

HOMELESS POLICY GROUP MEETING MINUTES
PINELLAS COUNTY
November 18, 2005

Present:	Dr. Teresa Bradley	Vice President, Medical Affairs, St. Anthony's Hospital
	Janet Clark	Pinellas County School Board – District One
	Bonnie Collins	Consumer
	Ron Dickman	Executive Director, Religious Community Services
	Bob Dillinger	Juvenile Welfare Board, Public Defender's Office
	John Doran	City Councilmember, City of Clearwater
	Mike Dove	Sitting in for James Bennett, City of St. Petersburg
	Patricia Gerard	Vice Mayor, City of Largo
	Joanne Olvera Lighter	Foundation Representative
	Sandra Lyth	PCCH, YWCA of Tampa Bay
	Gary MacMath	President, Boley Centers for Behavioral Health Care, Inc.
	Carlen Petersen	City Councilmember, City of Clearwater
	Virginia Rowell	At-Large Member
	Kenneth T. Welch	Commissioner, Pinellas County
Absent:	Catherine	
	Alexander-Ponder	Homeless Program Coordinator/Bay Pines/Veterans Admin.
	James Bennett	City Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg
	Beverley Billiris	Mayor, City of Tarpon Springs
	Rick Butler	City Councilmember, City of Pinellas Park
	Beth Coleman	President, Clearwater Chamber of Commerce
	Ronnie Duncan	Commissioner, Pinellas County
	Andrew Guyette	City Commissioner, City of Largo
	Kathy Haynes	Director, Sec. 8, Pinellas County/Dunedin Housing Auth.
	Mark Holmgren	Vice-President, United Way of Tampa Bay
	Sid Klein	Police Chief, City of Clearwater
	Virginia Littrell	City Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg
	Patricia Mabe	President/CEO Community Health Centers of Pinellas, Inc.
	Rev. Louis Murphy	Mt. Zion Progressive Baptist Church
	Karl Nurse	President, SP Council of Neighborhood Associations
	Don Shea	President/CEO St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership, Inc.
	Duke Tieman	President, South Clearwater Citizens for Progressive Action
Also		
Present:	Herb Marlowe	Consultant, Facilitator
	Howie Carroll	Staff, Assistant Housing Director, City of Clearwater
	Beth Eschenfelder	Staff, Manager, Social Svc. Program, City of St. Petersburg
	Cliff Smith	Staff, Assistant Director, Pinellas County Human Services
	S. Jean Vleming	Staff, Program Analyst, Pinellas County Human Services
	Patricia O. Sullivan	Staff, Board Reporter, City of Clearwater
	P.A. Tyrer	Prin. Planner, Pinellas County Community Develop. Dept.
	Carroll Roark	Pinellas County Community Development Department
	David Vaughn	PCCH
	Jackie Griffin-Doherty	Operation PAR/ PCCH
	Lisa Jackson	PCCH
	Okey Ryan	Apex Lending

Paul Akey	Juvenile Welfare Board
Sarah Snyder	PCCH
Danielle Ricciardi	Juvenile Welfare Board
Laron Barber	Le'Azon Technology Institute
Mary Brennan	Real Choice, Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services
Bob Rowan	PCCH

Facilitator Herb Marlowe called the meeting to order at 12:27 p.m., at Family Resources 5180 62nd Avenue North, Pinellas Park, Florida.

To provide continuity for research, items are in agenda order although not necessarily discussed in that order.

2 – Adoption of Agenda Items

Member Lighter moved to adopt the submitted agenda items. The **motion** was duly seconded and approved without objection.

3 – Approval of Meeting Notes – October 21, 2005

Member Petersen moved to approve the meeting notes of the regular meeting of October 21, 2005, as submitted to each member. The **motion** was duly seconded and approved without objection.

4 – 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness

Preview of Priority Setting Exercise: Review of Key Strategies

a) Approval of Summary Plan

Facilitator Herb Marlowe acknowledged the hard work of the Homeless Policy Group and staff. The County will send a letter to the Interagency Council on Homelessness outlining the group's efforts to develop a plan.

Facilitator Marlowe began to review the draft, "Opening Doors of Opportunity: A 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Pinellas County." Staff member Beth Eschenfelder reported that starred items absolutely must be accomplished, but items without stars also are important.

