

Montgomery County Homelessness Task Force Meeting Notes



DATE: 8/25/2023 TIME: 12:00PM – 1:30PM VIA: ZOOM

Goal of Meeting Review top three initiatives endorsed and draft implementation plan. Provide recommendations related to implementing the three initiatives in four municipalities.

Chairs: Commissioner Kenneth E. Lawrence, Jr.

Kimberly Krauter, Director of Development – PA Walters Group

Tamra Williams, Ph.D. Director- Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services

Attendees:

Dr. Tamra Williams, Montgomery County DHHS Director

Andrea Galambos, Montgomery County DHHS Office of Performance and Planning

Kayleigh Silver, Montgomery County, DHHS Office of Housing and Community Development

Lora Gonzalez, Montgomery County, DHHS

Laura York, Montgomery County, DHHS Deputy Director

Neil McDevitt, Mayor, North Wales Borough

Mark Boorse, Access Services

Owen Camuso, RHD

Beth Sturman, Laurel House

Matt Candland, Township Manager, Upper Moreland Township

Kim Krauter, Director of Development – PA Walters Group

Anna-Marie Slivinski, Norristown Resident, Formerly Homeless

Joel Johnson, Montgomery County Housing Authority

Noah Marlier, Montgomery County Prothonotary

Kristin Frederick-Leonard, CAARSEA, Candidate for Plymouth Township Council person

Lori Schreiber, Clerk of Courts and Abington Township Commissioner

Rev. Marleen Wood, Wings of Victory Outreach

Jason Bobst, Township Manager, West Norriton Township

Deb Spence, County Resident

ASL Interpreter, Megan

Jacque Rocco, CPW Rotary Club

John Ernst, Municipality Lansdale

Holly Parker, TCN Provider Representative

Emma Hertz, President/CEO, HealthSpark Foundation

Matt McCarry, Matt Bradford Representative

Date/Time of next meeting:

9/29/23, 12:00pm – 1:30pm (last Friday of every month at 12:00pm through November 2023)

Update – Kim Krauter

Upper Gwynedd Township received zoning amendment for affordable housing for the workforce which came through Project development. Research Data was very helpful with getting it approved.

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Key Discussion Points

NEW MEMBER

Emma Hertz, President & CEO HealthSpark Foundation

Updates

Operations Workgroup - Kayleigh

- Moderated a panel with three shelter operators:
 - Faith based Code Blue Shelter Trinity Lansdale - volunteer driven to help bring single men off the streets during code blue
 - Family Promise of Montgomery County– provides overnight services for up to 3 families at a time, utilizing faith based partners to shelter them at night; also has day services on-site in Ambler
 - RHD Shelter operation – provides 24 hour shelter for single men and women, low barrier and housing-focused case management

Municipalities Status

Upper Moreland (Matt Candland) – meeting with Kayleigh next week to help identify faith-based organizations to help with locating facilities/buildings to house the homeless. Focusing on Code Blue.

Lower Merion – looking to have meeting to help with clinical support

Lansdale (John Ernst) – 1. Met with local faith-based organization members regarding additional usage for vacant building.

2. Exploring an opportunity to partner with the community for assistance with the homeless.

3. How can meal preparations be utilized more for the community

West Norriton (Jason Bobst) – 1. Potential partnership with shelters

2. securing site for shelter – looking at Norristown State Hospital ground

3. potential workforce housing development with Kim Krauter

4. finalizing model ordinance for housing zoning

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Dr. Williams shared a self-reported data chart by zip code on last permanent residence of those experiencing homelessness. This data can be viewed on the PowerPoint showing 48% reported in zip codes 19401 & 19464.

A suggestion was made to be more collaborative with each other in reference to the data. Confirm where the data comes from and ensure the accuracy of it.

Dr. Williams explained the need to release a mission statement highlighting what the Task Force Members are doing and what they stand for.

A discussion was held regarding the **Vision Statement** stated on the PowerPoint and shown below.

- Housing is a basic need.
- It is vital that our communities look out for their most vulnerable populations in order to maintain the health and safety of those communities.
- Montgomery County has more residents who are homeless than there are places for them to live that they can afford.
- Accessible housing in relative proximity to their prior residence.

Task Force members discussed and provided feedback on what they think the vision statement should say.

Members recommended the statement should: **1)** put people first; **2)** reference root of homelessness is systemic and policy choices, not personal choices; **3)** refrain from using the phrase “**vulnerable populations**”; **4)** state the necessity for education, affordable housing, accessibility for everyone and any other resources available to the community.

Vision Setting – As stated on the PowerPoint

- The role of the County is to provide planning and governance of affordable housing and homeless services using Federal and State funding
- Municipalities are responsible for building development and zoning, not county planning.
- The County and Municipalities need to work together to use county, state, and federal resources dedicated to housing
- Montgomery County’s solution includes housing with services; services help keep the person housed, and housing is what makes the services effective.

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Task Force Members discussed and added what they also believe the roles of the County and Municipalities should be and they believe municipalities and the County - **1)** should focus on the whole community displaying commitment and trust; **2)** state collaborative process & reliance on entities other than counties & municipalities; **3)** expand collaboration with non-profits, faith-based groups, businesses and community partners, extending the opportunity for everyone to get involved while providing services as part of their role and **4)** explore wrap-around services, wellness of the individual and their needs; focusing simultaneously on the whole as well as the system at the same time.

Next Steps		
Task Force Operations group will continue to meet		
Homelessness Taskforce meetings to continue	The last Friday of every both until November 2023	

Additional information (link to shared folder with additional info, where to locate meeting minutes, additional links discussed) [Homelessness Task Force](#)