



**Fidelity Committee  
of the  
Tri-City Joint Mayors' Task Force on Homelessness  
Remote Meeting Via Zoom  
July 9, 2020  
6:00 PM**

**MAYORS**

Mayor Caroline McCarley  
Mayor Karen Weston  
Mayor Dana Hilliard

**Rochester Members**

Jeremy Hutchinson  
(Chairman)

Barbara Holstein

**Dover Members**

Charles Reynolds

Betsey Andrews Parker

**Somersworth Members**

Todd Marsh  
(Vice Chairman)

Dina Gagnon

**Others Present:** Lauren Krans, Assistant Director of Rochester Recreation & Arena. Mary Boisse, SOS. Julian Long, Rochester Economic Development. Dave Carpenter, Dover Planning. Tory Jennison, Integrated Delivery Network. Lindsey Williams, Dover City Council. Paige Farmer, Home For All. Susan Gaston, Dover welfare

**MINUTES**

**1. Call to Order**

Vice Chairman Marsh called the meeting of the Fidelity Committee to order at 6:01 PM. Cassie Givara, Deputy City Clerk of Rochester, took the roll call. All committee members were present except for Chairman Hutchinson, who was excused. Additionally, Mayor McCarley, Mayor Carrier and Mayor Hilliard were all present.

**2. Public Input (3-minute maximum and/or submit a statement)**

Paige Farmer, Director of Home For All, spoke to the committee regarding the goals of her organization; primarily to end homelessness in the region. She stated that they have multiple projects which they have been working on over the past year,

and although they were slowed down due to COVID-19, they are still working diligently. They have been placing emphasis on increasing landlord engagement to expand units which will accept vouchers and creative solutions for offering more affordability in rental housing. Home For All will be looking to expand the work which is being done in this area and Ms. Farmer stated she would be giving updates at future meetings when they become available.

Tory Jennison, gave an update on the work she has been doing with the State's emergency operations center to support their planning around health and housing for vulnerable populations, such as the homeless and housing insecure. Ms. Jennison reported that there have been no outbreaks of COVID reported at any area shelters due in large part to the work which has been done in developing safety protocols, introducing PPE, and educating staff and creating new procedures to keep residents safe. Ms. Jennison reported that the State has opened two sites, in Laconia and Dover, for those needing further support or quarantine due to possible exposure to COVID or high risk thereof. She spoke of the prevalence of people leaving shelters and entering community encampments due to their higher perceived risk of COVID in shelters; she said there is work being done to try to develop a shelter experience that these people will deem acceptable and safe. Ms. Jennison gave details on how the shelters in the area have ensured social distancing and safety.

Martha Stone, Crossroads House, spoke about the numbers they have been seeing at the shelter. She stated that in the winter months, although their capacity is typically 100 people, they flex to accommodate higher numbers during the cold months; bunk beds are added to fit more people in each room. When COVID began, Crossroads housed 120-130 people at that time which made it impossible to follow CDC guidelines for distancing and numbers. The shelter implemented a decompression plan by using a second site to house 30% of the population at a local motel. Ms. Stone reported that they are still able to provide case management and meals, as well as staff visits, at this remote location. She stated that although this is a very expensive way to offer case management, it has given some residents the incentive to take steps to obtain apartments as opposed to returning to the shelter environment.

Ms. Stone stated that the funding for this second site only runs through the remainder of the calendar year, so there needs to be a funding solution so residents utilizing this service are not put out on the street in January. She spoke about the reduced capacity Crossroads has seen due to the pandemic and the decrease in intakes they have been performing over the past several months.

Dave Carpenter, Dover Planning, gave an update on two resolutions which Dover has passed recently to allocate Dover's allotment of CARES funds. He gave information on how some of the funding may be used to develop programs to augment the current welfare programs via additional funding for rent and utilities assistance. Mr. Carpenter also spoke about a pilot program into which funding has been dispersed which is designed to improve existing residential units in Dover which may not currently meet minimal standards to qualify for housing vouchers.

Mary Boisse, Manager of the Recovery Friendly Workplace program at SOS, announced that SOS has reopened. They are at limited capacity, but are available Monday through Saturday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Ms. Boisse said since reopening, SOS has not experienced the numbers which they have anticipated and it has been relatively slow.

### **3. Communications from the Mayors**

Mayor McCarley gave a brief update on meetings the mayors have been having with the County Commissioners to try to come up with a solution for a permanent shelter in the region. There are currently discussions on potential use of County land and how CARES act funds could be leverages to help with this goal.

### **4. Communications from the Chair**

Vice Chair Marsh spoke about the challenges being faced with vulnerable populations even prior to COVID. He asserted that Corona has simultaneously slowed the progress of the work which was being done by many social services agencies as well as increased the need. Vice Chair Marsh felt that things were evening out just slightly, enough to allow work to move forward.

