

## MEETING MINUTES

### COMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS

#### SOUTHERN NEVADA REGIONAL PLANNING COALITION

April 9, 2009

**In attendance:**

Orlando Sanchez, Chair, City of Las Vegas  
Stuart Ghertner, Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services  
Rose Ann Miele, City of Boulder City  
Adrienne Cox, Adrienne Cox Consulting  
Gary Schofield, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department  
Nancy McLane, Clark County  
Maryann Ustick, Vice Chair, City of North Las Vegas  
Danielle Turner, Alternate, City of Henderson  
Gina Gavan, Nevada Homeless Alliance  
Mark Smasal, Veterans Administration

**Absent:**

Skeet Fitzgerald, City of Henderson  
Myra Berkovits, Clark County School District

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**Agenda Item 1. Call to order, notice of agenda compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law.**

The meeting of the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition Committee on Homelessness was called to order by Orlando Sanchez, Chair, City of Las Vegas, at 2:03 p.m., on Thursday, April 9, 2009, in Commission Chambers in the Clark County Government Center, 500 S. Grand Central Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada.

The agenda for the April 9, 2009, meeting was duly posted in compliance with the Nevada Open Meeting Law requirements.

**Agenda Item 2. Approval of the Agenda for April 9, 2009.**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda for the April 9, 2009, meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Agenda Item 3. Approval of Minutes from the Meeting on March 12, 2009.**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes for the March 12, 2009, meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Agenda Item 6. Receive an update from the Regional Homeless Services Coordinator. Recommended action - Take any necessary action.**

Shannon West, Regional Homeless Services Coordinator, gave a progress update including: the HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funding, timeline and RFP process; a Legislative update; and an update on the Continuum of Care (CoC) process and application status.

There was discussion by the Committee about resolution of the stimulus funding dedications by the cities and

county.

No motion or action was required on this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 7. Receive an update on the 2009 Southern Nevada Homeless Census. Recommended action - Take any necessary action.**

Peter Connery, Applied Survey Research, gave an update on the 2009 Southern Nevada Homeless Census via a PowerPoint presentation titled “Southern Nevada Homeless Census and Survey Study.”

There was discussion by the Committee about the significant increase in the number of sheltered individuals and the financial impacts because of this; increased collaborative efforts by all parties during this count; capacities, especially with emergency shelter beds; accommodating any future increases; keeping families intact when providing services; saturation versus tipping points on providing programs and services; identifying possible intermediate groups between chronically and newly homeless; eventual identification, by specific location, of homeless groups; difficulties serving the most chronically homeless; and funding levels need to be continued or possibly increased.

Mr. Connery stated that the changes in the shelter numbers were the largest he’d seen and, coupled with the reduction in overall street numbers, reflected a huge commitment by Clark County and the Valley.

No motion or action was required on this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 4. Recognize Darryl Martin for contribution to the Committee on Homelessness. Recommended action - Take any necessary action.**

Several Committee members thanked Darryl Martin, Clark County, for his creativeness, inventiveness, commitment, leadership, inspiration and direction.

Mr. Martin commented on the team effort required by everyone.

No motion or action was required on this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 5. Receive resignation and accept nomination for committee membership. Recommended action - Take any necessary action.**

There was no discussion by the Committee; and a motion was made and seconded to receive the resignation of Darryl Martin, Clark County, and accept the nomination of Nancy McLane as the primary representative for Clark County and Tim Burch as the alternate. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Agenda Item 8. Discuss the 2009-2010 Regional Homeless Budget. Recommended action - Take any necessary action.**

Shannon West, Regional Homeless Services Coordinator, requested that this item be held until the May Committee on Homelessness meeting to allow for further discussion by the Technical Working Group.

There was no discussion by the Committee; and no motion or action was required on this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 9. Receive an update on the Inclement Weather Shelter Program. Recommended action - Take any necessary action.**

Shannon West, Regional Homeless Services Coordinator, gave an update on the Inclement Weather Shelter Program and capacities of several providers.

There was no discussion by the Committee; and no motion or action was required on this agenda item.

**Agenda Item 10. Public Comment.**

Frank Perna, Homeless Advocate, submitted an article from the April 5, 2009, issue of the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* titled “Tortured Soul” and an undated article from an unknown newspaper titled “Report: Army used untested medical treatments”; and he submitted two letters one dated April 5, 2009, and one dated April 9, 2009, both addressed to the SNRPC Homeless Committee, as follows:

April 5, 2009:

“I read about the events in the article “Tortured Soul”, written by Keith Rogers, and felt anger in that, as a voluntary veterans advocate I have been unable to penetrate the bureaucracy in the local veterans administration and Department of Defense. For about seven years I have attended meetings of the Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition and have been successful in advocating for the SNRPC Board resolution 3/20/2008 advocating for an acceleration of the 2011 completion date for the V.A. health complex, at 215 and Pecos, but more important domicilliaries (veterans homes) where inpatient therapy programs would be established to treat TBI, PTSD, alcoholism and legal and illegal drug addiction.

Senior airman Jason Klinkenberg was failed not only by the Department of Veterans Affairs, by the Department of Defense, supposed advocates in UNLV, (and) the air force but marginally by the lack of veteran unity in our local area.

Our troops problems must be identified primarily on the battlefield but certainly in Senior airman Klinkenberg’s case, when he was denied discharge and attempted suicide the first time.

