

**CITY OF SILVERTON  
HOMELESS/HOUSING TASK FORCE MINUTES**

**Zoom Web Conference Platform**

**March 24, 2021, 6:00 p.m.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Kyle Palmer called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. The task force members and staff were present through the virtual meeting platform Zoom. Chair Palmer explained the meeting is being held through Zoom in accordance with House Bill 4212.

| Present | Excused |                    |
|---------|---------|--------------------|
| X       |         | Kyle Palmer        |
| X       |         | Rachel-Anne Rapoza |
| X       |         | Sara White         |
| X       |         | Helen Thomas       |
| X       |         | Jess Miller        |
|         | X       | Dana Smith         |
|         | X       | Jennifer Hannan    |
|         | X       | Sarah DeSantis     |
| X       |         | Hilary Dumitrescu  |
| X       |         | Karen Garst        |
|         | X       | Joseph Schmaus     |

Staff Present:  
Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk, Angela Speier

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Member Dumitrescu made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on December 2, 2020. Member Miller seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT – None**

**IV. DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM**

**4.1 Options for illegally parked recreational vehicles**

Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk Angela Speier reviewed the memo located in the meeting packet. The Task Force members discussed illegally parked RVs and ways to help the individuals and/or families living in them. One option could be to allow people to park their RVs on a vacant piece of property located in the industrial park area. This would allow for a permanent camping location, but there would not be any electricity or water hook ups available. Member White is aware of a number of people in the community who are living in RVs and travel trailers. The Silver Spur has prohibitions on the age of the RVs, as well as not allowing individuals with a criminal history to locate there and there is a long wait list for permanent spots. She said a lower barrier RV park would be a huge help to the community. Members discussed the possibility of applying for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in order to add RV hook-ups on a piece of vacant industrial property if the owner was agreeable. This could create a longer-term location for individuals who have nowhere to locate their RV. Member Dumitrescu said the main concerns are how to regulate illegal activity on a site like this. Another option discussed was to promote rural neighbors to host RVs on their property, but Marion County does enforce a 120-day rule for camping on private property.

Members asked if the City is getting regular complaints about this issue. Staff will pull the code enforcement complaints and present those to the Task Force at the next meeting. Member Rapoza suggested the Task Force discuss safe places for people to park. Discussion ensued regarding the use of church property for emergency sheltering and trying to figure out a way every church in the community would have an ability to host people needing a place to stay overnight. Members noted this area is where the City could provide some additional leadership and work with area churches to offer this service. Chair Palmer has had conversations with Silver Creek Fellowship regarding using some of their property in a productive way.

## **V. TASK FORCE UPDATES**

### **5.1 Sheltering Silverton**

Member White said Sheltering Silverton is still operating their Resource Center and the winter hotel voucher program is shutdown, but they are still providing emergency hotel stays. They have been awarded a \$230,000 grant from the State of Oregon as part of a collaborative grant through the local Continuum of Care. This will allow them to expand their programming, provide support for staff and provide programming around their pallet shelters. In addition, they will be looking to provide rapid rehousing assistance and landlord incentives. Member Dumitrescu explained this grant must be spent on COVID-19 response efforts, for example an organization could not start a warming shelter with this money, but could expand an existing shelter to be more COVID-19 compliant. Their part of the grant was to expand the Resource Center which currently serves as a day shelter. Member Dumitrescu explained the Rapid Rehousing Program which puts people in housing for a stable period of time and allows them to participate in programs that will get them to financial long term stability. Member White said part of the grant was funding for Sheltering Silverton to lease a property to move the Resource Center and shelter. The staff is actively looking for a suitable property in the community. She said it is going to be a challenge to find a place and they might have to move back into the basement of the Community Center. They would like to find a space that would allow them to run a ten bed warming shelter year round where their clients would check in at 9:00 pm and leave at 7:00 am. She explained this is needed for their harder to house clients who have not been successful in the hotel voucher program.

Member Garst asked about the barriers for Sheltering Silverton to use the entire Community Center for their needs. Chair Palmer explained the State of Oregon actually owns the building and the City leases it from the Military Department. The City is responsible for the maintenance and he reviewed some of the capital needs of the building.

### **5.2 Educational Cohort**

Douglas Jenkins provided an update on the Educational Cohort he presented to the Task Force in December. There has not been an organization willing to take the lead on this idea. He was been working with an individual in the community to post information about kindness on their social media pages. He explained some of the challenges they have been facing and provided an overview of the kindness concepts he developed. He asked Task Force members to email him suggestions for additional educational activities.

Member White said Sheltering Silverton would like to partner with the Silverton Area Community Aid (SACA) to host a summit on poverty and homelessness in Silverton. She would like Mr. Jenkins and Member Thomas to coordinate with their volunteer who is starting to work on this event. The event would include a variety of speakers and individuals who can share their personal stories about this issue. Discussion ensued on ways to encourage broader community participation, as well as ways to promote the event and its educational components. Member Garst discussed her latest book where she interviewed eight individuals about their lives and noted the need to educate the next generation about this issue.

Mr. Jenkins asked if the members had any direction for him moving forward. Chair Palmer said if there is not an organization who wants to be responsible for the cohort then Task Force members either individually or collectively should be responsible to impart positive messaging. He said a coordinated public movement leading into a summit would be ideal.

Member Miller said one trend he has noticed recently is an attachment between animal companionship and housing options. If an individual is seeking housing options either through private means or HUD housing animal ownership creates a barrier for temporary and long term housing. He asked if this is a larger problem other people are seeing and if it is something that could be addressed in this Task Force. Member White said a lot of the individuals Sheltering Silverton serves have pets, particularly dogs, which can become a barrier for them to get housing and to get into programs. Sheltering Silverton does allow companion animals. She has seen individuals, particularly women, who will give up a spot in a program because they are not allowed to have an animal with them. She said it is becoming a best practice for shelters to eliminate this type of barrier, because having their pet is good for the emotional and psychological health of the individual.

**5.3 Other updates – None**

**VI. NEXT STEPS**

Chair Palmer said the Task Force should continue to meet and brainstorm ideas. He encouraged members to help push out the positive messaging from the Educational Cohort and to support the creation of a summit focused on poverty and homelessness in Silverton.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Member Miller made a motion to adjourn and Chair Palmer adjourned the meeting at 7:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

*/s/Angela Speier, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk*