

**Central Florida Regional Commission on Homelessness**  
(Orange, Osceola & Seminole counties & City of Orlando)

**Commission Meeting Minutes**

**October 10, 2007, 9:30 a.m.**

9<sup>th</sup> Floor Overlook Room, Orlando City Hall

**Members Present:** Co-chair Tracy Schmidt, Steve Kodsi, Brian Wilson, Dr. Richard Baxley, Paul Sladek, Evelyn Herrera-Jackson, Krissy Todd, Paul Partyka, Keylor Chan, Diego “Woody” Rodriguez, Rabbi Steven Engel, Cara Eule, Meredith Griffin, Bryan Malenius, and Waldemar Serrano.

**Members Absent:** J. Marsh MacLawhorn, Orlando Dep. Police Chief Val Demings, Warren Hougland, Dr. David Medley, Thomas Griffin, Dr. Brenedette Hardy-Blake, Margaret Sanders, and Pastor William Andrews.

Co-chair Tracy Schmidt called the meeting to order and postponed approval of September’s meeting minutes, due to the initial lack of a quorum. Although a quorum was reached a few minutes later, several members had left by the time the minutes were brought forward at the end of the meeting. Approval of the September minutes will be placed on the November agenda.

Carolyn Gosselin, member of the Communications Subcommittee of the Leadership Committee, reported on the development of a communications plan. She said the plan focuses on building community support for resolutions to homelessness and building the belief that the problem of homelessness can be effectively addressed.

Members were given a copy of the draft communication plan that revolves around four key areas of community information:

- We need to maximize current resources, and bring new ones to the table, in order to change lives.
- The homeless are our neighbors.
- Solving homelessness requires regional leadership.
- Everyone should have a home.

Gosselin said the Committee would work through early next year to heighten the visibility of the region’s homeless and their issues.

Several members commented that the Communications team appeared to be putting together a great plan. Schmidt asked the Committees to forward any ideas they may have to contribute to the communications plan. The Commission unanimously – with a “Yea” vote – approved adopting the communications plan.

Amy Barnell, program manager at the Osceola County Jail, updated the Commission on discharge procedures used by the jail. She noted that, although built for 990 inmates, the jail regularly holds approximately 1,100 inmates and there are only six case managers. She said they have great difficulty tracking whether former inmates follow-up on referrals. Also, if inmates come in with no money they leave with no money. The only thing provided them is a one-way bus pass. She also acknowledged that – due to the length of the release process – inmates do

sometimes end up being released in the middle of the night – a time when there is no public transportation available.

Barnell also said it is entirely voluntary whether inmates use the services of a case manager. She said the recidivism rate is about 50 percent. The Osceola County Jail is run by the Osceola County Commission.

Schmidt updated the Commission on the work being done on creating a financial matrix of funding to homeless services in Central Florida. He said information was still being gathered from area agencies and governments and he hoped there would be a completed document by mid-November.

He also updated the Commission on the Oct. 4 visit by himself and four commission members and four staff to Atlanta. In Atlanta the group met with homeless service providers, members and staff of the regional homeless commission, and toured the city's 24/7 homeless services center, and a transitional housing program for the chronic homeless. He noted that Atlanta's homeless commission is composed of eight different jurisdictions that each contributes \$30,000 annually toward the operating budget. The Commission has also raised \$33 million in new funds and the city has created a 3-cent tax on rental cars that is used to fund supportive housing.

Paul Sladek, one of the members who went to Atlanta, said an interesting point he noted was how the existence of a permanent Regional Commission on Homelessness affects the recommendations made in the final plan.

Each Committee gave brief reports on where they are in their work on devising recommendations. The Health Committee is looking at primary care services, mental health services and the distribution of pharmaceuticals; the Housing Committee is working on identifying the region's housing needs and the way housing trusts function; the Prevention Committee is looking at how the 2-1-1 hotline can be used to enhance the homeless management system, job training and education for the homeless, and discharge planning done by jails, hospitals and foster care programs; and the Supportive Systems Committee is looking at how all programs serving the homeless, or precariously housed, can be integrated to create a no-wrong-door system.

Members were reminded of the Oct. 20 Commission retreat, and the December 7 Homeless Connect event in Orlando. Members were invited to act as volunteers at Homeless Connect.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:40 a.m.

The next Regional Commission meeting is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, November 14, 2007 at Osceola County's Heritage Park.

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