

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

**Commission Meeting Minutes**

**November 14, 2007, 9:30 a.m.**

Osceola Heritage Park, Extension Services Building

**Members Present:**

Chairman Tracy Schmidt, Dr. Richard Baxley, Keylor Chan, Cara Eule, Meredith Griffin, Warren Hougland, J. Marsh MacLawhorn, Bryan Malenius, Paul Partyka, Margaret Sanders, Krissy Todd, Brian Wilson, Pastor William Andrews and Diego “Woody” Rodriguez.

**Members Absent:**

Orlando Dep. Police Chief Val Demings, Dr. David Medley, Thomas Griffin, Dr. Brededette Hardy-Blake, Paul Sladek, Evelyn Herrera-Jackson, Rabbi Steven Engel, Waldemar Serrano and Steve Kodsi.

Co-chair Tracy Schmidt called the meeting to order. Minutes of the September and October meetings were unanimously approved.

Schmidt thanked Osceola County for hosting the November meeting and told members the majority of the meeting would be used for each Committee to go over its current draft matrix. In that way, each member would hear what recommendations each Committee was considering making in the 10-year plan.

Paul Partyka began the presentation on behalf of the Prevention Committee. He said Prevention was considering seeking enhancements of the services currently offered by the 2-1-1 referral hotline. MacLawhorn said his impression, from things he had learned, was that 2-1-1 was a “complete failure.”

Schmidt counseled that there appeared to be widespread misunderstandings of what 2-1-1 is designed to be. He noted that it is simply a referral hotline and does not provide counseling services. “What I’m hearing,” said Schmidt, “is that 2-1-1 has issues, but our task isn’t to fix it but to make it better.”

Schmidt suggested that recommendations involving 2-1-1 would be more appropriate coming from the Supportive Systems Committee. Audience member Cathy Jackson, executive director of the Homeless Services Network, said her agency was close to completing an online guide to services – that it plans to update monthly – and that would be invaluable to operations like 2-1-1.

Discussion also focused on the shortfall each jurisdiction experiences in providing rent and utility assistance funds. Woody Rodriguez, chair of the Prevention Committee, said it was seeking to get a handle on just what that shortfall is.

Margaret Sanders, of the Supportive Systems Committee, said its central focus is to make recommendations that enable ease of access to services. “Our goal is ‘No wrong door,’” she said. That Committee has discussed having a team of case managers who could be deployed at proposed 24/7 service centers located around the tri-county area, and that those individuals could be the ones 2-1-1 refers service calls to.

Schmidt asked what types of services were being considered for the service centers. Sanders said a variety of assessment services were being discussed but using those centers as shelters had been almost ruled out. “We’ve discussed shelter but thought that would make the centers too expensive to operate,” she said.

Brian Wilson noted that each Committee needed to be really clear about who would be the responsible party recommended to implement each recommendation. Partyka also noted the recommended timeline for implementation also needed to be closely considered. “The worst thing we can do is over-promise in terms of timeline,” he said.

Krissy Todd, chair of the Housing Committee, said one of its main recommendations will be the creation of a regional housing trust to provide funding for a variety of housing options. There will be recommendations for more transitional housing, permanent housing and also permanent housing using the Housing First model for those identified as chronically homeless, she said. The Committee had not yet decided what funding method to recommend for the trust.

Schmidt said the recommendations needed to be specific as to what the gaps in various types of housing are, and where these gaps exist.

Dr. Baxley, chair of the Assessment and Health Committee, drew a schematic on a white board in an attempt to show what services currently exist in the region. He said a goal of the plan would be to prevent recidivism and take care of the most difficult patients. Other issues being discussed by his Committee included communication – or the lack of it – between healthcare providers, as well as ease of access to medical services.

During the public comment period, Pastor Jeff Linman, of the Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church, said there are about 22 churches located in east Orange County that have been discussing the presence of homeless camps in east Orange County. They said they wanted to keep abreast of the Commission’s work so they can provide assistance with getting programs implemented.

Cathy Jackson said she had recently received data, going back seven years, from Orlando Regional Healthcare and would be working on analyzing that.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:35 a.m.

The next Regional Commission meeting – previously planned for the Orange County Commission Chambers – was changed to the 9<sup>th</sup> Floor Overlook Room of Orlando City Hall, 400 S. Orange Avenue, Orlando, FL 32802. It was scheduled for December 12, 2007, at 9:30 a.m.

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