All troops should have their discharge extended and an extensive study be conducted to identify PTSD and TBI but the military’s concern in an exit interview is mainly directed toward reducing future disability claims.

Then while in uniform and under military discipline they should receive the best and most extensive treatment, not a pill and outpatient treatment available. Finally upon discharge they must be handed off to a person in the Dept. of Veterans Affairs not given an 800 number or be expected to rationally request the best treatment. We must recognize we have a societal bias against mental illness in the military but in civilian life. Note the incidence of mental illness in our civilian population homeless, which sadly includes 28-30% military veterans.

The domicilliaries, outlined in the 3/20/2008 SNRPC Board resolution, presently have been utilized, in the V.A., in Jacksonville, Florida. I would assume that they have unity in their veteran community and proactive advocates who recognize that political activism is good citizenship.

My efforts have been extensive including correspondence and an attempted visit with the commander of the Mike O’Callaghan Federal Hospital, a DOD-VA facility, the local V.A.

Director and Public Affairs Officer, various public forums and correspondence to Secretary Eric Shinseki and his predecessors.

Johnathan Abbinett's admonition, as a combat veteran, "there's a nightmare that's about to unfold in the next 10, 20, 30 and 40 years and it's going to make the Vietnam veteran's generation pale in comparison" must be followed by this question; "How with the tragic experiences of our Vietnam and Gulf War veterans, some unresolved until today, have our Iraq Afghanistan veterans not received the essential services and facilities needed for their healing?" Did you know we have Iraq Afghanistan veterans in our homeless shelters and approximately 1750 Vietnam and Gulf War veterans in our 3500 homeless veteran population in Southern Nevada?

How tragic and sad!"

April 9, 2009:

"Southern Nevada is suffering the worst economic conditions since the Depression and we are experiencing an increase in homelessness.

Our homeless, the poor, military veterans and retirees and our troops had little or nothing to do with the greed, deceit and incompetence that has led to America's financial collapse. Yet there is a reluctance to equitably spend stimulus funds to benefit them.

Why don't we have the political will and humanitarian feelings to comprehensively address the disgrace of the human disaster in Ward 5?

The Southern Nevada Regional Planning Coalition Advisory Committee and Board were established 8 years ago to address homelessness and there is a formula to share expenses based on population.

Has there been any progress on renting the available 200 bed shelter or a BLM infill 5 acre parcel to orderly move the tent city and homeless? Has the veterans administration director seriously considered the proposal to build a mobile home park adjacent to the V.A. health complex adjacent to 215 and Pecos? Why hasn't there been an honest appraisal of the SNRPC 3/20/2008 resolution to fund domicilliarics?

I'm going to leave it up to you to find out why stimulus money is not being used for this worthy purpose and why our local media, newspapers, TV and alternative publications do not report about this bureaucratic and governmental neglect!

Someone once said "bad things happen when good people do nothing." Please use your free speech rights and speak out. Our troops are suffering and dying to protect your rights."

Gaylord Pearson, private citizen, commented on the Stand Down for Homeless Veterans that was held on March 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>; and he stated he supports establishing a 100-unit mobile home park adjacent to the veterans health complex. He also stated that he would like to see a land purchase for some sort of permanent structure and not for individual homes. Mr. Pearson recommended that Peter Connery (Applied Survey Research) attend a future Stand Down for Homeless Veterans.

Joe Maviglia, H & E Training School, Inc., provided lengthy comments on the importance of economic stability and creating jobs, especially trade jobs such as mobile home retrofitting; and he referred to an article

recently seen in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* titled “More without homes”. Mr. Maviglia commented on moving in the wrong direction with babysitting homeless by feeding them, for example, and instead recommended providing jobs so people could make money for themselves. He submitted a copy of a business plan, submitted to the City of Las Vegas, for retrofitting and upgrading mobile homes.

Melissa Goodwin, the Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada, commented on a veteran she had spoken with who allegedly was recommended by the V.A. to leave the state. She submitted the April 2-8, 2009, issue of the *Las Vegas CityLife*, in which she referenced several articles.

Tony Sippitch, Homeless Helpers, spoke about feeding the homeless directly; and he requested assistance on working together with providers to alleviate harassment and encourage cooperation.

Gary Peck, ACLU of Nevada, commented on the increasing numbers of homeless as well as rising numbers of obstacles and barriers to assistance. He stated that the most important solution seems to be to provide housing or shelter; and he has been watching the criminalization of homeless and bullying of individuals for 12 years. Mr. Peck stated that the newest tent city is reminiscent of the last one; and he said that the ongoing litigation of people feeding the homeless in parks isn't logical or sensible.

Orlando Sanchez, City of Las Vegas, encouraged Mr. Peck to assist with fundraising efforts.

Phillip Hollon, Catholic Charities, stated that Catholic Charities would be holding a “Thanksgiving in April” on April 30 from 10:00 to 12:00 at St. Vincent Lied Dining Facility.

Linda Lera Randle-El, Straight From the Streets, stated that she was happy people were still coming to the meetings and that issues were still alive and being talked about. She spoke on housing being a key but not the only solution; and she said everyone in the community had a moral obligation to never say “I'm too busy”. She commented that it was encouraging to see people still working toward a solution, and providing services was critical as people wouldn't stay in housing without a system for monitoring and continued support.

Bob Johnson, private citizen, spoke about volunteerism and the number of homeless on the streets was increasingly evident. He recommended investigating the idea of an ombudsman program for a permanent position to be located in the homeless corridor.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.