide survey and two community-wide meetings.

The Action Plan is intended to provide a roadmap to guide current and future planning by the Norman/Cleveland County Continuum of Care (CoC) in its efforts to prevent and end homelessness.

An effective response to homelessness requires additional housing opportunities, and any housing, should embrace the evidence-based practice of Housing First.

The community-wide process identified three goals for the CoC.

- Secure Housing for all Norman Residents
- Increase Access to Homeless Emergency Response Services
- Mobilize County wide response to Prevent and End Homelessness

Together the three goals address the key challenges and needs identified in the CoC's Homelessness Gaps Analysis. Each goal includes a set of strategies that enable the community to achieve the goal and action steps that are recommended to move the strategy forward.

SECURE HOUSING FOR ALL NORMAN RESIDENTS

- Develop policies and opportunities to increase the number of safe and affordable housing units available in the community
- Protect and expand affordable housing through local policy
- Assess and use available public and private land for housing
- Increase the number of landlords willing to rent to people with lived experience of homelessness
- Develop greater access to affordable housing through a coordinated landlord engagement campaign
- Fund a Landlord Risk Mitigation Fund to help encourage landlords to house the population by minimizing their risk.
- Expand housing through coordinated assistance programs
 - PSH – Permanent Supportive Housing
 - TBRA – Tenant Based Rental Assistance
 - Section 8 -
 - 120 vouchers in Norman, with a waiting list of approx. 1 year
 - Documented disability under age 62 can fast track in voucher system

1. (continued)DISCUSSION REGARDING THE REVIEW OF THE HOMEBASE PLAN.

INCREASE ACCESS TO HOMELESS EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES

- Increase low-barrier, housing focused shelter
 - The need for a 24-hour shelter has been discussed for a long time, with all kinds of possible options being considered, location, property available for purchase, funding for purchase/operation, nimbyism, etc.
- Expand street and encampment outreach, including treatment for mental health and substance use disorders
- Expand supportive services and housing focused case management
- Improve transportation to employment, services and shelter.

MOBILIZE COUNTYWIDE RESPONSE TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS

- Expand coordinated prevention and diversion assistance
- Provide information and engagement opportunities to people living in homelessness
- Develop public education about the homeless system of care
- Improve communication, coordination and transparency of the CoC
- Commitment to comprehensive data collection

Case management is very important to the success of housing, but a lack of funding leads to limited availability of case managers.

The annual PIT, (Point in Time) count occurs in January each year. Staff and volunteers contact the homeless population to assess the number of homeless within the community and their needs. A quick two-to-three-minute questionnaire is completed when possible, and helps assess many factors/needs of the homeless, including why they are in Norman, how did they get here, etc. The 2023 PIT shows that there were 167 people living in homelessness in Norman at that time.

When illegal encampments were closed in Norman, it made a slightly invisible problem become very visible. Cutting off resources makes it difficult to manage the problem.

2. EMERGENCY SHELTER UPDATE

Ms. April Dosier, Director, A Friends House and Food and Shelter, presented data for the month of November 2023. The shelter has been full every night, and staff are working with residents to connect them with available resources. The number of people moved into permanent housing has slowed down as resources are very limited.

- 93 Unique guests, 35 Women, 58 Men, 9 Veterans
- 28 of the 93 guests are currently working or have an income source of some sort.
- Two of the guests checked into addiction treatment programs outside of Norman.

2. (continued) EMERGENCY SHELTER UPDATE

Food and Shelter funds a program that provides bus tickets to get homeless back to their home of origin and with family support. Staff also follow guests for six months to monitor progress, needs and provide support. Shelter Staff are working with a lawyer to assist shelter guests with disability applications.

Ms. Dosier said the contract with the security company was ended and Food and Shelter Staff provide the security services now. Anyone with behavioral issues is not permitted to stay at the shelter but Staff work with them to access mental health treatment programs. The majority of the Police Department calls for assistance are for medical reasons.

Shelter Staff work with the Veterans Affairs program Staff to obtain resources for the veterans at the shelter to assist with the elimination of homelessness for this sector of people. Veterans experiencing homelessness is not a resource issue but related to other factors.

3. UPDATE ON THE PRIOR DISCUSSION REGARDING INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS TO 109 WEST GRAY STREET.

Locations considered for the homeless as listed below.

- 209 W. Gray has asbestos
- 213 W. Gray looking at \$40,000 for demo
- 209 W. Gray was the cheaper option with \$60,000 for demo alone.
- 109 W. Gray needs interior improvements to house a homeless shelter in the facility.
 - Costs for complete renovation and improvements are estimated to be \$297,000 plus \$30,000 contingency.
 - Expansion will have room for 100 beds, two bathrooms for homeless, one staff bathroom, sitting areas and storage.
 - No showers or kennel options will be available.
 - Mobile showers provided by local church.
 - Building modifications will not prevent usability for future businesses.
 - Four to six months to complete the renovations.
 - No disruption in service during work.

Should Council expand services to the west, more overnight staff, case managers and supplies will be needed. Shelter currently encompasses 109,110,111 W. Gray.

Council consensus to move forward with the renovation of 109 W Gray for the homeless shelter and to make an appropriation through Finance as necessary.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

ATTEST


City Clerk, Deputy



Mayor