

HSC Community Outreach Meeting Minutes – May 3, 2022

Human Services Campus, Inc. hosted a Quarterly Community Outreach Meeting on Tuesday, May 31, 2022 at 6:00 pm via ZOOM. This report is submitted per Ordinance G-6799.

Invitations were emailed to 539 people, and hard copy, postcard mailed to 565 people.

More than 38 individuals participated.

The following is a report of the meeting:

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

HUMAN SERVICES CAMPUS UPDATE

Alisa Chatinsky gave an update from CASS.

The shelter is expanding from 470 beds to 600 beds and the expansion is being funded by the City of Phoenix. Renovations are currently underway and are expected to be complete by June 1. There are currently an additional 50 beds being funded by Maricopa County. Bathrooms are also being expanded and built to be more trauma informed. CASS is also working on specialized and regional shelters. The Arizona Department of Housing and the City of Phoenix have supported Project Haven, which is specialized for people over the age of 55.

Amy Schwabenlender gave an update from HSC.

The Sprung Structure named “Respiro” officially opened for shelter on Saturday with a temporary certificate of occupancy. The current occupancy is 25 and it is being ramped up to 100. In partnership with the City of Phoenix, there is now a mobile bathroom facility on Jackson & 9th Ave. Temperatures are increasing and there are plans underway to create more shade structures. ASU has received a grant to do some landscaping and tree-planting around the campus along Madison Ave, the corner of 11th Ave and Jackson, and along Jackson to 9th Ave. She then shared some data as requested at previous meetings on a slideshow.

CITY OF PHOENIX UPDATE

Councilwoman Yassamin Ansari stated that the City is in the middle of the 2022-2023 budget-planning process and there have been many strides made to address issues surrounding homelessness. The City is looking to hire various positions dedicated to tackling homelessness and blight issues specifically surrounding the campus. She recognized the Homelessness Task Force for all of their work to establishing long-term plans. The City is looking to dedicate \$9 million to mental health support. A good chunk of the second tranche of ARPA dollars will be dedicated to addressing issues surrounding homelessness. Heat relief has been a focus of the Councilwoman’s team, with effort towards water accessibility and cooling stations.

Councilmember Carlos Garcia discussed the 20th St and Washington project regarding heat respite and shelter space. He emphasized the importance of investment toward issues surrounding homelessness and mental health in the general fund, especially when the ARPA funds are no longer available.

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GOOD OF THE ORDER

Bill Morlan provided an update on behalf of the Madison Pioneers Coalition. He commended the resources being dedicated toward these issues but stated that the increase in unsheltered people in the area paired with the lack of cleanings by the City of Phoenix has taken a toll on the neighborhood. He will be doing a ride-along through the neighborhood with provider CBI.

Angela Ojile commented on the increase in unsheltered people in the area. She asked about what HSC is doing to combat the violence and crime in the neighborhood.

Ian Francis thanked some of the service providers for their partnership in discussing plans for the future. He appreciates the resources going toward mental health. He commented on the need for large cleanings due to the waste build-up. He expressed concerns for the health and safety of the neighborhood.

Scott Hall stated that the City has held some town hall meetings with some of the unsheltered folks in the area to discuss how to be reimplement the City's cleanings.

Commander Freudenthal stated that the Police Department is focused on follow through on prosecution and is working on a project to identify those who frequent the area and prey on unsheltered individuals, such as drug dealers and violent offenders.

COMMUNITY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, AND FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

Annie Ender: These homeowners and business owners have been around longer than the campus – why do issues surrounding homelessness trump the issues that business and homeowners in the area are facing? Homeless people often decline resources and engage in crime.

David Schwartz stated that by helping those experiencing homelessness, this will alleviate the issues being experienced by others in the neighborhood.

Melanie Harmann: Will they stop the street sweeps? Are more shade structures being built in the zone? Will the police harassment of community-based support stop? How exactly is the city increasing access to affordable housing for these folks? Can't they share a few million for shelter beds?

David Schwartz stated that these questions were addressed during the presentation.

Sophia Elicia: How come there is no other space proposed besides the dirt? Why isn't there more discussion around providing other space for unsheltered people to go other than the dirt? There is a shaded grassy area available across the street – why is that not being used?

Scott Hall stated that all options are on the table.

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John Trautman: A lot of money and pride has been put into the assets owned in the neighborhood around the campus. What is the crime increase in this area? Taxes continue to increase in the area – why does that continue to happen when things are worse? What is the City doing to offset this?

Scott Hall stated that the City is focused on addressing the issue of getting folks off the street.

Sophia Elicia: How come lack of bike lights is being enforced? People are being arrested every day for petty crimes in the area.

Commander Freudenthal asked for specific incidents where this is occurring and welcomed the meeting attendees for follow up directly with him.

Cynthia Graber: The least that the City and County could do is provide waivers for property taxes for people who own property in the neighborhood.

Scott Hall stated that he will make sure that this is discussed at the City.

Sophia Elicia: Why haven't these meetings been made accessible to the unsheltered individuals who live in the neighborhood.

David Schwartz stated that anybody is welcome to join these meetings and we are open to any effort made to give them better accessibility.

Kat Eglezos: Is anyone able to explain the dramatic increase from 400 - 1100 people unhoused in this area within the last few months? I'm newer to this group so was just wondering, thank you

Scott Hall explained that it is a compilation of inflation, increased rent, and the housing inventory. The problem is being seen across the City, County, State, and the Nation.

Sophia Elicia: Where are people allowed to have a tent without risking arrest in the City of Phoenix?

Scott Hall emphasized the efforts to get people out of tents and into shelters, where it is safe and cool.

Commander Freudenthal stated that people are living in tents all around Phoenix and are not being arrested. He reiterated the need for specific instances where people are being arrested for being on public property.

Spencer Self emphasized that this meeting is meant for the HSC and the neighborhoods surrounding the campus.

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Stacey Champion: Has water been made available? How much and where? Are water bottles being passed out?

Scott Hall stated that water was available at the Brian Garcia Welcome Center and near the restrooms on 9th Ave and Jackson available 24/7. The Office of Heat Mitigation is working on an effort to pass out hydro flasks.

Amy Schwabenlender added that there are drinking fountains and water bottles are passed out. Outreach teams are also out every day handing out water.

Kat Eglezos : We aren't part of the HSC but we do offer bottled water to all who ask (over the summer) at NourishPHX on 9th and Buchanan if anyone needs.

Stacey Champion: How many 24/7 restrooms are there?

Amy Schwabenlender stated that there are 10 in the trailer and 2 in the Welcome Center.

Stacey Champion: How many unsheltered individuals are outside of the campus now?

Amy Schwabenlender stated that there were 1085 this morning.

Stacey Champion: Does the City believe that there are enough restrooms to support over 1000 people? How many are ADA accessible?

Scott Hall stated that there are other restrooms available during operating hours for anybody to use.

Amy Schwabenlender stated that the campus never anticipated to have over 1000 people unsheltered outside and has no way to add more restrooms quickly at the moment, but is open to ideas. She offered to follow up with Stacey regarding ADA accessible restrooms.

David Schwartz reiterated that these restrooms were recently added and are an improvement to the number of restrooms available last year.

Ian Francis discussed some projects that he had been working on with the community and the City of Phoenix.