



DOUGLAS COUNTY HOMELESS INITIATIVE

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 9, 2024

9:00 AM

BOCC Hearing Room,
Conference Rooms A & B

Location: Douglas County Philip S. Miller Building
100 Third Street, Castle Rock: BOCC Hearing Room, Conference Rooms A & B

In - Person Attendees: Andrea Barnum, Brittainy Johnson, Dan Makelky, Dantae Latson, Elise Cordle, Erin White, Jason Gray, Jeff Garcia, Jennifer Eby, Karen Tarbox, Kevin Ross, Megan Tran, Melody D'Haillecourt, Mike Hill, Mike Polhemus, Mike Waid, Phil Domenico, Rand Clark, Sandy Holcomb, Sasha Larson, Scott Nelson, Steven Dodrill, Tiffany Marsitto

Online Participants: 33 (list is available upon request)

1. Welcome & Introductions: Commissioner Laydon

2. Migrant Crisis:

- Commissioner Laydon: Douglas County was invited to participate in a regional panel concerning the Migrant Crisis. The panel included the City and County of Denver, a law professor from University of Colorado, a representative from Common Sense Institute, and Mayor Mike Kaufman, from City of Aurora. Approximately 40,000 Venezuelan migrants have been bussed from Texas to Denver. This originally cost the City and County of Denver \$180 million dollars and is estimated to cost an additional \$90 million dollars this year. The Douglas County response to the Migrant Crisis is to collaborate with the region while prioritizing the rights of legal citizens and remaining compassionate. Douglas County supports legal immigration.
- Jeff Garcia, County Attorney: The following is an update on the lawsuit against the State and the bussing ordinance. The lawsuit is in repeal of two laws that prohibits law enforcement from arresting or retaining illegal immigrants for civil immigration enforcement. The following counties have joined the lawsuit: Mesa, Garfield, Elbert, and Rio Blanco. El Paso County was a part of the original lawsuit. Lastly, the current bus ordinance is only applicable in Unincorporated Douglas County. The Attorney's office has reached out to other cities and municipalities within the County to encourage them to adopt the ordinance.

3. Aurora Regional Navigation Campus:

- Emma Knight, City of Aurora, Homelessness Division Manager: In late April, the Douglas County Board Of County Commissioners approved an Inter-governmental Agreement for \$1,125,000 dollars towards the Aurora Regional Navigation Campus. This investment provides an emergency shelter option with onsite supports for HEART and other community partners to utilize for those experiencing homelessness. The navigation campus will serve single individuals 18 years or older experiencing homelessness or housing instability, offer 24/7 services, and will be managed by a

seasoned shelter provider. Services may include employment services, workforce development, transitional housing, addictions counseling, mental health services, case management, housing navigation, day shelter/navigation services, emergency shelter, a medical clinic, dental care, and medical respite beds. The Campus will be based off a three-step model similar to the Colorado Springs shelter. Step one will be a low barrier congregate style shelter with access to services. Step two will be a short-term shelter in a dorm room style where participants will have to engage in case management. Step three will be a transitional housing model with participants actively working with case managers to engage in workforce development and obtaining permanent housing. Yet, regardless of what step participants are on, the main outcome will be to work towards permanent housing. A Request For Participants (RFP) has been issued for the shelter operator. The City of Aurora has received three applications. The applications have been reviewed by a diverse panel from Douglas County, Arapahoe County, Adams County, City of Aurora, and Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI). The operator will be announced once the lease agreement is finalized. Good neighbor practices will be established for the City of Aurora and surrounding communities to the Campus. It will include clear information on who to contact in case of questions, feedback, or emergency, fencing around the entire campus for positive control on three entry/exit points, and Aurora and Denver Police Departments will be conducting frequent patrols of the area. The Operator has agreed to conduct regular clean ups of the neighborhood. Transportation will be provided with a bus stop right outside of the location and will have 2 independently owned busses to drop off and pick up those at the campus. The shelter will be operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The current location site for the Campus is in Aurora and the site was previously a hotel and convention center with 20 ballrooms. Preliminary design will include a fenced site, 255 rooms for transitional housing, navigation day center open to the general community with a medical clinic and dental services, pallet shelters, 2 industrial kitchens, and an onsite pet kennel. The anticipated phased opening will begin in the late fall of 2024, with plans to be fully functioning by late 2025. If you'd like to partner or volunteer at the Navigation Campus visit www.EngageAurora.org/NavigationCampus for more information.