### **5. Presentation/Discussion: Recovery Friendly Workplace Initiative**

Lauren Krans, Assistant Director of Recreation and Arena, shared her experience with establishing the Department of Recreation and Arena as a Recovery Friendly Workplace. Ms. Krans reported that the process was easy and fairly seamless. She acknowledged that the proposal had been met with some skepticism regarding the purpose and potential implications of having such a designation; but by and large the process has been met favorably and has been a positive experience. Ms. Krans clarified that the process of designating a business or City department as Recovery Friendly can go at any pace which is comfortable and manageable to the organization and there is not a specific timeline which needs to be followed. She said the program provides a safe atmosphere for employees to ask for help and support as well as education on available resources. Ms. Krans stated that although Recreation and Arena is the first city department to establish the recovery friendly designation, there has been interest shown in other areas and it is likely other departments and organizations will follow suit.

Mary Boisse, SOS, stated that the idea of establishing a Recovery Friendly workplace is to lift the veil of stigma surrounding substance misuse and recovery and to confront the issue head on. Ms. Boisse stated that there are people dealing with these issues at every age and walk of life and it is often encountered in the workplace. She stated that any step forward is a good one and gave examples of how organizations could take steps toward becoming recovery friendly.

Ms. Krans detailed the process which the Department of Recreation and Arena went through in order to establish the Recovery Friendly Workplace. She emphasized the need to first ensure all the decision makers were on board with the process.

Ultimately, the department developed a declaration statement or a statement of intent which is similar to a brief mission statement specific to recovery friendly workplace.

Mayor Carrier inquired what the obligations would be on the part of the employer offering this program. Ms. Boisse stated that there is a program which is required to be completed within one year of establishing the recovery friendly workplace. The organization would also need to provide, and have readily available, information on resources for employees.

There was a discussion on how to go about the process of establishing a recovery friendly workplace. Ms. Krans offered to supply the committee with the declaration statement used by Rochester Recreation & Arena as an example. Both Ms. Krans and Ms. Boisse offered their experience and knowledge for any other organization or department looking to develop a plan for a recovery friendly workplace. Vice Chair Marsh suggested revisiting this item within the next few months at the committee level to develop recommendations for the City Councils.

## **6. Review of Master Plan**

### **6.1 Master Plan strategy proposals and priorities**

Vice Chair Marsh outlined his top three priorities from the Master Plan:

Strategy 2, section 1: Commit to review barriers and opportunities in zoning and planning

Strategy 3, Section 4: Expand long-term case managed rental subsidy programs for individuals on a path to gainful employment

Strategy 5, Section 5: Increase numbers of case managers at social service agencies

Barbara Holstein emphasized the need to focus on Strategy #2: Create Affordable Housing for all, in its entirety. The four subsections contained within the strategy are all important, and creating affordable housing would help alleviate so many of the issues discussed by the committee.

Betsey Andrews Parker prioritized Strategy 1: Create Seasonal Cold Weather Shelter as well as Strategy 2: Create Affordable Housing for all in its entirety. Ms. Andrews Parker spoke about the potential of a TIF district established for developers who commit to setting aside 10% - 15% of their housing to be considered "affordable, and to stop blocking workforce housing.

Dave Carpenter suggested the committee look into the use of CARES funds for some of these strategies which would likely qualify.

Lindsey Williams, Dover, emphasized the importance of Strategy 3: Increase Homeless Prevention, Rapid Rehousing, and Supportive Housing Programs; in particular sections 2 and 3 which deal with landlord issues. Ms. Williams stated that eviction prevention is very important and educating of both clients and landlords would help a great deal.

**7. Discussion: Location for Permanent Shelter**

No further discussion at this time.

**8. Other**

Tory Jennison stated that within the Master Plan, each strategy has at least one recommendation that falls within the domain of municipal work. She suggested identifying the action in each strategy which is a municipal role and coming back to the committee with objectives which are in the domain of the cities so proposals can be developed to be placed on their respective Council agendas for action. There was a discussion on having at least one Council member from each City attend Fidelity Committee meetings to help facilitate the work.

Betsey Andrews Parker suggested the Committee have a discussion on the work they are doing and what is expected of them from the Mayors and City Councils. The committee should also look at other groups to determine the work which is already being done so there is no duplication of effort, and a formal report should be developed on what has been done.

The next meeting of the Fidelity Committee is scheduled for August 13, 2020 at 6:00 PM, meeting remotely.

**9. Closing Public Input**

No discussion.

**10. Adjournment**

Vice Chair Marsh **ADJOURNED** the Fidelity Committee meeting at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cassie Givara  
Deputy City Clerk, Rochester

