

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

**Commission Meeting Minutes**

**July 17, 2007, 10 a.m. to noon**

Present: Co-chairs Tracy Schmidt and David Porter; members – Krissy Todd, Cara Eule, Thomas Griffin, Steve Kodsi, Brian Wilson, Dr. Richard Baxley, Meredith Griffin, J. Marsh MacLawhorn, Bryan Malenius, Paul Sladek, Rabbi Steven Engel, Dr. Brenedette Hardy-Blake, Evelyn Herrera-Jackson, Paul Partyka, Orlando Dep. Police Chief Val Demings, Allan Jones, Dr. David Medley, Margaret Sanders, and Waldemar Serrano.

Absent: Pastor William Andrews, Richard Burton, Keylor Chan, Warren Houglan, and Diego “Woody” Rodriguez.

After convening the meeting, Co-chair Tracy Schmidt asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the June 11, 2007 Commission meeting. Member Paul Partyka made the motion and member Thomas Griffin seconded it. The minutes were unanimously approved. Staff Coordinator Yvonne Vassel drew attention to the revised Commission meeting calendar for 2007.

Schmidt introduced the Chairs of the four working committees – Krissy Todd, Housing; Dr. Richard Baxley, Assessment & Health; Diego “Woody” Rodriguez, Prevention & Self-Sufficiency; and Dep. Chief Val Demings, Supportive Systems/Community Asset. He then spoke to the Commission about its overall goals and the work to be done by the newly constituted committees. He asked that the commission’s final report be a series of actionable recommendations organized around seven stages of a Continuum of Care:

1. Prevention
2. Outreach/Intake/Assessment
3. Transitional Housing
4. Permanent Supportive Housing
5. Supportive Services
6. Permanent Affordable Housing
7. Systems

Schmidt also suggested that each recommendation identify which aspect of the Continuum of Care it addresses; the specific issue being addressed; a description of the project or recommendation; specific action steps detailing what must be done, who has the lead to get it done, a completion date; key supportive partners to achieve the recommendation; measurable outcomes; best practices to be benchmarked; overall timeframe; and detailed financial impact.

Schmidt urged members to be aggressive and creative in their thinking and to not become bogged down in exhaustive data. He also reminded members that the committees will all have staff support: Rob Heenan and Buddy Balagia from Seminole County; Andy

Rosario and Vicki Kilroy from Osceola County; Donna Wyche from Orange County; Alana Brenner from the City of Orlando; and Yvonne Vassel, the Commission's staff coordinator.

Co-chair David Porter introduced Nan Roman, president of the National Alliance to End Homelessness, a bi-partisan, non-profit agency based in Washington, D.C. Ms. Roman said the coming together of four Central Florida political entities, in a partnership to end homelessness, made her very optimistic about the Commission's ability to move the issue forward.

She said 10 percent of the nation's poor become homeless each year, and the cost is not just in the money involved in assisting them but in society's failure to effectively deal with the problem of homelessness. She suggested that, as the Commission drafts its final report, it include plans for a strong implementing body that does not represent only one interested party.

Ms. Roman also said a successful plan will look closely at some of the systems from which the homeless exit: Jails, hospitals and the state foster care system. If effective discharge processes are implemented at these sites, she said, the number of homeless individuals would be significantly decreased.

In conclusion, she said that moving from a system that primarily shelters the homeless to one that focuses on permanent housing, is a difficult process but well worth the effort. In answer to questions, she added that the U.S. is six million units short of affordable housing and the number of homeless in America has been doubling each year. Different cities and regions are trying different measures to tackle the problem and some – like Portland, OR, and Hennepin County, Minn. – are seeing significant successes. She encouraged members to familiarize themselves with methods being tried elsewhere, and consider how those successful initiatives can be adapted to Central Florida's needs.

Schmidt reminded members of the Commission retreat on Oct. 20, 2007.

There were no public comments and Co-Chair Porter adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

The next Regional Commission meeting – initially scheduled for Aug. 8 – was rescheduled to Aug. 16, 2007, from 9:30-11:30 a.m., in the 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Overlook Room of Orlando City Hall, 400 S. Orange Avenue.

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