



Cambridge Human Services Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
June 11, 2015  
5:30 – 7:30pm  
Citywide Senior Center  
806 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Commissioners present: Christine Elow, Christopher R. Hall, Khari Milner, Nan Stone, Katharine Emilie Thomas, Rev. Lorraine Thornhill

Regrets: Dr. Ayse Atasoylu, Lori Likis

DHSP staff: Janice Alger, Shelly Chevalier, Mike Payack (recorder), Ellen Semonoff

Presenter: Liz Mengers, Homeless Services Continuum of Care Planner, City of Cambridge  
DHSP/Planning & Development

Ellen Semonoff welcomed everyone and introduced Liz Mengers, Homeless Services Continuum of Care Planner for City of Cambridge DHSP/Planning & Development. Ellen acknowledged the astonishing amount of work that goes into planning the annual Census of Persons Experiencing Homelessness.

Liz began her presentation with an overview of the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009, the federal government's primary response to homelessness. Among other things, the law updated the Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of homelessness and chronic homelessness, and defined the responsibilities of the [Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#).

The HEARTH Act requires the CoC to submit several annual reports to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), including the Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), Housing Inventory Count (HIC), and the Point-in-Time Count (PIT). Liz presented the [summary report](#) of the 2015 PIT, also known as the Census of Persons Experiencing Homelessness.

Shelly Chevalier provided an overview of the Cambridge Charrette – the City's strategic planning process for addressing homelessness in Cambridge. The City has entered into a contract with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), the architects of the Charrette model. CSH's Charrette is a short, intensive process modeled on the community planning process in the physical design world. A steering committee, comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders, has been working to identify 6-8 issue areas on which to focus. Two community meetings, scheduled for next week, will be held to educate members of the public on the Charrette process and gather input from the community on the issue areas identified by the steering committee. The steering committee will use feedback gathered at these community meetings to narrow down the issue areas. During Charrette Week (September 15-18), a facilitated "fishbowl" panel will be held on each of the key issue areas identified by the steering committee with input from the larger community. Each fishbowl will include an inner circle of 6-8 local and national experts on the respective issue area and an outer circle of 50-200 members of the community. (National experts will be from cities with similarities to Cambridge.) Charrette Week will

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close with CSH presenting a draft of recommendations to the community for feedback. CSH will incorporate this community feedback into the final strategic plan.

The two community meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, June 24, 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, at the Central Square Branch Library; and Thursday, June 25, 6:30 to 8:00 pm, at the Cambridge Community Center. All members of the public with an interest in addressing homelessness in Cambridge are encouraged to attend. Updated information on the Cambridge Charrette can be found at [cambridgecharrette.yolasite.com](http://cambridgecharrette.yolasite.com).

Mike Payack provided some follow-up information on the FY2016 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Renewal Applications, which were reviewed at the May 14 meeting of the Commission. Mike reported SCM Transportation's referral policy and provided some context of how Centro Latino's non-CDBG-funded programs support the CDBG-funded Adelante Program.

Mike announced that the Commission will be undertaking a reappointment process and Commissioners interested in serving another term should send him a letter of interest.

Christine Elow announced that the "Safer Homes, Safer Community: Gift Cards for Guns" initiative will be taking place on Saturday, June 13, between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm. Gift Cards for Guns drop-off locations will provide a safe, convenient way for participants to drop off unwanted guns with no questions asked and no ID required. Residents will be awarded gift cards for each firearm they turn in on the day of the event. The two drop-off locations are Greater Boston Vineyard Church (170 Rindge Ave) and Pentecostal Tabernacle (77 Columbia Street). Cambridge Police and the Middlesex Sheriff's Office will be managing both sites and handling the guns turned in, and the State Police will destroy the guns.

Katharine Emilie Thomas announced that she is stepping down from her role as Human Services Commissioner and this will be her last meeting. Ellen Semonoff thanked her for many years of fine service. Ellen reminded Katharine that HSC meetings are open to the public and, as such, she is welcome to attend future meetings.

Mike announced that the Human Services Commission will break for the summer; the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 10, 2015.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Payack  
Planner/Contracts Manager  
DHSP/Planning & Development