

# Housing Opportunities Action Council

## Lead Administrator: Summary Report

Benton County and the City of Corvallis have contracted with United Way of Benton & Lincoln Counties to serve as the backbone organization, and host the position of Lead Administrator (aka, Program Manager) for HOAC from November 1, 2016 through June 30, 2018. Shawn Collins began serving in this role November 1, 2016.

Following is a summary report of the activities of the Program Manager, May 2018 – June 2018.

### Project Updates

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If you've been anywhere near a Corvallis newspaper in the past month, you may have a good idea what's been consuming my time and focus. While efforts surrounding the proposed location of the Corvallis Men's Shelter, along with the Corvallis Daytime Drop-in Center and Stone Soup, at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Western have dominated my calendar, I have been able to stay connected to other projects as well. These include:

- Meetings to plan, and then attendance at a Corvallis Sustainability Coalition sponsored event with SquareOne Villages from Eugene on June 19. This workshop was design to explore what may be required to develop housing in the Corvallis area which would be similar to the "opportunity village" model (transitional housing) or "emerald village" model (small, permanent, affordable housing) SquareOne has pioneered in Eugene. SquareOne has a grant from Meyer Memorial Trust to work with small communities in Oregon to assist in developments following their model. More updates to come, as future meetings are held.
- A meeting with Vince Adams, 509J School Board chair, and others seeking solutions to student homelessness issues on June 13.
- A forum sponsored by Councilor Nancy Wyse, Councilor Hyatt Lytle, and Councilor Barbara Bull, to gain community input on the proposed Enhanced Law Enforcement Area in downtown Corvallis, also on June 13.
- Continued engagement with the Homeless Vulnerable Patients team, whose recent Letter of Intent to the IHN-CCO "Delivery Systems Transformation" (DST) grant program was successful, and has resulted in an invitation to proceed to the next level of application, for a proposal which would create a stronger set of resources to support homeless patients.

It's encouraging to see these efforts, which are not directly sponsored by, but clearly relate to the work of HOAC, develop, and I appreciate the opportunity to participate.

**Cold Weather Shelter:** The proposed Corvallis Service Center at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Western, which would include the Cold Weather Shelter, have captured headlines, and stirred a great deal of conversation across the community. If there were early concerns about "not enough community input" and "lack of transparency" and "lack of flexibility" around the proposal and counter-proposals, I would suggest these are being addressed in many forums. A listing of events from the last month follows, to give a sense of the ways in which this topic has occupied my time.

- June 4: Corvallis City Council: Provided testimony in the Budget Hearing.
- June 6: Avery-Helm Neighborhood Association: Participated in a session with Sara Ingle and Sue Schulz of Stone Soup to hear concerns of residents of Avery-Helm, and discuss possible mitigating strategies.
- June 7: Tour of Hanson Tire Factory site with Catherine Mater and Sara Ingle: Following discussion at the Avery-Helm meeting, Catherine Mater requested a tour of the Hanson Tire Factory site, to

assess it as a potential alternative site. After consulting the owner of the building for permission, we toured the facility, and discussed the potential construction requirements to relocate the Corvallis Service Center.

- June 8: Tour of Flowmatcher site with Parks and Recreation Director Karen Emery, and staff: Having not been invited to the earlier tour reported in the Gazette-Times, I reached out to Director Emery to get a tour, so that I could understand the potential to renovate the site.
- June 12: Meeting with Catherine Mater, Rich Carone, Councilor Roen Hogg, Commissioner Anne Schuster, Chris Quaka, Jill McAllister (Unitarian Universalist Fellowship), Sara Ingle (Stone Soup board member), and Aleita Hass-Holcombe (Corvallis Daytime Drop-In Center): This meeting was called at the request of Catherine Mater, to present Rich Carone with the space and other building requirements to support relocation of the Corvallis Service Center. Written requirements were provided, and extensive discussion followed over 2 hours.
- June 13: Downtown Advisory Board: Participated in discussion of the proposal with the Board, Sara Ingle, and Aleita Hass-Holcombe.
- June 18: Corvallis City Council: Provided additional testimony at the extended Budget Hearing.
- June 21: Meeting with Rich Carone, Commissioner Anne Schuster, Mayor Biff Traber, and Sara Ingle, called at the request of Commissioner Schuster: This meeting was to further discuss requirements to relocate the Corvallis Service Center, and review potential sites being considered.
- June 26: Benton County Board of Commissioners: Attend meeting of the Board to understand and discuss proposed next steps in their consideration of funding for the Men's Shelter.
- June 26: Corvallis Advocate City Speak Panel: Participated in a panel focused on the location for the Shelter with Commissioner Schuster and Mayor Traber.

While taxing, it has been important to be as available as possible for these public forums, as well as meetings with those who are seeking alternatives to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Western location. Further review of proposals will occur at the July 2<sup>nd</sup> City Council meeting, and at a July 10 Board of Commissioners meeting.

## Perspective

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I recently described the past 2 months as one of the longest rodeo rides I've ever imagined. Just when you think 8 seconds is up, and you can finally get off the bucking bronco, the clock seems to get reset, and the horse develops a new head of steam. For all of our sakes, I remain hopeful that the process recently established by Council and the Board of Commissioners will allow a conclusion to the search for a Shelter location, and establishment of a Corvallis Service Center. That hope, however, is matched with concern. This process has brought out passionate positions on many different sides of the issue, and trust has been abused on many fronts. Going forward, there's serious work to be done to develop more productive, and inclusive conversations in our community about the range of housing needs we face, the paths we must follow to address them, and the risks we take by getting so lost in conflict that we reach a stalemate – one we cannot afford in the face of a growing housing crisis here in Corvallis and Benton County, and across the western US. The need is great, and the clock is ticking.

For anyone interested in discussing affordable housing and homelessness, and approaches we might take going forward, I can be reached at [shawn@unitedwayblc.org](mailto:shawn@unitedwayblc.org), 541-757-7717, or through [contact@bentonhoac.com](mailto:contact@bentonhoac.com).