



City of Tacoma Committee of the Whole Minutes

733 Market Street Tacoma, WA 98402

Conference Room 16

September 18, 2018

3:00 PM

SPECIAL MEETING

Call To Order

Mayor Woodards called the special meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

Present: 5 - Blocker, Hunter, Mello, Ushka and Woodards

Absent: 3 - Beale, Ibsen and McCarthy

Briefing Items

1. [18-1078](#) Stability Site Update

Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager, introduced partners who assisted with the Stability Site and were in attendance, including Denny Hunthausen, Vice President, Catholic Community Services; Duke Paulson, Executive Director, Tacoma Rescue Mission; and Ernie Careno, a committed community member. She stated the presentation would provide the City Council an overview of the City Council's actions and updates relating to the Homeless Emergency Declaration, a review of lessons learned and adaptive management with funding of the program, and the strategies and recommendations moving forward. Ms. Pauli reviewed the City Council actions and updates from May 2017 through April 2018, the starting point of the three-phase approach, and stated the program was an emergency response to safety issues relating to homeless encampments and not a solution to end homelessness. She outlined the program visions, including services available, enforcement of laws regarding public and private property, and ensuring no one would have to live on the streets in Tacoma; and stated metrics collected in each phase were used for guidance and to inform staff of the next phases.

Ms. Pauli reviewed the first reiteration of the three-phase approach, noting changes made with the original approach, lessons learned, and the purpose of each phase, beginning with phase I, Mitigation, stating it provided amenities and services to the unauthorized encampments, provided immediate relief for individuals experiencing homelessness, collected data for phase II, conducted

clean-ups, and prevented illegal activity. She reviewed the purpose of phase II, the Stabilization Site, noting it provided an authorized and managed temporary shelter for individuals in encampments to move into and provided stabilizing services and continued assessments to collect metrics for the next phase. She stated at this time the Mitigation Site was shut down to be cleaned and enforcement efforts were in place so the site would not reoccur, and further stated that at the same time of the two phases, staff consistently conducted city-wide enforcement and clean-up of public and private property. Ms. Pauli presented the overall lessons learned, including the importance of building trust, connecting all the phases of the program, services and city-wide enforcement were effective in eliminating large encampments, setting up a second stability site was not feasible, 85 percent of Stability Site residents required permanent supportive housing, placement of individuals was slow due to the shortage of permanent supportive housing, and 85 individuals transitioned into the Stability Site.

Ms. Pauli introduced Erica Azcueta, Program Manager, Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS). Ms. Azcueta reviewed lessons learned from the operation of the Stability Site, including behavioral agreements and housing plans, daily meaningful activities, serving the most vulnerable individuals in other shelters, coordinating food delivery, employment connection programs, and extended state of emergency and budgeting for the site. Ms. Azcueta shared site statistics and weekly reporting by the Catholic Community Services, including statistics on chronically homeless, employed, high school graduates or equivalent, female domestic violence survivors, individuals living with disabilities both mental and physical, males, housed, housing stability plans, and veterans. Ms. Azcueta further reviewed the weekly reports from the operator of the site, including current population, how many people have been housed, and the number of people who have exited, noting more people exit to permanent housing than temporary housing and people with a housing stability plan has increased.

Ms. Pauli stated 211 unduplicated individuals were served and 46 of those individuals found either permanent or temporary housing. She presented phase III of the three-phase approach, including the initial strategy to coordinate with service providers and neighboring jurisdictions to create pathways to permanent housing and enhance related policies at the state and local levels, and the goal for people to not live at the site. She reviewed lessons learned, including challenges to implement a faith-based organization homeless shelter strategy, housing readiness sites and transitional housing was not feasible, and the lack of available housing. Ms. Azcueta described the repositioning of phase III, including a more tailored service approach, such as therapeutic mental health court, and landlord liaison and rental assistance programs to prevent individuals from becoming homeless; and emphasized faith-based temporary shelter sites and exploring existing shelter expansion.

Linda Stewart, Director, NCS, presented related strategies lead by the City of Tacoma and Pierce County, noting affordable housing and homelessness and working on the affordable partnership to update the Continuum of Care plan to end homelessness. Tadd Wille, Assistant City Manager, City Manager's Office, reviewed the 2017 and 2018 revised plan and budget, costs of the Mitigation and Stabilization Site, 2018 combined costs of the Stability Site and enforcement, expanded Stability Site capacity, redirecting funds for the Readiness Site, and ongoing regional collaboration.

Ms. Azcueta provided a list of currently funded programs not associated with the emergency declaration dollars, including emergency shelter, housing, complementary services, mental health court, and the landlord liaison project. She further reviewed costs associated with encampments and stated in 2017, 17 encampments were cleaned up, 25 individuals were offered services during the cleanups, and one individual accepted services; in 2018, 74 encampments were cleaned up, 108 individuals were offered services during the cleanups, and 11 individuals accepted services; and there are limited capacity of shelters available. She reviewed the 2018 point-in-time count, reporting 1,627 individuals experiencing homelessness in Pierce County and 529 in Tacoma, and 480 shelter beds available to single adults and families. Ms. Azcueta discussed the encampment cleanup challenges, including finding immediate shelter options for individuals displaced from encampments, encampments that re-populate or move to nearby locations, and coordinating with other jurisdictions and private property owners.

Ms. Pauli stated that the City has partnerships with MetroParks in addressing encampments, and coordinating and discussing issues; the City is coordinating and collaborating with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), to assist with receiving responsiveness on WSDOT properties; and the City is collaborating with Bates Technical College and the Tacoma Public School District on homelessness and encampments.

Ms. Stewart stated the City is alleviating some of the pressing health and safety concerns but will not resolve the issue of preventing homelessness, that support of the emergency declaration propelled the community into action and helped adapt approaches based on data and experience. She continued by stating the Stability Site was not intended to be a permanent shelter but more of an as-needed temporary shelter. Ms. Stewart continued by reviewing recommendations, including increased existing shelter capacity, sustained or increased efforts to support a Landlord Liaison Program, complimentary services, homelessness prevention, technical assistance to enhance shelter operator services, therapeutic mental health court incentives for faith-based organizations to establish temporary shelters, and extending the emergency declaration and no camping ordinance as the City moves forward to the next year. Ms. Pauli clarified that increasing the existing

sheltering capacity is not for expansion of the Stability Site, but to help expand existing shelter operators' capacities.

Discussion ensued regarding Pierce County collaboration, other cities providing their own services, partnering with other cities, the community conversation that former Mayor Strickland conducted with Mayors of other jurisdictions and Pierce County regarding homelessness, shelters outside of the Tacoma city limits, start-up costs, and the cost for 2018 and the difference between the dollar figures. Discussion continued on outlining goals, cost of extending the emergency declaration and no camping ordinance, plans for the Stability Site, the budget for continuing operation through 2019, and sheltering capacity and other housing options in the community allowing the transition of individuals into other options. Mayor Woodards discussed permanent supportive housing, individuals that do not take the opportunity to get into a temporary shelter, and barriers that exist. She stated she is committed to working with other cities and towns to provide housing.

Adjournment

On proper motion, the special meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

Victoria R. Woodards, Mayor

Doris Sorum, City Clerk