

SNACC meeting / Sept. 16, 2021

Present: Matt Lembo, Jessie Maran, Ash Hester, Vincent Dawans, Hannah Wallace, Emily McCadden, Andria Robbins, Julia Peattie, Marisa Espinoza [**note:** pronounced Ma-ree-sah]

- Jes opens the meeting and reminds folks that this committee, which encompasses showers and trash pick-up, is looking for new leadership. She just doesn't have the bandwidth right now with all her work for Beacon Village.
- Andria nominates Emily to be chair. Emily asks Jes to explain a bit about what SNACC does and what the role of chair entails.
- Jess says we currently don't have any other projects besides showers & trash, and both are running fairly smoothly at this point. The main responsibility of the chairs is to plan the agenda and make sure the meetings stay on track, so we respect one another's time and stick to the agenda. The chair is also the one who reports on the work of the committee at the main SNA meeting. The committee can be whatever we want it to be right now.
- Hannah suggests that we may not need to meet monthly, but the new chair (or co-chairs) could decide to run the meeting every other month, depending on what we have going on.
- Matt reminds us that we have this “Get on the Sunnyside Campaign” that Hanna Neuschwander and her fellow students at U of O grad school worked on for their independent study. A lot of work went into that, he says, and we are probably one of the best Neighborhood Associations to do a communications plan based on the work we've already done. The message could be, “Look everyone, we all know we're in the shit right now. But let's stop complaining about how bad things are and get on the stick and start making a difference!” Matt thinks that there are about 10 hours of work left on the website. Three posters already exist.
Action: Hannah W. to check in with Hanna N. about this so we can see if one of her classmates (or her) have the bandwidth to work on this in the coming weeks/months.
- Vincent says the SNACC meetings could be useful for testing ideas for other projects, thinking about the connections between our programs (showers & trash).
- Hannah suggests that Dana Buhl and others may have interest in organizing some kind of Cahoots-like training for Sunnyside where volunteers would be trained in de-

escalation and mental health skills to try to avoid calling the police. That sort of educational event would fall under the SNACC committee, Matt says.

- Emily mentions that she's getting her masters in social work at PSU and in their last year, students have to do an independent study project and maybe she could organize a small cohort of students to get involved with us in some capacity. (Matt suggests that maybe some could work for Beacon Village, as well!)
- Vincent points out that one neat thing about committee meetings is that they don't need to be public. They are really work meetings.
- Emily wonders if it would be possible to have co-chairs?
- Jes and others think that would be a great idea.
- Hannah nominates/ suggests Marisa to be the co-chair. She has shown a lot of initiative and leadership at Showers, offering to crunch the data for us. She works at NW Pilot Project and used to work at Sisters of the Road, so has experience working both directly with the houseless but also at a nonprofit whose goal is to help finding permanent housing for houseless seniors (over 55).
- Marisa says she will think about it. She has a lot on her plate currently.
- Jes suggests that she and Emily can co-chair for now until Emily feels more comfortable with the role, and that will give Marisa some time to decide.
- Hannah gives brief report on showers. We've recently gotten a lot of donations! Former shower volunteer Kieran Cannistra made an announcement at her church in early August and two people made donations. One was a cash donation of \$100, the other sent boxes and boxes of supplies (shampoo, conditioner, body wash, razors, etc.) from Amazon. This should last us through December!
- Vincent updated the SNACC spreadsheet on our shared drive. We currently have \$453.50 in our account. We will be getting a monthly recurring donation from a shower volunteer (she and her business partner). We need to ask her to earmark that for SNACC rather than showers, just in case the shower program changes so that we can still use the money for other projects that fall under SNACC.

Action: HW to talk to volunteer about changing that.

- Back to showers. Hannah shares about the de-escalation training on Sunday. Julia and others give a thumbs up. We learned about things like body language, tone of voice, who to call when we're having a crisis. As a result of the training, led by Zack Hart from Hygiene4All, we also put some new systems in place, like having a PIC (Person in Charge) for each shift who can give level advice and/or pop over to the church at a moment's notice, if needed. Unfortunately for us, Zack is moving to Seattle this week for grad school in social work, so we are unlikely to be able to tap them for another training. [Matt says de-escalation training is needed for other groups.] Hannah is thinking of seeking out future trainings like the one on opioids run by Haven at Outside/In.

- Jes: What's going on with the idea of issuing a vaccine mandate for the shower program? We discuss this for awhile.

