

**ONTARIO CITY COUNCIL
HOUSING AUTHORITY
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 28, 2011**

JOINT MEETINGS

Special Meetings of the Ontario City Council, Housing Authority and Ontario Redevelopment Agency were held on Friday, January 28, 2011, in Room 101, Ontario Convention Center, 2000 East Convention Center Way, Ontario, CA.

Notice of said meeting was duly given in the time and manner prescribed by law. Affidavit of compliance is on file in the Records Management Department.

Purpose of the meeting was to discuss homeless services.

CALL TO ORDER

The Mayor called the City Council/ Housing Authority/ Redevelopment Agency meetings to order at 8:59 a.m., and requested the City Clerk to call the roll.

PRESENT:	Mayor/ Chairman	Paul S. Leon
	Mayor pro Tem/ Vice Chairman	Debra Dorst-Porada (arr. at 9:02 am)
	Council/ Authority/ Agency Members:	Alan D. Wapner, Sheila Mautz, and Jim W. Bowman.

ABSENT: None

Also present were City Manager /Executive Director Chris Hughes, Assistant City Attorney Charisse Smith and City Clerk/ Secretary Mary E. Wirtes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one present who wished to speak during Public Comment.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

HOMELESS SERVICES CONTINUUM OF CARE

City Manager Hughes reviewed Council's previous direction on this issue and their request that staff return with a plan for the Temporary Homeless Services Area (THSA). Mr. Hughes indicated that staff had prepared a presentation that will address where the City is on this matter, where they started and options for moving ahead.

Housing Director Schultz outlined the program as approved that began in May 2005, and reviewed changes and additions that have occurred in each budget year since that time

including completion of a design and issuance of building permits for a Permanent Intake Center, and receipt of grant monies and housing acquisitions on Francis Street and on Begonia

Avenue. He presented a budget for capital improvements reflecting income and expenditures to date and addressed the original scope that included financial assistance through a partnership with the Building Industry Association (BIA) and HOME AID.

Director Schultz said the greatest growth took place in the number of permanent housing units acquired without the use of General Fund monies. He said there are now 62 permanent affordable housing units and noted that, in late 2007 there were 400 people at the THSA, but as of December 2010, there are 38 THSA clients. Interspersed with his presentation were human interest slides that depicted individuals and families in the program who are successfully turning their lives around.

Mayor Leon questioned policing of the homeless at other locations including Euclid Avenue near businesses to which Director Schultz responded that ordinances put in place as part of the overall program are being enforced and violators prosecuted. Mr. Schultz noted there are fewer homeless people visible in the community; but many are service resistant. The Mayor also asked about those in recreational vehicles to which Police Chief Hopley responded that the Police Department now has the education needed to enforce existing laws and indicated training bulletins have been issued to patrol officers.

Mayor Leon left the joint meetings at 9:14 a.m.

Chief Hopley added the Police Department now has swing shift patrol officers who focus on panhandling on the I-10 freeway corridor and officers have discretion regarding booking of violators. He explained that they have created a culture of change which has brought good results.

Council Member Wapner questioned the courts' response to violators to which Assistant City Attorney Smith indicated the courts are supportive.

Council Member Mautz asked whether it is Ontario residents who are being assisted; and City Manager Hughes indicated it will always be a challenge when dealing with homeless from outside the area who may be trying to take advantage of Ontario's services.

Mayor pro Tem Dorst-Porada questioned the involvement of Mercy House in enforcement actions and maintenance of records for repeat offenders. Larry Haynes, Executive Director of Mercy House, said they prepare intake forms and records that provide a running history of transactions with an individual. He said Mercy House is willing to provide additional assistance in accordance with the monies available.

Mayor pro Tem Dorst-Porada asked whether there are resources for homeless with no available income to which Mercy House Housing Director Linda Wilson replied they provide transportation and guidance to available resources based upon individual needs.

Director Schultz noted there are monthly meetings between the various agencies involved in the continuum to share information.

Mayor Leon returned to his seat at 9:23 a.m.

