

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

May 27, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Kyle Palmer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The task force members and staff were present through the virtual meeting platform Zoom. Mayor Palmer explained the meeting is being held through Zoom due to Governor Brown’s Executive Order 20-16.

Present	Excused	
X		Kyle Palmer
X		Jaime Fuhrman
X		Sara White
X		Helen Thomas <i>(arrived at 6:09 p.m.)</i>
X		Jess Miller
	X	Dana Smith
X		Mark Hannan
	X	Sarah DeSantis
X		Hilary Dumitrescu
	X	Karolle Hughes
	X	Joseph Schmaus

Staff Present:

Police Captain, Jim Anglemier and Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk, Angela Speier

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Miller made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on October 15, 2019. Member Dumitrescu seconded the motion. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

III. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

IV. TASK FORCE UPDATES

4.1 Sheltering Silverton.

Sarah White and Hilary Dumitrescu provided an update on the warming shelter. In total the shelter served 96 individuals and eight children with an average of 15 people per night. The average stay in the shelter was 17 nights. Member Dumitrescu explained how COVID-19 impacted the shelter and how they were able to get the guests housed in other locations. She explained the St. Edwards cottages were also shuttered due to COVID-19 and are almost complete, but currently in limbo until the church can safely allow their staff back into the facility. In the meantime, Sarah White and her husband started Joy Farm which is a space for six women who are struggling with homelessness.

Member Dumitrescu said Sheltering Silverton’s goal is to provide longer term transitional housing for individuals who are experiencing homelessness. She said this is a civic problem that the community will need to solve together, because the numbers are on the rise. She is concerned about the upcoming winter and where they are going to locate the warming shelter, because the Oak Street Church is no longer an option. Another concern is distancing requirements and finding a space big enough to be able to meet the ten feet requirements between guests. They are actively seeking a new location for a

warming shelter. Sheltering Silverton had to close their daytime Resource Center due to COVID-19. The Resource Center is where staff meets with clients to perform their casework. She said during the closure they have made upgrades to the space and explained how it will be utilized moving forward.

Member White said the number of unsheltered individuals in the community is down right now due partly because of the work Sheltering Silverton has done to get people housed, but also it is fairly typical for this time of the year. They are trying to prepare for those numbers to increase significantly due to the current state of emergency. She described the recently opened small Catholic Worker Farm called Joy Farm which is a free transitional space for six women. In the future they would like to be able to serve women with children. Currently there are five women living on the property and one short-term stay. She said the women can stay there until such a time they can transition into stability. The goal is to eventually turn it into a productive small commercial farm (2.5 acres) that would support the house.

Member White explained the fire marshal will not allow Sheltering Silverton to use the Oak Street Church again for its warming shelter. She requested the City allow them to use the Community Center gym for the warming shelter starting in November. If there is a second wave of COVID-19 cases they are not sure how to safely shelter individuals in the current mass shelter environment. Member Dumitrescu will provide Chair Palmer with a letter outlining Sheltering Silverton's needs for the warming shelter and he will discuss the request with the City Manager.

4.2 Affordable Housing Task Force

Chair Palmer provided an update on the Affordable Housing Task Force and the process for adopting the Housing Needs Analysis.

4.3 Other Updates

Member Hannan provided an update on the meal program through the Silver Falls School District and noted not a lot has changed with their programming due to the shutdown. He said there are approximately 75 students in the district who fall under the McKinney-Vento Act which ensures that homeless children and youth are provided free, appropriate public education.

V. OPEN DISCUSSION/BRAINSTORMING

5.1 Conestoga Village

Member White provided a link in the chat feature to a Conestoga Village in Eugene. She explained a group of Sheltering Silverton advocates toured several small communities in Eugene that utilize Conestoga shelters. She said the shelters are temporary and put up on various plots of land, some are on city owned land and other are on private land. They are managed by offsite nonprofits with onsite supervision and have been successful in Eugene for years. She feels this is a good responsive model and is something that can be put up quickly. Sheltering Silverton would like to propose a Conestoga Village for the City of Silverton geared towards chronically unsheltered men in the community. Chair Palmer explained his experience touring two Conestoga Villages and was impressed by their ability to self-govern and felt their locations were well chosen which resulted in very little push back from the community. He said the next step would be a formal request to the City Council to consider code language (if needed) that would allow a Conestoga Village in Silverton. If such request came from this body it would be more meaningful. Member White did speak to Jason Gottgetreu, Community Development Director about the possibility of this being a viable option under the current code.

Member Dumitrescu explained the warming shelter cost Sheltering Silverton about \$48,000 to run last winter by comparison the cost of one hut for a Conestoga Village is \$500-\$1,000 and would last multiple winters. She further explained there used to be a continuum of housing which is no longer the case and options for smaller homes and boarding houses really do not exist anymore. Every community should have a continuum of housing for all income levels and as a country we used to provide housing for people who could not house themselves. The chronically homeless individuals are suffering from mental illness that is preventing them from being able to live on their own, but they still need a place to live. A Conestoga Village would be a kind solution to some of the housing needs and is community minded.

Member Miller asked if the goal of the village to provide temporary housing until such time a more permanent option is available and if there are statistics on the factors contributing to homelessness in this area. Member White said the idea is that this would be transitional shelter, because they are not plumbed and do not have electricity. There would likely be one long term anchor tenet who acts as a supervisor on site with the other tenets transitioning out of the village after 6-18 months. She said the Section 8 waitlist is roughly three years to get someone who needs treatment for mental illness and/or substance abuse into housing. Member White said the vast majority of women who have come to Sheltering Silverton are survivors of domestic violence and that is a primary cause for their homelessness. Member White and Member Dumitrescu explained some of the other contributing factors they are seeing in Silverton's homeless population. In addition, there is a lack of treatment options for people. Bridgeway is the only facility in Marion County that provides inpatient treatment for individuals who are on the Oregon Health Plan.

Member Dumitrescu made a motion for the Homeless/Housing Task Force to prepare a proposal to the City Council for the approval of a Conestoga hut village. Mayor Palmer asked for clarification on the motion and if this body would be making a proposal for the actual village or asking for City Council to look into necessary code changes to allow this type of use. Member Dumitrescu's motion died for lack of a second.

Member White explained this idea of housing came from Sheltering Silverton clients. Member White made a motion for the Homeless/Housing Task Force to make a recommendation to the City Council to review the possibility of a community led effort to create a Conestoga like emergency shelter in the community. The motion was seconded by Member Dumitrescu. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Next Steps

The Task Force would like to schedule their next meeting in one month due to the current public health crisis. Staff will reach out to members regarding a preferred date.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Member Miller moved to adjourn and Chair Palmer adjourned the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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