



October 21, 2020 LPNA General Meeting Minutes

Introductions *Introductions - Steve Liston, Ben Durrant, Alex Bliss, Carin Peterson, Junail Freeman Anderson, Larry Kutzler, Alex Mongin, Rashid Ali, Chad Blidhovde, Pat Vogel, Robert Bell, Rep Jordan, Alexa Ernst, Paula Allan, Tony, Becky Wifstrand, James, Barbara, Gail Schack, Brandy Schmidt, Kevin Reich, Teresa Leno, Dale and Nancie Theissen, Sue Watlov Phillips, Jacquelyn Kramer, Barb and Denny Grodahl, Senator Kari Dzeidzic, Alex Stahlman, Heidi, Jessica Pearlman, Seth Nesselhuf*

Rashid Ali, 2nd Precinct: Crime up city wide. Especially car jackings. Pay attention. Don't open windows to strangers. Also thefts from motor vehicles, especially catalytic converters. Toyota Prius & Honda Elements are most popular. Utilize the garage if possible. Or get a device to protect. Call 911.

Logan Park stats: 1 Burglary of dwelling. No forced entry. 2 burglaries of business. 2 thefts of catalytic converters. Reminder – Don't leave keys in the car.

Discussion on Encampment, Shelter issues:

Junail Anderson & Alex Mongin, Freedom from the Streets: 3 main volunteers worked hard to get everyone into the hotel, safe warm space. The moving process was incredibly stressful. The promised volunteers (Park Board) didn't show. The school buses promised by Margaret King, MN Interagency Council on Homelessness, didn't show. Alex put the call out and friends helped move everyone and their stuff in their personal vehicles. They couldn't take everything on Tuesday. They left the park tidy Tuesday night. They thought that they could come back and get the rest of things Wed morning. Alex was at the park early morning and found that the camp area had been trashed. Car tracks, tents slashed, garbage cans kicked over, trash spread out. Alex went to clean up. Park Police politely asked her to leave. She saw Logan Park residents taking pictures and video of the mess.

Sue Watlov Phillips, MICA and President of the National Coalition for the Homeless: ... Thanks to Junail, the LP encampment was self-governed and well run. Sue thanked the Logan Park community for support, food, and volunteers. The folks from the encampment are now at the Extended Stay in Bloomington. The hotel cost is being paid by ZACAH. Unfortunately, this hotel is in process of being bought by Henn Co. when sale closes, residents will have to move somewhere else until Strong Tower is available. Elim Shelter Board is working with Strong Tower.

People need to know that CARES funds are still available. Call 211 if people need help on back taxes, rent etc. Multi languages available. The Governor extended the Executive Order another month so it helps stop evictions. MICA's goal for people to stay where they are.

Henn Co spent \$22 million to purchase hotels, Volunteers of America for covid space for now, eventually permanent housing.

Issues in the way: Coordinated entry process, screening. People on waitlist for over a year. Some folks won't go through the process. So organizations like ZACAH, crowdfunding step in to help.

Steve asked if there were any lessons learned from this summer

Sue – Really important to have community support. Have unsheltered folks help run the camps. Getting park police on board. Putting fences up. Not a real coordinated response by Heading Home, InterAgency Council. Bottom line is there are not enough places for people to move into. Some good news -there may be property for the Envision Project.

Larry asked – You talk a lot about poverty, affordable housing, but 20-30% of homeless have chronic mental illness , 16-20% have chemical dependency issues. (not sure exact question...)

Sue – 20-25% of the general population has mental illness. 10— % addiction. People with money can address issues on their own. If there is no money or home, no stable place, they can't get services. They're not around people who maintain sobriety. Vast majority of those who experience homelessness are in & out of shelters in 30 days. Need to look at different models of harm reduction. Those with the disease of alcoholism need support. Having a stable home is always the key to addressing these issues.

City Councilmember Kevin Reich – Really appreciate how LPNA takes on issues – 'trademark' of LP – actual action. You've embraced these issues emphatically, "unique Logan Park way". Also kudos to Junail for a well organized camp. Hard to follow Sue, good info.

Enabling new zoning options is paying off – cluster housing, intentional communities. Now moving into actual results. Still committed to affordable housing goals. Final vote in Dec on budget. Envision – pursuing some sites. Pricing negotiations are going on. Other possible areas of opportunity but pollution issues. The need is apparent so working on future sites. County using federal \$\$ to create 2 of 3 projects. Indoor Village – in North Loop moving forward. Small secure units, within the broader envelope. Site and funding is secured. Still working on legal zoning issues. Due to urgency - getting things done in days & weeks rather than months. Shout out to Ben as information exchanger, convener of the issue. Volunteerism matters (!!!)

