

**Astoria Homelessness Task Force Meeting
September 29, 2022**

Members Present - HOST members: Amy Baker, Teresa Barnes, Mike Davis, Alan Evans, Leslie Ford, Jennifer Holen, Jarrod Karnofski, Viviana Matthews, Lisa McClean, Osarch Orak, Susan Prettyman, David Reid, Monica Steele, Terri Steenbergen, Jerome Steegmans, Jessamyn West.

Staff Present - Mayor Jones, Special Project Manager Spalding, Director Dart-McLean, Sr. Officer Hansen, Chief Kelly, and Councilor Rocka.

Members Absent - Sean Fitzpatrick, Leslie Ford, Eva Hague, Jennifer Holen, Scott Justus, and Arlene LaMear.

Call to Order: Special Project Manager Spalding called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

Introductions: Mr. Spalding noted that Kate Allen moved out of the area and would no longer be serving on the committee. He introduced Chief Kelly and welcomed him to the taskforce.

Rosters – Virtual Roll Call: Mr. Spalding conducted the roll call.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Spalding said the March minutes would be approved at the next meeting as he was not able to get them sent out in time for this meeting.

Mayor’s Welcome: Mayor Jones stated that on January 1st, the city would have a new Mayor and two new Councilors. He hoped the city would also have a new City Manager by then as well. He was excited to see that the Owens-Adair affordable housing project would be moving forward. There was also forward movement on the [Copeland Commons \[5:09\]](#) affordable housing project.

Harbor Shelter Program Updates – Terri Steenbergen: Ms. Steenbergen provided statistics on the Harbor’s staffing, programs and services provided over the last six months, including services provided in partnership with other community service agencies.

ARPA Funds Update/Housing Project Conversations – Monica Steele: Ms. Steel updated the task force on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding allocations for the 2021-2022 and the 2022-2023 fiscal years. She also provided updates on the County’s housing projects and the housing dashboard, which is a map showing where housing is being developed in the County.

Countywide Liaison Update – Jerome Steegmans: Mr. Steegmans provided details about the most recent changes made to the Countywide Liaison Team and efforts to collaborate with community partners.

Helping Hands Update – Mike Davis: Mr. Davis gave updates on Helping Hands facilities, programs and services, ongoing projects, and community partnerships.

Ms. McLean noted that the Clatsop County Department of Public Health would like to provide vaccinations and other services at the Seaside warming center when it opens.

Mr. Davis and Ms. Matthews answered questions about the opening of the Seaside warming center and the Helping Hands navigation center.

LifeBoat Services Update – Osarch Orak: Mr. Orak provided an update on LifeBoat's lease renewal for their location on Commercial Street, programs and services, work done with community partners, and efforts to expand services. He and Ms. Barnes answered questions about the Astoria Warming Center's operations for this upcoming season and their partnership with LifeBoat and Clatsop Community Action (CCA).

Storage Locker Status: Mr. Spalding asked if anyone had any information on the storage lockers, noting that several people had asked the mayor recently for an update.

Ms. Matthews stated that she had done some research about seven months ago and sent what she had found to former City Manager Estes.

Mr. Orak confirmed he would be willing to assist with a storage locker project if funding was provided.

Mayor Jones said the next step would be to identify possible locations for the lockers, which he believed would have challenges similar to identifying possible camping spots.

Clatsop Opportunity Village – Ron Maxted: Mr. Maxted updated the task force on Clatsop Opportunity Village, noting that a sponsorship has been offered. He listed next steps and said he hoped to have a model complete by the end of the year. However, he anticipated challenges with securing a property.

APD Comments on Homelessness – Officer Hansen: Officer Hansen provided an overview of the last six months of his work as Community Resource Officer, noting staffing changes and work with community partners. He spoke briefly about homeless individuals and families who had recently come to Astoria from out of state. He also described efforts to address bad behaviors, the impacts of the changing weather, and issues he has with people falsely claiming he has given them permission to be somewhere they are not allowed. He explained that many homeless people travel regularly throughout the County and are not from any one particular town. Therefore, they should be considered residents of Clatsop County and not from Astoria or Warrenton or Seaside.

Mr. Steegmans noted that someone had made the claim at a Seaside City Council meeting that Officer Hansen was sending people to Seaside, and that person wanted to know what HOST thought about it. He would be sure to tell this person that Officer Hansen did not send people to Seaside and that counties across the bridge frequently transported people to Clatsop County and dropped them off.

Ms. McLean said that as part of the County's Harm Reduction Program, she planned to speak about how mobile the homeless population is.

Ms. Steele added that the cities and the County had no control over people going into other jurisdictions.

Camping Ordinance Update – Geoff Spalding: Mr. Spalding stated that the city wanted feedback about the proposed ordinance. Feedback received from the task force would be incorporated into the draft, which would be reviewed by City Council on October 17th.

Contract Attorney Chad Jacobs updated the task force on State laws and court decisions that the City's camping ordinance must comply with, briefly reviewed best practices for such an ordinance, and explaining the process he and the City were taking to draft a legal ordinance. He answered questions about what types of beds would be required if the city offered a shelter, what would qualify as a shelter, how to handle homeless people who were trespassed from a shelter, and determining whether someone was voluntarily or involuntarily homeless.

Mr. Spalding provided a high-level overview of the proposed camping ordinance, noting that Staff's goal was to address concerns about where people are allowed to sleep while still being reasonable. He explained that the regulations needed to be considered reasonably objective from the perspective of those experiencing homelessness. The time and manner aspects of the ordinance has already been discussed by City Council and the place aspect was still being drafted. He, Mr. Jacobs and Mayor Jones answered questions about who would determine what reasonably objective was, when the ordinance would take effect, the City's current efforts to address issues with homelessness, and other City ordinances that address issues with homelessness. They also shared details about State laws and court decisions that make the enforcement of some local ordinances challenging.

Member Roundtable: Mr. Spalding said an important piece of the camping ordinance was communicating to those who are impacted. CCA and law enforcement would be fully informed. Information would be posted on the City's livability website. A list of frequently asked questions would also be made available from social service partners.

Mayor Jones stated that as the city goes through leadership changes, HOST would need someone else to take the helm at the beginning of next year. He explained that HOST was a communication and information forum for individuals working in many different ways to address homelessness. He recommended that HOST form subgroups to work on topics that need a deep dive, like the issues with recreational vehicles, rather than discussing those topics during the meetings. If necessary, HOST could meet more frequently.

Guest Comments: There were none.

Next Meeting: To be announced.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:52 am.