



City of Tacoma Community Vitality and Safety Committee Minutes

Dial: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 823 7010 6303

Webinar Link: www.zoom.us/j/82370106303 Passcode: 614650

January 27, 2022

4:30 PM

Chair Catherine Ushka, Vice Chair Keith Blocker, Kiara Daniels,
Sarah Rumbaugh, John Hines (alternate)

Call To Order

Chair Ushka called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Ushka, Daniels and Rumbaugh

Absent: 1 - Blocker

All Council Members participated virtually.

Approval of Minutes

1. [22-0123](#) Minutes for the meeting of October 14, 2021
2. [22-0124](#) Minutes for the meeting of October 28, 2021

MOTION: Council Member Daniels moved to approve the minutes of the October 14 and 28, 2021, meetings.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Rumbaugh.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 3 - Ushka, Daniels and Rumbaugh

Absent: 1 - Blocker

Briefing Items

3. [22-0125](#) Update on Aspen Court
[Linda Stewart, Director, Neighborhood and Community Services; Heather Moss, Director, Pierce County Human Services; Tiffany Speir, Long Range and Strategic Planning Manager, City of Lakewood; Sharon Lee, Executive Director, John Brown, Program Manager, and Joe Perva, Shelter Operations Manager, Low Income Housing Institute]

At approximately 4:34 p.m., Linda Stewart, Director, Neighborhood and Community Services, provided opening remarks and introduced Heather Moss, Director, Pierce County Human Services; Tiffany Speir, Long Range and Strategic Planning Manager, City of Lakewood; and Sharon Lee, Executive Director, John Brown, Program Manager, and Joe Perva, Shelter Operations Manager, Low Income Housing Institute. Together, they presented an update on Aspen Court, including an overview; background information; current operations; guests; and partnerships, noting the City of Lakewood, and Pierce County.

Discussion ensued regarding impact of criminal activity in the area, improving safety in the area around the shelter, how long residents stay and where they will go when they leave, whether leadership opportunities are available for residents within the Aspen Court community, a request for a future update on how many people have moved from Aspen Court to permanent housing, improving support for services and law enforcement in the area, and creating a monitored entry and exit process to increase safety.

4. [22-0126](#) Comparison of Municipal Approaches to Unlawful Camping
[Keith Echterling, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office]

At approximately 5:30 p.m., Keith Echterling, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office, presented a comparison of municipal approaches to unlawful camping, including an overview; background information, noting Tacoma Municipal Code Chapter 8.12.180, Ordinance No. 28756, and unlawful camping presentations at prior Committee meetings; issues the City is facing regarding encampments; *Martin v. City of Boise*; considerations for a new camping ordinance; comparison highlights, ordinances passed by other municipalities in Washington State, and a pair of comparison tables, noting the cities of Aberdeen, Auburn, Everett, Mercer Island, Redmond, SeaTac, Spokane, and Sunnyside; considerations; and next steps.

Discussion ensued regarding options for when individuals refuse shelter, the timeline for accepting services, who enforces the ordinance, how enforcement would effect the Tacoma Police Department (TPD) and Pierce County Jail, the effectiveness of the ordinances in other jurisdictions, the difficulty of the issue, the Spokane Community Court, whether a camping ban that limits the number of days or the number of tents in a specific area exists in another jurisdiction, whether any jurisdictions in Washington have had legal cases brought against them, escalating penalties, the Everett pallet shelter, whether ordinances in other jurisdictions offered services before enforcement, what a timeline would be if an ordinance was put in place that had delayed enforcement until enough shelter space was available, which cities mentioned are comparable demographically to Tacoma, whether it would be legal to create an ordinance stating it was unlawful to camp based on environmental impacts or safety concerns, time-of-day enforcement, daytime shelters, how future discussion is required before recommendations can be made to the full City Council, the costs involved for enforcement versus building shelter space, and which staff can help the Committee Members continue their work on this topic.

Topics for Upcoming Meetings

5. [22-0127](#) February 10, 2022 - To be determined
February 24, 2022 - Interviews for the Tacoma Community Redevelopment Authority

Ted Richardson, Committee Liaison, stated the next meeting will be on February 10, 2022, and the topics have yet to be determined, and the February 24, 2022, meeting will include interviews for the Tacoma Community Redevelopment Authority Board.

Other Items of Interest

Discussion ensued regarding a request for Committee Members to provide five stakeholder names to include in a community discussion on homelessness, a request for more information about TPD response and the Community Safety Office, impacts on Tacoma of neighboring jurisdictions closing encampments, working with the City of Fife on the issue of homelessness, the timeline for future discussions on the potential camping ban and for making recommendations to the full City Council, expediting the process, and potential new safety projects.

Public Comment

Public Comment was heard from;

1. Beverly Allen, speaking on unlawful camping.
2. Nolan Hibbard-Pelly, speaking on unlawful camping.
3. Ken Miller, speaking on unlawful camping.

Discussion ensued regarding the number of beds the City would need to shelter the homeless population in the City.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.



Catherine Ushka, Chair



Jered Lobban, City Clerk's Office