In reference to the Glossary of Plan Terminology on pages 49-50, it was recommended that the term "Lead Entity" include background information on the Homeless Policy Group. In response to a recommendation, Ms. Eschenfelder will clarify language related to the primary oversight group and business leadership counsel. In response to a question, Ms. Eschenfelder reported that several years ago, the Homeless Coalition had adopted minimum shelter standards of care, modeled after the State. Based on State encouragement, the standards never were put in place. Some smaller facilities do not meet minimum standards related to grievance procedures, etc. Concern was expressed that standards not be so stringent that few facilities qualify. Ms. Eschenfelder reported only HUD (Housing & Urban Development

Department) funded emergency and transitional housing require licensing and adherence to minimum standards.

In response to concerns, Ms. Eschenfelder said the oversight council will make certain the plan is implemented. Concern was expressed that technical resources cannot be provided until funding is in place. Ms. Eschenfelder will amend language regarding the process, which resolves not to displace needed agencies. In response to a question, she said some agencies, such as the YWCA, have limited funds and will need some level of support to make necessary transitions from old to new service delivery models. In response to a question, Facilitator Marlowe said while this draft states intent to provide technical assistance to maintain a database of available housing, the action plan will identify necessary resources. It was recommended that data collected by all agencies must be consistent.

It was recommended that the glossary include information on current conditions, such as the number of shelter beds, feeding site locations, continuum of care information, available resources such as the County Health Department, including mobile medical units, Children and Family, etc. with the goal of integrating resources into a single County effort that shares funding, rather than be fragmented among agencies. Ms. Eschenfelder said the goal is to produce recommendations to close gaps that prevent homeless people from moving to permanent housing. An action plan, to be developed next, will establish benchmarks and research costs. The goal is to have a significant reduction in homelessness.

Discussion ensued regarding the coordination and integration of case management, with recommendations that a one-stop center would streamline care. Concern was expressed no network exists for providers to communicate with each other. It was noted that being homeless can be exhausting, as providers are difficult to access. It was recommended that in-kind assistance food banks be added to funding sources.

Discussion ensued regarding challenges affecting homeless individuals upon their release from hospitals and jails or children who have been abandoned by their parents. In response to a concern regarding elected officials supporting an unfunded plan, the report's opening summary will report that the plan is dependent on funding.

It was recommended that Pinellas County not build mega-shelters, housing between 300 and 500 people. Ms. Eschenfelder recommended that centers average 60 beds each. Consensus was to strike the word large from the strategy for Objective 2C.1, Service-Enriched Shelter & Housing, Year 5+.

Discussion ensued regarding the current shortage of beds, shelter rules, the closing of transitional housing, and the need to provide alternate beds for clients who are uncomfortable with multiple restrictions imposed by some shelters. Ms. Eschenfelder said the intention is to offer services and outreach in hopes of engaging clients down the line. It was recommended that a master list be developed of all available spaces, including related rules.

Safe Havens, targeting those with disabilities and severe mental illness, would feature approximately 25 beds and are costly to run due to the required intensive overlay of mental health services. However, costs for these beds are lower than expensive alternatives, such as emergency rooms and jail cells. Staff member Howie Carroll said few SROs (Single Room

Occupancies) are being constructed locally as they are difficult to finance. Consensus was to endorse Objective 2C.2 - "Housing First."

Regarding "Attainable Housing," Mr. Carroll reviewed LURA (Land Use Restriction Agreements), which must be long-term to maintain affordability. Discussion ensued regarding the term "affordable housing," with comments that attainable housing is the biggest current issue. Mr. Carroll recommended requiring that local governments, not just the State, be notified when apartment to condominium conversions are proposed. In response to a concern regarding blight at some mobile home parks, Ms. Eschenfelder said it is important to protect mobile home residents. Staff member Jean Vleming reviewed the new County HomeFinder Program that will target mobile home park and apartment conversion residents who are displaced due to economic development.

Ms. Eschenfelder discussed proposed changes to the draft that clarify protection of residences and add requirements for rental apartment conversions to report first to local governments, which will monitor issues. It was recommended that Section-8 be added to Glossary definitions.

The importance of Object 3.3 – HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) was discussed, as many of the chronically homeless face multiple problems and require a range of services. A federal mandate requires 75% of providers to enter data into HMIS. Staff is considering ways to use this information as a case management tool.

