

FSocial & Economic Justice and Waterfront Committees' Joint Subcommittee on Homelessness

Report: Public meeting on May 23, 2012 in City Hall Conference Room, Albany CA

Present: Francesco Papalia and Gordon McCarter (Waterfront Committee), Ruth Cashmere (S&EJ Commission), Emilie Raguso (Albany Patch.com) and several other members of the public as noted.

After introductions around the table, the public was asked to comment on items not on the agenda. Genevieve Wilson of BOCA announced upcoming meetings of the Berkeley Homeless Commission (June 13) and a Berkeley city-wide "action" on June 21.

Regarding agenda items, there was much discussion of the current state and needs of the homeless community regarding basic sanitation and services. While Peggy McQuaid tried to remind us to keep in mind the whole of Albany when discussing the homeless, most of the discussion centered on the Bulb. Currently there seems to be quarterly placement and pickup of a large dumpster where the Neck meets the Bulb. Dan Paul, a Bulb resident, said this could at least be doubled. He also noted that since water is not available on the waterfront, large (5 gal) water bottles that are clean are in great demand by residents.

Ideas for local sources of basic needs for the homeless included expanding clothing donations beyond current examples such as REI and Clean Air Cleaners, and food donations similar to Trader Joe's donations to the Senior Center (e.g., Barbara Chambers noted that she has seen Costco crushing produce into dumpsters). Steve Thrush, with Solano Community Church, suggested that the homeless citizens themselves could be enlisted in the actual collection and distribution of donations. Finally, Allan Maris suggested again that Port-a-Potties would be humane, while problems with access by service trucks were cited by the City as the reason that prevents their placement on the Bulb.

In response to the question of Francesco Papalia,—what are the Bulb residents' long term goals?—Dan was joined by Steve and Genevieve is guessing that only 20% or 30% of current Bulb residents want to leave and get inside. Instead, the remainder would prefer "to be honored and allowed to remain." Dan said that residents vow to welcome visitors (e.g., by refraining from panhandling) and want to maintain a good relationship with neighbors. And in response to concerns that Bulb residents are dangerously isolated, he countered that they actually feel they are in good hands being so close to the neighboring community.

The second item on the agenda was the fate of this Subcommittee in light of the formation of the Albany Homeless Task Force by the City Council. It was generally assumed that the latter would supersede the former, but while the Task Force is being formed, the Subcommittee members will report back to their respective Committees for consultation.

Prepared by Gordon McCarter, June 3, 2012.

More notes from Francesco Papalia from the May 23rd, 2012 Meeting

Paul O'Curry, sub- committee member was absent from this meeting.

Dan Paul, Bulb resident, expressed concern over treatment of homeless when not on the Bulb and unnecessary loss of property.

Ruth Cashmere suggested that Albany look creating a Food Pantry for the those in need here in Albany.

Paulette Malak, Albany resident and fellow grad student working with Isabelle Leduc on the Task Force, suggested using a tax-exempt group for receiving and distributing food.

Francesco Papalia suggested that the Albany Community Center Kitchen could be used in some way to gather and distribute food.

Francesco Papalia proposed that the next meeting of the sub-committee be at the Bulb in order to get more participation from Bulb residents. Peggy McQuaid reminded us that public meetings must be accessible. The Cove area above the beach would satisfy that requirement.

Ruth Cashmere provided an over view of the grant obtaining process both private and public and how the source of the grant can restrict the use of the funds.

Berkeley Organizing Congregations for Action (BOCA) is a non-profit, faith based organization of 18 member congregations <http://www.berkeleyboca.org/>

Berkeley Homeless Commission, Chair Jeffrey Davis Commission Secretary, Drew King

Mission:

Continues ongoing functions of monitoring and assisting in the City's progress in implementing needed homeless services and facilities. Appointments shall give consideration to representatives of the homeless.

Meetings: North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue, **2nd Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.**

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