

Notes from Homelessness Conference, June 12, 2015

L. Ames, with personal observations [in brackets].

[Report is incomplete: I missed some portions of the meeting.]

Transcript of mtg: <[link](#)>

Agenda and packet: <[link](#)>

New member added to task force: Johnny Walker, member of the homeless community.

Public comments:

- \* How about housing the homeless at County Park campsites? Park Charter says “parks are for the use of the public.” Could buy a few acres next to parks and house everyone, sharing the infrastructure (showers, etc.)

Discussion on Work Plan. Suggestion: Task force tour an encampment. Rocha says he’ll go, regardless of how many others on task force join him. Tour is added to the work plan.

Staff presentation on Veteran Homelessness

- \* Vets are ~10% of the homeless
- \* 90% of homeless Vets are single; high rate of PTSD and TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury); higher rate of long-term (>1-year) homeless.
- \* need for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid ReHousing (RRH).
- \* Q (Johnny Walker): what about impacts of past prison record? Need ability to expunge the records – forget the past; otherwise, often can’t rent housing.

VA gives housing vouchers.

Vouchers don’t always work: priced at “fair rate”, much less than local cost.

Area has high cost and low vacancy.

Cindy Chavez: even w/ vouchers, can’t rent housing because of bad credit report, because they’re homeless! Q: could County “vouch” for them, front the security deposit? Small cost relative to others. Can County require “no credit check”?

A: when Co. pays for housing development, they can set the selection criteria, including that.

Q (Johnny Walker): what about driver’s license clearance? Person gets a minor fine, can’t pay, ends up w/ court costs and penalties, can’t get out from under it all.

A: Jim Beall say CA Senate just passed bill allowing for clearance of fines to assist Vets get housing.

Next meeting: Aug 7, 9 AM, at 70 W. Hedding.