

Safe, Equitable and Thriving (SET) Communities
Task Force
Minutes of April 7, 2016 Meeting

SET TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gary Hinzman, Paul Hayes, Karl Cassell, Alphonse O'Bannon, Okpara Rice, John Tursi, Stacey Walker, Mary Wilcynski, Leslie Wright, Rafael Jacobo, Linda Langston, Jenny Schulz, Dorice Ramsey, LaSheila Yates, Rodrick Dooley

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Susie Weinacht

CITY LIASION/STAFF PRESENT:

Wayne Jerman, Cristy Hamblin, Jean Novak

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tracy Title, Dan Johnson, Jay Johnson

The meeting began at 7:36 AM, and Stacey welcomed everyone back. The SET Task Force will meet the first Thursday of each month at 7:30 AM at the City Services Center from now on.

Sgt. Hamblin provided information on the Task Force's website, and following is the navigation path:

- www.cedar-rapids.org
- Government
- City Boards and Commissions
- Government Operations
- SET
- Click on SET

The website describes the Task Force's purpose, goals, list of members, City rules, meeting agendas, handouts and meeting minutes. The meeting agendas should be posted on the website the Monday prior to the meeting. Stacey and Mary will try to send emails with the preliminary agenda a week ahead of time as well. Also, it was decided that the website would list each member's email address.

Leslie gave an update on work completed from the last meeting, and she distributed a handout entitled "Safe, Equitable Thriving Community Programs", as well as outlines for each subcommittee. The outlines have a standardized format:

- Purpose Statement/Goal
- Who will we help
- Factors that contribute to poor outcomes for our target population
- Data
- Current efforts
- Past efforts
- The Team/Who will help

There is a correction on the Safe, Equitable, Thriving Community handout – under Data – Reading prof., African-American 4th graders not proficient in reading should be changed to read “54.4%” (instead of 4.4%).

Discussion was held regarding getting juvenile justice statistics. Linda stated she could get numbers from the Juvenile Detention Center. Also, she felt Dawn Shot, who is the Juvenile Detention Director would be beneficial to have on the Task Force. Linda will see what her schedule allows.

One change to the template is to change the wording on the handouts from “who would you help” to “target population”.

Chief Jerman brought up the need to be included whenever a subcommittee needs police department assistance with the subcommittees, task force, or attendance at subcommittee meetings. After much discussion, it was felt that the most expedient way of notification is for each subcommittee chair to send out a calendar invitation (marker) and invite the whole Task Force to their meeting. The invitation will have their meeting agendas attached as well.

Stacey asked for general updates from each committee of where they are, and if there are any pain points with the subcommittees so far. If so, he and Mary could provide any help with resources where they are needed. Each committee should answer these three points:

- Give a general overview of the committee focus.
- What are some of your pain points so far?
- What are your next steps, and what do you need to help?

PROGRAMS UPDATE

Dorice handed out a copy of a spreadsheet that the Programs committee has been working on. The spreadsheet is being compiled to take a look at all the agencies.

It was suggested to have a category of youth to adult ratio because that would provide information about the quality of the program, and the supervision of the program. Also, it was suggested to add information regarding whether the program is accredited,

because if you are accredited then you are following certain quality standards. Another suggestion was to add the type of program, because different types of programs will have different structures. It might be useful to think about some broad categories, such as academic or sports program, and is it an out of school program.

Also suggested was to use 211 to prefill the document. They do; however, want to make sure that they find out about those smaller programs that no one really knows about. After they get all of the programs that they know are out there, they are going to send this list out to everyone who runs a program. The information can then be updated and the committee can start the analysis of where the gaps are. Much discussion was heard regarding religious organizations and the targeted population.

The committee needs more information.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The committee has been looking at the protective factors from an educational view. Those things that help kids be successful, and what are some of the barriers that they face in helping kids. Their biggest pain point is the scope of the issue, and their next steps are to take those risk factors, protective factors and barriers and begin to narrow in. Where will they reach the most students and families to make the biggest impact? Some of that is going to be based on leveraging the programs that become available to us. They will try to get to as many subcommittees as they can.

HOUSING COMMITTEE UPDATE

More information is needed to be gathered regarding Section 8 housing. There's an assumption that they're located in one area, but they are not clustered in one particular area of town. Also, there is a perception when people see low income neighborhoods, that this is a Section 8 program. More information regarding nuisance abatement violations and the SAFE-CR program are also needed. Also needed is more information regarding where all the rental properties are located.

Discussion was heard regarding the need for data regarding eviction activity, because it creates a tremendous financial burden on low income households. Also, the average rent in different neighborhoods is creating islands of low income and low resource families. It was suggested that someone from Legal Aid needs to be on that subcommittee, because no one represents more low income family cases, and they know what the specific issues are facing tenants in terms of bad practices by landlords across the city.

A preliminary recommendation is to look at more education for landlords. There is rental business training, but maybe make it a requirement every two years.

Also, tenant education was discussed. Waypoint Services has run a tenant academy, and there used to be an individual in this community five or six years ago who started a tenant advocacy group that was at some level affiliated with MAHP.

Discussion was heard regarding the path to home ownership. Waypoint may have some programming or education about how to own a house. It was also suggested to check with the Housing Trust Fund of Linn County because they have sponsored some workshops related to that. Tracy Achenbach at ECICOG is the contact.

The committee will follow up about the Waypoint tenant academy, look into eviction activity, and also see if they can find information about the average rent.