Ben – Lessons learned?

Kevin – Need to ask more What If questions. Be more forward looking than reacting. We have vulnerable people at the best of times, it gets worse in hard times. Need to be more planful – which is cost effective – which allows us to do more with our resources!

State Representative Sydney Jordan – Passed the bonding bill. Allows state to sell bonds so state can spend money. Helps jobs, projects. Signed by Walz today. Includes \$100 million for affordable housing across the state. Also included Equity projects – like the Wellness Center, 38th Street So Mpls, culture specific and responsive health care. Not enough. Important with the legislature next year to not diminish investments. Been thinking about something Sue & Junail said last time – when the state does things, funds entities – really important to have the people being served are on the boards, in the decision process like Junail said. Want to put that in law.

Junail Anderson – Been working on Envision Project for 3 years – and still no houses. Govt not helping us. Or fast enough. Sanctuary and volunteers are doing the work, not the government. Mental health workers are not always helpful. Talk to you like a little kid for ex. You need to give the jobs to the people who can get the job done – for real. You're giving the \$ and jobs to the wrong people. (To the earlier question,) just because you're homeless doesn't mean you doing drugs. Kids in the camp came out of foster care. When taking kids from families, when they turn 18 years old – they don't have a family, don't know how to live right. Need to teach them.

Sue – Critical to get people on the boards. Also to employ people. Peer mentoring works very well. Financial literacy and landlord training used to be part of the educational system. Now it's not. Creates problems. House File 42 – MN Office of Budget looking at \$\$ spent on COVID, please give some consideration to move forward to use those federal \$\$ and repay state.

State Senator Kari Dziedzic – Bonding bill – both sides came together. It's a start. The housing was the largest ever done. Continuing to work on \$300,000 for the Stonehouse project. Aging out of foster care huge issue. Can't move back home. In Public Housing, can't always stay if too many adults are on the lease when turn 18 (issue for Cedar Riverside housing). Families are afraid they will get kicked out but the 18 yr olds aren't prepared to live on their own. Also, the whole (Henn county) system to get registered – no one likes going there. Need to push with Henn Co why keep making people go there. Need to better connect people to services. Meet people where they are. Help people get into productive lives.

Sydney – This is a statewide issue. Investments need to be statewide. Encampments also in Bemidji, Duluth. Mpls have more services which bring people here. Need statewide solutions.

Pastor Becky, Elim Church – For the last 14 years, Elim ran Hope Avenue in the church . At the peak 200 people served on Sunday mornings - foods, use showers etc as well as other supports. 3 years ago Hope Ave moved out of larger space to shared space with preschool (M-F), Hope Ave Sundays. Now out on the streets (due to COVID). Drop in center now 3 days a week with Tasks Unlimited, meals, other supports. Safe environment, behavior needs to meld with others. Looking for a space for Hope Ave (too cold outside). Looking for property for 5 months. Need to ensure momentum doesn't stop.

Pat V asked if Strong Tower got the grant to open the shelter this winter. Also if they need a permit.

Alex M: Strong Tower's approved for grant but didn't receive \$\$ yet. Need \$\$ to install showers before can open.

Steve – It's been a learning year! Keep the conversation going.

Ben – Next steps. LPNA is planning to start a workgroup shelter issue . Bring together people, including neighbors, those experiencing/who have experienced homelessness, shelter advocates, electeds, staff, shelter staff etc. Have time boundaries - 6 month project. Each month focus on a different topic, have a presenter, and reading material. End result is a planning document. Hire a facilitator. Neutral party. Hear from everyone. Keep us focused. Example of a topic would be: Where are we putting our tax dollar?. Make sure they're going to the right places; explore new concepts, innovations for long-term solutions; affordable housing - what does it really mean? How/why do developers get subsidies? Are the development projects creating housing for those who really need it? Where are the gaps?

It would be a commitment. People should be there for all the topics and the development of the end product. Who wants to sign up?

Junail - YES

Pastor Becky – will talk to the team that put together the grant for last year about participating.

Junail – Asked about the flowers on the left on doorsteps, trying to show appreciation. Every Tuesday had bible study at camp. Please think about the good things!

Pat motioned to approve Sept minutes. Ben seconded. Motion approved.

Lights of Logan – judging will be on 12/13. Steve -(Personal note) Please consider environmentally good decorations.

Meeting adjourned.