In response to a question, Ms. Eschenfelder said the Homeless Coalition had issued an RFP (Request for Proposals) to implement a centralized intake/unified case management system; 211 Tampa Bay was chosen to be the provider. The Homeless Coalition is financially supporting the system, which can track just about anything. The client has full control of what information is shared and some reporting is limited due to HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act). Concern was expressed that the case management system is not user friendly, and is difficult and expensive for small providers to access. Discussion ensued regarding system difficulties. Ms. Eschenfelder said the system is scheduled for implementation during out-years so that problems first can be resolved.

Pinellas County currently has three ACT teams of interdisciplinary professionals. The term will be added to the Glossary. Ms. Eschenfelder supported the development of one-stop centers in targeted locations throughout the County where service providers and clients can meet in one place. A center already exists in St. Petersburg.

Facilitator Marlowe reviewed proposed removals to barriers, including the need to advocate and lobby to prevent ordinances that criminalize homelessness. Ms. Eschenfelder said the plan is to work with federal funders and legislators to address transportation barrier issues. Discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of a transportation system exclusively for homeless individuals who need to access services and the availability of transportation systems. Facilitator Marlowe said a thorough review of transportation issues is needed. In review of Community Partnerships, consensus was to star the strategy to educate, engage, and involve the community-at-large on issues concerning homelessness. Discussion ensued regarding the Funding & Policy section with a recommendation to add foundations and other funders to the list of possible funding sources, and to add a bullet point to seek entropic dollars.

b) Prioritization of Key Strategies

Facilitator Marlowe polled members to determine preferred priorities.

The Homeless Policy Group recessed from 2:52 to 3:00 p.m.

c) Structure for Leadership Network

Facilitator Marlowe reviewed report priorities and steps needed to develop a policy leadership network, including interlocal agreements, formal invitations, etc. This network would be the official body in charge, be the recipient of external funds, and would subcontract services. Network members would represent their organization's direction and hold the Homeless Coalition accountable for its prudent use of funds and attainment of measurable impacts. Staff will review County organizations and recommend which ones should be represented in the network. It was recommended that the network represent north and south county. In response to a question, Facilitator Marlowe reviewed overlapping responsibilities of the four networks of the human services coordinating council: 1) homelessness; 2) behavior and health issues; 3) housing; and 4) economic well being. The administrative forum would search for overlap duplication so that resources are optimized.

d) Next Steps-Timeline and Assignments

In response to a recommendation, consensus was for the report to begin with an overview. Further discussion ensued with recommendations, i.e. add page numbers, a two page executive summary, a page of statistics regarding current conditions and assets, anticipated costs, etc. Staff will develop a power point for policy group members to present the report to their organizations. Ms. Eschenfelder said significant work remains to be done before costs can be determined and suggested that the new committee could tackle that issue as its first task.

At the next meeting, the policy group will discuss the operating network, the action plan, how the two networks will interact and responsibilities, and determine network membership. Ms. Eschenfelder said many steps are necessary before the network is formalized. The structure of the policy groups could be added later as an addendum to the report. The plan can be amended at any time. Concern was expressed that another level of bureaucracy not be created but that the network improve the coordination of services.

Ms. Eschenfelder said the goal is for the report document to be approved at the next meeting for preliminary submission. She requested that members submit comments to staff prior to the next meeting. Facilitator Marlowe recommended that members present the report to their organizations by February, as preparation of municipal budgets begins early.

e) Message to community about the HPG and 10 Year Plan

Ms. Eschenfelder will draft a two-page executive summary by the next meeting. In response to her request for suggestions regarding the report's message to the community in a letter from the group; members suggested: 1) countywide; 2) partnership; 3) comprehensive; 4) countywide coordination; 5) homelessness affects all families and children; 6) purpose for group's formation; 7) all elements of homelessness; 8) while costly, efforts represent

community's core values; 9) efforts are cost effective and a smart use of funds; 10) effects of spiraling housing costs; 11) why now; 12) quality of life of all county residents; 13) the changing face of the homeless population; 14) closing gaps; 15) overcoming stereotypes; 16) unique group; 17) collaboration; 18) unified; 19) call to action; 20) commitment; 21) appeal to values; 22) anticipated return on investment based on economics and community priorities and ethics; and 23) loss of one paycheck can result in homelessness.

Next meeting date:

The next meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2006, from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at a location to be announced.

NOTE: This has changed since the meeting – The January meeting is now scheduled for January 13, 2006 from 1:30 to 3:30 at the Area Agency on Aging

5 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.