Director Schultz reported that the homeless population in the THSA area has been reduced from 400 to 38 and costs have been transferred from the General Fund to the Ontario Housing Authority. His presentation included statistics involving those helped through the Temporary Intake Center, acquisition of transitional housing such as Assisi House, and 62 permanent affordable housing units referred to as the Guadalupe Residences, Francis Apartments and Begonia Apartments. He also said that Flipside Church has been one of the leading agencies in providing food service within the THSA.

Director Schultz then addressed the accomplishments of the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing (HPRP) Program begun in October 2009, including the walk-in center and emergency shelter accommodations. Mr. Schultz reported on what has been learned through this process indicated that emergency housing is not the greatest need.

Discussion turned to issues related to the emergency shelter and federal requirements for its maintenance. Council Members questioned the numbers with mental illness, services being provided by other local cities, and funding sources. Where and when homeless may sleep was discussed and limitations of a 14-bed shelter including legal issues and financial liability.

Director Schultz presented two options for Council's consideration: Option 1 is to implement the Continuum of Care (CoC) as originally planned with THSA operating; and Option 2 is to pursue development of an Homeless Outreach Services (HOS) Center and gradually close THSA. Mr. Schultz outlined the risks under both options.

Discussion continued regarding operating expenses under each option and the associated risks. City Manager Hughes reported the City is spending \$300,000 per year on the current program.

Council Member Wapner referred to his understanding of the agreement with Mercy House to provide a Continuum of Care to which Mr. Haynes responded noting that Mercy House is running a successful program for which they have good partners. He said Mercy House's recommendation is Option 2 because more people will be served.

Mayor Leon said is also concerned the City will take a step backward with people sleeping on private property. Assistant City Attorney Smith said there will be a gradual phasing out that will include assistance securing SSI. If participants refuse, they will have no recourse in challenging the City's enforcement as there are records to support the City's efforts to obtain resources for the homeless. Mr. Haynes noted a great deal has been done to assist the THSA clients to move into more suitable housing and that provides the City with a much stronger defense.

Additional concern was expressed regarding recreational vehicle dispersal to which Director Schultz indicated that staff would work with qualified THSA RV permit holders to look at using available HPRP funds to secure spaces within mobile home parks where available. Staff will continue to ensure that RV permit holders maintain the vehicle's drivability.

Further discussion followed with Mayor Leon advising he is comfortable with Option 2 but was concerned about finding suitable places for recreational vehicles. Assistant City Attorney Smith noted that Ontario must continue to serve others because of federal funding, and City Manager Hughes reminded all of the great improvements reflected in the December 10th photograph and today's more manageable situation. Phased THSA closure recommendations were also discussed.

RECESS Mayor Leon called a brief recess at 10:15 a.m., after which the meetings were reconvened at 10:26 a.m.

Director Schultz outlined potential capital costs associated with Option 2, the Homeless Outreach Center and its potential funding. He said funding for HPRP will end in August 2012.

Mayor Leon noted the program is multi-faceted and commended staff for doing a good job.

Council Member Wapner asked staff whether they have a preference for Option 1 or 2 to which Chief Hopley responded that the Police Department can work in either direction noting the relationship with Code Enforcement and the Housing Department has never been better.

Larry Haynes, Mercy House, said they recommend Option 2 but could manage either option with staff in place and will work on long term solutions.

City Manager Hughes advised funding is the issue and staff may ask for 100% of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for one year to pay for capital costs.

Director DeVries, Code Enforcement, said that she recommends Option 2. She also indicated that they are coordinating with inspection for clean up of the homeless area and have worked well with the Police Department; she indicated closing THSA will save time and money and they will continue to enforce ordinances.

Discussion continued regarding public perception of changes in the program, possibility of increased homelessness on the streets, the need for strict enforcement of ordinances and marketing of the community's increased safety, quality of life and cleanliness.

There was consensus among Council Members that Option 2 is their preference without exception.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Joint Meetings, they adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

MARY E. WIRTES, MMC, CITY CLERK/SECRETARY

APPROVED:

PAUL S. LEON, MAYOR/CHAIRMAN