

## **HSC Community Outreach Meeting Minutes – February 1, 2022**

**Human Services Campus, Inc. hosted a Quarterly Community Outreach Meeting on Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 6:00 pm via ZOOM. This report is submitted per Ordinance G-6799. Invitations were emailed to 517 people, and hard copy, postcard mailed to 720 people. More than 57 individuals participated.**

**The following is a report of the meeting:**

### **CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **HUMAN SERVICES CAMPUS UPDATE**

Amy Schwabenlender provided a few updates from the Human Services Campus.

- The construction of the Sprung Structure, funded by the City of Phoenix, is expected to wrap up in February. Front-line staff and security will be hired to work in and around the structure. It will be open for respite during the day and overnight shelter, there will be showers and restrooms available, and there will be access to other services. A gate at 11<sup>th</sup> Ave and Jackson will be opened for client foot traffic so that they can easily access the structure from the campus. A ribbon-cutting event will be held prior to the structure's opening.
- The City of Phoenix recently conducted a streetlight assessment and identified some areas where new streetlights could be installed. The campus is looking forward to seeing that through with City staff.
- The Brian Garcia Welcome Center became a 24/7 facility on December 6, 2021. Signage was put up for public restrooms and these signs are also available to others in the immediate neighborhood to post on their properties.
- A Safe Storage program was implemented on December 6, 2021, using bins donated by the City of Phoenix as storage for clients.
- 200 trash bags were donated to Angela Ojile at the request of the Madison Pioneers Coalition. Twice-per-day cleanings have continued in the stipulated area. The Clean Zone volunteer program with Andre House continues on Tuesdays and Thursdays – from September through January, there have been 55 unduplicated volunteers participating in the program and they have collected 276 bags of trash. The HSC continues to work with the City of Phoenix's homelessness task force to discuss the twice weekly cleanups.
- HSC is working with a team at Arizona State University to plan a landscaping project.
- There are around 60 security cameras on the campus, and HSC staff continues to work with the police to improve security and safety.

Lisa Glow provided updates from CASS.

- CASS is a low-barrier shelter provider with 470 beds and a daytime program. The current capacity of the shelter is 520, with additional mats provided. CASS is working to improve the accessibility for hospital drop-offs.
- Architectural drawings were received this week for the 600 beds and CASS is moving into the City permitting process. Much of the funding will be used to upgrade the restrooms in the shelter. There is no confirmed plan for where to move people while the renovations are taking place.
- More bunks beds have been ordered.

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- CASS is in the process of renovating the Phoenix Inn hotel for use as a shelter for seniors.

### **CITY OF PHOENIX UPDATE**

Scott Hall introduced himself and gave an update on behalf of the City of Phoenix.

- Four additional dumpsters have been added to the area, totaling ten dumpsters.
- The City is partnering with some of the service providers to implement an intensive data program to target individuals and provide resources for housing.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Ian Francis provided an update on behalf of the Madison Pioneers Coalition. He commended the City of Phoenix for stepping up and putting these issues at the forefront on their agenda. He also commended Lisa Glow, Pam Morrison, Amy Schwabenlender, and Goodman Schwartz Public Affairs for the opened lines of communications. He cited the increase in people on the streets from 400 to 700. He expressed concerns about the City of Phoenix's twice weekly cleanings being halted.

Scott Hall stated that these cleanings are needed and the City has been working with the community to educate on the importance of these cleanings and how they should be implemented going forward.

### **COMMUNITY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND FOLLOW-UP ITEMS**

Laurel Langmade: I sent a summary of the crime in the area to Melissa at Goodman Schwartz. Can you please share with all during this meeting and have the HSC address the Prevention of Crime? You always list it last in the agenda and really don't even address the topic. If you need me to resend during this meeting I will.

Commander Freudenthal corrected the crime statistics - the Maricopa County Jail and Phoenix Police Headquarters are included and many of the crimes reported are occurring in the jail and not on the streets. There is a midnight team in the area now and the presence alone has greatly impacted crime. Video camera footage provided by the HSC has also been helpful. Even though the population has increased, the call volume increase has not been as high.

Stacey Champion: Has the city considered paying unsheltered folks to clean - could be with grocery store gift cards, etc., as well as pass out cleaning supplies directly to the people on the street? I mentioned this to Scott last week. Brooms, dust pans, garbage bags, rakes, spray cleaner...