- Bob LeGare, Former Mayor of Aurora, asked for an explanation of where the funding came from for the Campus: no local tax dollars were utilized for this acquisition. The largest source of payment came from Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) HB-1378 grant award. In which Boulder, Denver, Lakewood, and Tri-Cities were also awarded funds to create separate Navigation Campuses. The remainder of the funding for the Aurora Regional Navigation Campus came from collaborative contributions from Douglas County, Arapahoe County, Adams County, and The City of Aurora. The daily operations funding for the Aurora Regional Navigation Campus will be provided through redirecting the City of Aurora's budget for homelessness towards the navigation campus.
- Kevin Duffy, Douglas County Sheriff's Office Bureau Chief, asked questions about campus safety: the operator will plan on hiring in house security. This allows the security team to build relationships with participants and who will know the people who stay there and work to support the model. The operator will provide well trained staff with an understanding of the model and conducive to safety. Aurora Police Department will perform regular patrols and continue to build good relationships with operator.
- Mike Polhemus, The Rock Church, asked where do people go with families? Comitis Center currently serves both adults and families. With the opening of the Regional Campus, Comitis will go to serving families only. In addition, there is the Family Tree GOALS program in Aurora.
- Dantae Latson, Family Tree, Chief Executive Officer: the GOALS program stands for Generational Opportunities for Long-term Success and operates as a two generational model. Program length is 4-9 months to allow families to exit to safe and affordable housing. Family voice allows participants to give feedback on the ongoing program. One of the most common needs are for childcare. To address this, Family Tree has partnered with an onsite childcare

provider. The goal is for the newly renovated building to be open in August 2024, before the next school year begins. There are upcoming opportunities for faith-based partners to adopt a room to spruce it up and make it homey for GOALS program participants. There will be 10 rooms available. More details to come soon.

4. DC Homeless Prevention:

- Steven Dodrill, Community Programs Administrator: The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) 23 was awarded to Douglas County for \$50,000 for homeless prevention. A Douglas County Homeless Prevention pilot program will serve up to 5-7 families with a time range of 9-12 months. Participants must not be homeless, will need to meet an income requirement of 30% AMI or lower, in the court process for losing housing or fleeing domestic violence, and have moderate barriers. This pilot will provide limited rental assistance while engaging in case management to address barriers and work force development.

5. HEART:

- Tiffany Marsitto, HEART Supervisor: HEART received a total of 203 referrals for the month of April. Of those 203 referrals, 51% were proactive street outreach by HEART, 23% were dispatched by law enforcement, 12% were citizen calls, 9% were public referral forms, and 5% were community partner calls. The call outcomes included 52 individuals contacted by HEART, 18 were not from Douglas County, nine were not homeless, 13 refused services, three law enforcement actions, 91 no unsheltered person found, and nine encampments that have been cleaned up. The four highest categories of HEART program enrollments included: three shelter referrals, nine transports, 47 hotel vouchers, and seven referrals to housing support. During the month of April services provided by location include Highlands Ranch 37%, Castle Rock 22%, Parker 23%, Lone Tree 9%, Castle Pines 5%, Englewood 1%, and remaining areas 1%.
- Success Story: The HEART received a referral from the Highlands Ranch Library of a man needing assistance. The man was struggling with mental health challenges. The man wanted to reconnect with his natural supports in Arizona but needed to resolve his court case in Douglas County before he could leave. The HEART provided three hotel vouchers for the man during cold nights and multiple faith-based organizations provided food boxes, clothing, and hotel vouchers. Once the man confirmed he could appear virtually for his sentencing, he requested a bus ticket. A faith-based organization purchased the ticket, and HEART transported the man to Union Station to begin his trip back to Arizona. Multiple HEART Navigators pulled together to assist this man while awaiting his journey home.

6. Executive Committee Member Updates:

- Mike Waid, Executive Director, Douglas County Community Foundation: Douglas Has Heart fund is 100% allocated to service providers of Douglas County. The fund has reached the next \$2,500.00 contribution and this round's recipient is Parker Task Force. The fund has raised a total of almost \$11,000
- Mayor Jason Gray: The Town Council directed to work with Jeff Garcia to create an Inter - Governmental Agreement for bus ordinance ban and to join the lawsuit.

7. Public Comment: None

8. Closing Comments

The Douglas County Homeless Initiative provides a collaborative meeting space for a diverse group of community partners to discuss issues related to homelessness. These meetings are not a forum for discussion of specific land use

applications or development projects in individual jurisdictions. Please contact the relevant jurisdiction to inquire about how to participate in the public input process for specific projects.