

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

**Commission Meeting Minutes**

**August 16, 2007, 9:30 a.m.**

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

**Members Present:** Co-chairs Tracy Schmidt and David Porter; members Krissy Todd, Cara Eule, Thomas Griffin, Steve Kodsi, Brian Wilson, Dr. Richard Baxley, J. Marsh MacLawhorn, Bryan Malenius, Evelyn Herrera-Jackson, Paul Partyka, Orlando Dep. Police Chief Val Demings, Dr. David Medley, Margaret Sanders, Keylor Chan, Pastor William Andrews and Diego “Woody” Rodriguez.

**Members Absent:** Meredith Griffin, Paul Sladek, Dr. Brenedette Hardy-Blake, Waldemar Serrano, Richard Burton, Warren Hougland, and Rabbi Steven Engel.

The minutes were unanimously approved.

David Porter introduced the presenters: Mitchell Glasser, of Orange County Housing Department; Cathy Jackson, of the Homeless Services Network; and Joan Nelson, of the Heart of Florida United Way.

Glasser presented information on publicly funded housing in Orange County. He said more than \$13 million is spent on Section 8 rental assistance each year in Orange County, but that amount has not increased in more than seven years. As a result, the list of recipients is essentially frozen and new people get on only when people drop off.

Glasser said local government cannot, by itself, create low-rent housing. The cost requires state and local government participation. In answer to a question, Glasser said 65-70 percent of housing in Orange County is owner-occupied. Also, it is difficult to find locations for new low-income housing. Instead, the current trend is to incorporate such housing into larger general projects.

Jackson told the Commission there are currently approximately 32,000 unduplicated individuals in this region’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database. She also said, because of federal guidelines, the most recent point-in-time count of the region’s homeless did not include about 1,700 children. She said the number of homeless families is on the increase because of the drop in affordable rentals.

Jackson also said this region needs to do better coordination and partnership if it wants to get more federal funds to assist the homeless. She said of \$57 million in federal homeless funding given to Florida this past year, Miami received more than \$23 million of it.

Nelson presented information on emergency food and shelter funding provided through the stewardship programs administered by Heart of Florida United Way. The goal of stewardship programs is to prevent the spiral of homelessness for families facing

emergency financial crisis. All stewardship programs depend upon applicants demonstrating planning for future financial stability, i.e. employment or sources of income. She said the monthly allocations are usually exhausted within the first week of each month. Additionally, United Way funds direct services for the homeless through their Community Fund allocation process.

Alana Brenner, Orlando City Clerk, said Orlando's entire housing plan can be read on the city's website. The city provided a total of \$5.6 million in total funding to homeless programs, of which \$850,000 was from general revenue funds, she said.

During the general question and answer, a member asked about Miami's ability to leverage more than \$40 million in local funds for homeless services. Jackson said that was due to Miami's one-cent tax on restaurants with revenues over \$500,000. Another member asked if there are plans to get more funding. Glasser said the Workforce task force has looked at the funding issue and an option discussed is the creation of a linkage fee on commercial developments. He said Winter Park has had such a fee for years.

Another member asked if it was too late to have a community benefit fee linked to the construction/development of the new Orlando Arena and Arts Center. She said Los Angeles did a comprehensive community benefit agreement when it built the Staples Center.

The Commissions four Committee chairs provided brief updates on their first meetings and their schedule for future meetings.

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

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