Scott Hall stated that the City is considering every feasible and reasonable opportunity.

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Angela Ojile: Made a comment regarding how helpful the police officers have been during the City of Phoenix cleanings because they have saved people who had overdosed. She would like to see more cleanings by the City of Phoenix.

Bill Morlan: Do the police officers participate in the clean ups and throw away possessions?

Commander Freudenthal confirmed that the police officers do not participate in the clean ups and are only there for security purposes.

Arthur Franco III: What are the results from services provided to individuals? Are these services helping to end homelessness for individuals?

Amy Schwabenlender stated that 20% of individuals can resolve their homelessness on their own after a couple of nights in the shelter. 10% require diversion and can resolve their homelessness after being connected with a family member or support group. Those experiencing chronic homeless may take longer to be connected to services and stable housing. More affordable housing units are needed in the County to keep up with the increasing population. The County is working to create more housing opportunities. She offered to follow up with Arthur offline.

Lisa Glow discussed CASS's preliminary housing plan they do with all individuals who check into the shelter.

Stacey Champion: Have you considered re-opening the county lots (with added shade & amenities) since the chains & poles have created a cramped situation that is in total violation of CDC Covid guidelines for unsheltered encampments and makes it difficult to keep clean?

Rachel Milne stated that this has not been considered. Two of the lots are under construction and there is a concern about heat.

Jeff Spellman: The neighborhood surrounding the HSC has been impacted more so than any other neighborhood in the City. Affordable housing and workforce housing is necessary to end homelessness but right now, shelters need more beds. The homelessness task force has been working to plan more shelters in the County.

Scott Hall outlined some of the plans introduced by the homelessness task force including eviction prevention, neighborhood strategies, and encampment strategies.

Anne Ender: Who are the activists that are discouraging street cleaning? What are the overdose rates?

Commander Freudenthal stated that overdose rates are not readily available, but the crisis surrounding opioid usage is a national problem experienced by those who are not necessarily homeless.

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Scott Hall stated that these activists have good intentions, but they have also created some unnecessary conflict which has been unproductive in getting things done.

Jessica Spencer: Why are tents allowed in the “zone” but nowhere else? What are the County projects on the lots?

Commander Freudenthal clarified that tents are permitted in public areas, but not private lots. There will naturally be a higher population of unsheltered individuals around the shelter because that is where they are receiving services.

Councilmember Carlos Garcia confirmed that tents are permitted in public areas, but not private lots due to a Supreme Court decision. He recommended that encampments being taken down in public areas be reported. He also clarified that the chains were placed up by the City due to the requests made by the councilmember who served that area at the time.

Rachel Milne stated that the County lots will be used for underground lines, but offered to follow up for confirmation.

Laurel Langmade: Is there an update on the Pioneer Cemetery being cleaned?

Amy Schwabenlender stated that the daily cleanings and twice weekly Clean Zone cleanings are occurring in the public easement. Part of the reduction of the cleanings is due to the City’s reduced cleanings.

Arthur Franco III: How many individuals serving on the various Boards, committees, and task forces are formerly homeless? Activists are helpful in filling in the gaps that these organized groups miss. Street feeding should not be discouraged because individuals experiencing homelessness are likely struggling with food insecurity.

Lisa Glow stated that CASS has four formerly homeless individuals serving on their Board. Scott Hall stated that he is formerly homeless and is happy to share his story with anybody who asks and there are many formerly homeless individuals serving on these various groups.

Jessica Spencer: Why are we discussing the messes and filth created before discussing the general lack of bathrooms?

Scott Hall stated that restrooms have been made more accessible and there are plans to create more restroom accessibility.

Stacey Champion: The chains and poles should be removed, shade structures and cooling tents should be placed on County lots, and people should lead with more compassion.

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Joel Coplin: Why is there not more discussion on smaller, more efficient shelters across the County?

Scott Hall stated that smaller shelters throughout the County are still part of the larger conversation and there are some plans in place.

Councilmember Carlos Garcia discussed the final allotment of federal funds that will be used to help create smaller shelters away from the HSC. He emphasized the importance of coming together to encourage other communities to accept shelters.