- HW's concern is that some folks have mental health challenges that would keep them from getting vaccinated. One of our regulars, who gets much joy from the showers, told HW he won't be getting vaccinated. (Without going into details...) HW's current thinking on this is that we have one-on-one conversations with folks we know aren't vaccinated and see what we can do to change their minds. HW is organizing a vaccine event with Neveh Shalom (<https://nevehshalom.org/covid19/>) which will be at the church in the coming weeks. They will bring \$100 gift certificates, hot food etc. I'm hoping that we can get a bunch more vaccinated at that event.

- Matt says we should do a vaccine mandate. It'll protect the volunteers who are there and the vaccinated houseless people as well.

- Jes says she was on board with a mandate until her last shower shift, when a newcomer showed up at the showers. How would we let folks like that know in advance that we're issuing a mandate? [Good question.] Would turning them away at the door cause conflict?

- Maybe we can give folks 2-3 weeks notice (including a vaccine event) so they have plenty of time to think it over and get vaccinated.

- Matt says that vaccine status is not private. And we should be able to take photos of vaccine cards and store them on a shared drive for volunteers. (Look into asking Devin if the Glide app for showers will do that.)

- Jes (or was it Matt?) has an idea: what if we have one shift where those who are unvaccinated can go (those volunteers are OK with hanging out with unvaccinated?) Or does this open up a can of worms?? [Also organizing this will be tricky, since peoples' schedules are fairly set at this point and hard to change around.]

- Emily suggests looking into an air purifier, which Jamie Newberg (shower volunteer) suggested. Julia has researched this. The church janitor, Rachel, has been leaving the industrial fan on after shifts to keep mildew away. It also helps with air flow so we now keep it on during a shower shift.

Action: Emily to research air purifiers with Julia's help/input.

- Someone suggests that we start using the front doors of the church again and keep those doors open during a shift to allow for more air flow. This will also keep us closer to our co-volunteer, which Zack said is a smart idea. (To be within ear-shot of one another.) We just have to be sure to securely lock the doors—this door is tricky to lock.

Action: Hannah + other shower volunteers to have more one-on-one conversations with the houseless. Still undecided about the vaccine mandate, but hoping we can encourage folks to get vaccinated at the Neveh Shalom event.

- Jes: There is one more thing to discuss. Shall we discuss it at this meeting or wait for next month. The idea is something Matt brought up in an email: using churches around town as sites for small sanctioned camps.

- Matt says that the basic idea is to promote the Beacon Village model as an alternate to the 6 mythical sites coming out of Dan Ryan's office (**note:** Nicole Hayden has a story about that in today's Oregonian: <https://www.oregonlive.com/health/2021/09/portland-lags-on-finding-locations-for-homeless-villages.html>)

It's not constructive to rely on the city for solutions at this point. There are hundreds of churches all around Portland, all with infrastructure (big kitchens, in some cases showers, classrooms), and though they have shrinking congregations their remaining members are excited about this kind of work! There may even be money in city/county budgets to pay churches to do it. We are already doing wrap-around services, Matt points out (though not the mental health + substance abuse counseling that so many of our houseless neighbors desperately need).

- Vincent agrees that the city is doing nothing but he worries about people like Norm, who may not be part of Beacon Village but may hang out on the periphery, causing neighbors to complain (and unfairly complain to Beacon Village about that person, even if he was there before they moved in). Folks like that (who have hoarding issues or who yell in the middle of the night or do drugs openly) can make these projects unpopular and untenable, he points out. He's just trying to be pragmatic.

- Jes acknowledges that this is an issue and that they are thinking about this and not necessarily relying on the city for help with this sort of thing. But she still thinks Matt's idea is worthwhile—creating a community with intention to see if it works, to see if it can be a viable model as we move forward and try to have a patchwork of solutions for the city's houseless crisis. We can't keep pointing at the city for what they aren't doing. (Or we can, but to what end?)

- Marisa chimes in. She was a case manager for 5 years at NW Pilot Project and the high-complexity clients (for instance like Norm or others with mental health issues) do face bigger challenges than other folks, which can make the work slow and challenging. Nonprofits (many of which receive federal funding) don't have the luxury of turning away folks because of Civil Rights laws, fair housing laws, non-discrimination requirements, etc. Oftentimes, privately-funded camps or facilities are high barrier, and the folks with more trauma, drug issues or mental health issues get screened out. And then the people who run these projects say, "See how easy this is?" But there is a sample bias there. But she wouldn't want it to be, "Let's avoid the folks who are hardest to work with." The beauty of grassroots projects like the shower program is its ability to be low barrier.

- Matt says he's getting the contract tomorrow from JOHS (which will be collaborating with Beacon Village?) and he says he doesn't know if Beacon Village will work if he, Pat, Sandy, and Jes cannot choose the residents. The whole premise is to build the village on relationships with people they know.

Lots to think about here!

* Discussion tabled until next meeting, which will be on Thursday Oct. 21st at 6:30.