



Cambridge Human Services Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 12, 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

Regrets: Dr. Ayse Atasoylu, Lori Likis, Rev. Lorraine Thornhill

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

Presenters: Sam Greenberg, Co-Director, Y2Y Harvard Square; Neil MacInnes-Barker, Producer and Director of *No Place Like Home*

Guests: Sgt. Fred Cabral, Cambridge Police Department; Brian Corr, Executive Director, City of Cambridge Peace Commission; Claude-Alix Jacob, Chief Public Health Officer, Cambridge Public Health Department

After a round of introductions, Ellen Semonoff welcomed Neil MacInnes-Barker, Producer and Director of the film *No Place Like Home*. Neil is also the Director of Veterans' Services for the City of Cambridge. *No Place Like Home*, which was subsequently screened for the Commission, focuses on the unique struggles of young adults experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts. The film features interviews with staff and participants of Youth on Fire, a daytime drop-in center for homeless and street-involved youth (ages 14-24) located in Harvard Square. Youth on Fire is a program of the AIDS Action Committee. In the film, Ayala Livny, then-Director of Youth on Fire, discusses the need for a youth-specific overnight shelter.

Ellen Semonoff introduced Sam Greenburg, Co-Founder and Co-Director of Y2Y Harvard Square. Sam grew up in Cambridge and is a Harvard graduate (Class of 2014). Sam began working at the Harvard Square Homeless Shelter (HSHS), a program of the Phillips Brooks House Association, while a high school student at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. Sam and Y2Y Co-Founder and Co-Director Sarah Rosenkrantz worked at HSHS together while attending Harvard. HSHS is a student-run homeless shelter located in the University Lutheran Church in Harvard Square that serves 24 men and women every night from November through mid-April.

Sam said his research showed that, while about 500 young adults experiencing homelessness utilize daytime services at Youth on Fire each year, there are currently only 12 youth-specific shelter beds in the Greater Boston area. Further, about 600 young adults stayed at the Pine Street Inn (an adult shelter in Boston) in 2013 and many young adults don't feel comfortable staying in adult shelters at all. After many discussions with Ayala Livny and many other service providers in Cambridge and Boston about the unique needs of young adults experiencing homelessness, Sam and Sarah decided that the ideal response would be the creation an overnight youth shelter.

An Advisory Board comprised of a diverse group of stakeholders was created including representatives from local non-profits and direct-service providers, Harvard (students and faculty), Harvard Square Business Association, the Cambridge Police Department, the City's Department of Human Service Programs, and the community at large. After a generous community response to fundraising efforts (money, materials, and in-kind services), the Y2Y shelter is scheduled to open in mid-December of this year.

Located in the basement of the First Parish Unitarian Church in Harvard Square, Y2Y will share space with Youth of Fire (Youth on Fire using the space during the daytime; Y2Y using the space overnight). Y2Y's goal is to provide sanctuary, connection to resources, and advocacy. Y2Y will have 22 beds dedicated to young adults experiencing homelessness. Thirty-day bed stays will be filled by lottery. Y2Y staff will be comprised of about 30 student-volunteers, each expected to commit 20-30 hours per week to the shelter. Student case managers will be available to connect shelter guests with available resources. Harvard Law School students will also provide legal case management services. Over time, Y2Y's goal is to increase services provided to include such things as onsite medical care and more permanent pathways out of homelessness.

For more information on Y2Y Harvard Square, visit y2yharvardsquare.org.

Mike Payack announced that the next Human Services Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 10, 2015.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Payack
Planner/Contracts Manager
DHSP/Planning & Development