SAFETY & LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Gary stated that we should be aware that other people in the community actually are fueling some of the buying and purchasing of drugs that come in, and they aren't necessarily the poor people of the community. He thinks we have to keep in mind that there are other dynamics that drives some of the problems that we have. We also need to think about human dignity and how we provide that for everyone. As we deal with various aspects of the population, the interactions with police, and police interaction with the community, human dignity and the way we treat people, is very important, and often times will offset those other issues that we're concerned with.

Chief Jerman stated that they have met three times, and a fourth meeting is scheduled for the 21st of this month. The committee has made a lot of progress regarding programs and initiatives. The U.S. Attorney's Office reported on the Violence Mitigation Program that Dr. Heistercamp from UNI has implemented at Prairie, and it has been successful in Sioux City as well. They have a meeting next week with Dr. Buck with Cedar Rapids School District to have him look at it in hopes of implementing it for Cedar Rapids. It is a fantastic program and successes can be measured. The Police Department has implemented the PCAT team. Also, there are a number of outreach programs and initiatives that not only have been in place for years, but also some new efforts such as the STOP program, in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club. Bruce Vander Sander reported on the Weed and Seed Program. Dedrick Doolin also reported on his programs. One called Unsnapping, is an anger management program for male African Americans, youths and adults, and for females. The committee has asked these groups to submit their initiatives and programs with the vision that it will be placed into the report that will be presented when they're finished. Chris Wyatt will prepare his information on initiatives and programs.

Jenny discussed surveys that will be circulated for this subcommittee, as well as the Education subcommittee, to gather more information and data. They are working up both surveys to do orally with kids either one on one or in various homes/ groups. They will also work up some paper surveys. They specifically want to interview low income

kids of color, particularly kids who have been involved in either school disciplinary matters or just otherwise identified as being at risk. Some examples of the questions are: When you aren't at school, what adult wonders where you are? Have you talked to the police resource officer at school? How did you feel about it? Could you get a firearm? Have kids you know been in a physical fight? Or a fight involving weapons? Do you know adults who have guns? Do you like and trust the police? Asking whether members of their family trust the police? Where they hang out? What could be done to make their neighborhood feel safer? Who would they go to if they needed help? This survey will be done without capturing names, and it will be confidential.

Al stated that his survey is already being done, and they have permission from the parents to ask the questions. Also, the questions are asked every two weeks to make sure the answers are consistent.

Jenny stated that they want to start with 10 questions and begin before the school year is out for the summer. They will get a feel for which questions are helpful, and which ones aren't. If anyone has questions you think would be good to ask kids, please email her.

JOBS & EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Stacey reported on the partnership between Kirkwood Community College and Iowa Workforce Development and the programs that Iowa Workforce Development runs. People from challenged neighborhoods, people with criminal backgrounds, and people who don't have a GED can get assistance from Kirkwood and Iowa Workforce Development to get their GED, provide soft skill training, resumes and help them find employment. Many people in these communities either don't know about these services, or they are unwilling to come in because they have to complete a week long or two week program with the Iowa Workforce Development.

Dr. Grant will give a more comprehensive update at our next meeting. If anyone has any ideas, please send them to Carlos.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE UPDATE

The committee met a couple weeks ago, along with United Way and some other departments to talk about how they can go about capturing their stories, and more importantly changing the narrative. There is a video was done in Wellington Heights by Flow Media. This is an 8 or 9 minute video where they just walked around Wellington Heights, and gave people an opportunity to really talk about Wellington Heights, Cedar Rapids, and living in this community. The goal of the Outreach Committee is to capture the voice of the voiceless, and to make sure that they are able to dispel a lot of the myths. We can capture these voices and begin to drown out the false narrative. By

putting a face to the neighborhood, hopefully, people will start seeing the positive stories.

Humans of CR has already put out some videos, and they can be seen on their website. One person from Humans of CR is even riding along at Horizons to specifically capture stories of people. Also, they have contacted the Gazette, and the Gazette wants to help with this narrative as well with guest editorials and doing pieces on what we're doing.

Kitchen Table Conversations is based on a strategy developed and used in other communities. It's a short set of questions, and all they have done so far is put it out to people who are part of different kinds of groups who would be willing to host them. They are intended to be small groups of people who are already connected to each other. They don't edit it, they just make sure they begin and end on time. There's going to be a testing of the process internally at the United Way, and at the Gazette. They are hoping to test it at one of next One Strong meetings. There are a number of other groups including the Youth Think Tank, and other preexisting groups. The Gazette has offered to provide some mapping to make sure that we are getting an accurate distribution of voices across the community. If anyone has a group that you would be willing to bring together, they will provide the facilitator and a recorder to help you do that. All you have to do is invite and open the door. Mary mentioned going to the school cafeterias; however, time is getting short for this school year, unless you want to wait and do it in the fall.

The committee is researching the use of social media, Twitter and Facebook.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mary thanked everyone for their reports and hard work. She also handed out a hard copy of the chart from which we are trying to create all of our work and requested that this chart be taken to the subcommittee meetings. The questions in the upper right hand corner of the chart are the questions that we need to have answers for.

Stacey reported that he and Mary try to meet with as many stakeholders as they can to try to figure out what people would be valuable to serve on the different subcommittees. If you have suggestions, please let them know. They will meet with the Mayor and City Manager to give them an update of our progress. Also, they will meet with County officials and officials from the district. Stacey also reminded everyone to read the first 13 pages of a Harvard study that was done. The link to this study was sent out in the last email.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Jean Novak