

**ROUNDTABLE/WORKING MEETING
OPIOID ABUSE**

DATE Monday, October 5, 2015

TIME 5:39 PM

LOCATION Sullivan Chamber

PURPOSE Roundtable/working meeting to discuss Opioid Abuse with State-Level/County Partnerships, City Departments and Community Partnerships (O#16 of August 10, 2015)

ATTENDEES Mayor Maher, Vice Mayor Benzan, Councillor Carlone, Councillor Cheung, Councillor Kelley, Councillor Mazen, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Simmons, Councillor Toomey, Richard Rossi, City Manager, Lisa Peterson, Deputy City Manager, Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager for Human Services Programs, Lee Gianetti, Director, Communications and Community Relations, Taha Jennings, Assistant to the City Manager, Claude-Alix Jacob, Chief Public Health Officer, Cambridge Health Alliance, Tali Schiller, Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator and Keisha Antoine, Director, Cambridge Prevention Coalition, Cambridge Public Health Department, Gerald Reardon, Fire Chief, Jeremy Walsh, Cambridge Fire Department, Robert Haas, Police Commissioner, Sandra Albano, Executive Assistant to the City Council, Paula Crane, Deputy City Clerk and Donna P. Lopez, City Clerk

OTHER ATTENDEES Marylou Sudders, Secretary, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Marian Ryan, Middlesex County District Attorney, Judge Roanne Sragow, First Justice, Cambridge District Court, Al Mergendahl, CEO, Pro EMS, Mark McGovern, Cambridge/Somerville Healthcare for the Homeless, Megan Hinds, AIDS Action Committee, Needle Exchange Program, Dr. Mark Albanese, CHA and John Hawkinson.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Mayor Maher convened the meeting at 5:39 PM. He stated that no votes will be taken, no public comment and that the meeting is not being publicly video/audio recorded. The meeting is being privately recorded. He stated that City Manager Rossi would provide opening remarks.

Mr. Rossi thanked the special guests for attending the meeting. He stated that it is no secret that our region is in the midst of an opioid crisis and it is not unique to the City of Cambridge. He stated that preventing addiction and overdose require an “all hands on deck approach.” He stated that there have been groups that have been working on this issue for many years around the city.

He noted that Police, Fire, Public Health and Department of Human Services Programs (DHSP) employees are working in collaboration with many community partners. He stated that many city resources are dedicated to this acute crisis. He stated that the crises in the streets, shelters and Emergency Departments are driving us to think about things that can be done outside the box. He stated that ProAmbulance EMS has saved hundreds of lives using Narcan. The Police Department has instituted Homeless Out Reach Program. DHSP has launched a citywide process to address the challenges of the homeless. He stated that the Department of Public Health (DPH) is developing an Overdose Monitoring System which will show hot spots. The DPH is working with neighboring cities and towns on this issue. All of the partners will update the City Council about what is being done. He introduced the Salvation Army video.

Mr. Rossi introduced Marylou Sudders, State Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and asked her to give her remarks. Ms. Sudders stated that it is a privilege to be present at this discussion. She stated that she is a longtime resident of Cambridge. She stated that she is one of Governor Baker’s bipartisan appointees. She noted that opioid addiction was not on the Governor’s agenda when he was campaigning for Governor but noted that everywhere he went, someone would approach him on this issue. She gave basic facts around opioids in Massachusetts. Ms. Sudders said that when Mr. Baker became governor he stated that it would be an issue that would be germane to his administration. She stated that 2 ½ times more people die of opioids than car accidents. She remarked that there is a 57% increase over the course of two years of people who have died from opioid overdose. She said that the Governor is taking a broad public health approach across the Commonwealth and partnering closely with the legislature. She noted that sometime in the next couple of weeks, the legislature will appropriate another \$27 million dollars to help mitigate the crisis. She stated that this epidemic has been long in the making and it will take time to break the trend. Ms. Sudders stated that the Commonwealth will make available the Opioid Death Data quarterly and list data by individual communities because it will take state action and local communities coming together to resolve this. She said that the commitment is multi-faceted over many years across the spectrum. In closing, she added that one thing to remember about addiction is that it is not a lack of will of people trying to deal with addiction, it is a chronically relapsing disease. She stated that treatment must provide continuum. She stated that we need to understand that addiction is a medical disease and ensure that it be treated as such.

Marian Ryan, Middlesex County District Attorney, stated that she brought a map that shows a breakout of serious overdoses across the county (ATTACHMENT A). She distributed a packet of information including fatal overdoses statistics, a multipronged approach to respond to the opioid crisis, H 2083 An Act to Limit Access to Opiates, H 1155 An Act to Regulate NBOMe, A Dangerous Synthetic Drug and H 1243 An Act to Punish Drug Distribution Causing Death (ATTACHMENTS B-1 - B-5). She noted that the Merrimack Valley was very high in incidents in 2012. She stated that as a result an Opiate Task Force was created. She stated that she spent half of every working week in various

sessions, government programs, etc. on this matter. She stated that for the amount of resources that are targeted to this crisis we are not seeing the results that we should be seeing. She stated that there were great accomplishments but the numbers are going in the wrong direction. She stated that they have many good programs in place. They have been training prescribers. She suggested that if we were able to stop the flow of opiates today it would still tax the resources of the Commonwealth to provide treatment for people already in an addictive position. She stated that a typical individual's progression from recreational use to opiates could take years. She commented that the time progression in moving from opiate abuse to snorting heroine could be days. She stated that she wanted to focus on people who were successful, look at the model for the success. One concerning thing is that when talking about large amount of resources, it is important to know what is working. She said that they brought together group of individuals who have made it long term out of the throws of addiction. She stated that after Narcan is used, it is the first response of an addict to find the dealer who sold opioid that was so good. She noted that of all of the people who arrive in the Emergency Department for treatment, the only persons being lectured were the people who came in after a Narcan incident. She stated that when looking at various treatment models the weight of success is low and that is, in part, due to the nature of addiction. She stated that resources must be spent in a way that gives people the best chance to recover. She noted the need to be better educated and the importance of speaking the same language and listening to people who have been successful in recovery and replicating that success. Ms. Ryan stated that they have also been looking at long-term strategies. She said that in Cambridge there have been six fatal overdoses this year. She said that in one situation, a young child was present. She stated that over a period of time, observing drug use is normal to these children. She stated that there is no surprise when years later that same child who witnessed such events shows up in court 3-4 years later. She stated that in order to qualify for Drug Court a person must in the serious throes of addiction. She stated that the most critical piece is that it is about changing the thinking and culture about the prevalence of opiates. She spoke about a program where there is a partnership with realtors because open houses are an avenue for opioid gathering. She stated the goal is to prevent people from becoming addicted, using effective treatment and thinking about generations of young individuals who have been normalized to drug use.

Roanne Sragow, First Justice, Cambridge District Court, stated that she has been First Justice for about 17 years and has been on the Bench for 25 years. She stated that when she first became a judge recreational drugs were more prevalent. She stated that the Cambridge District Court is one of the first courts to establish a Drug Court. She stated that it is a very difficult process. She stated that society is dealing with an epidemic disease. She explained that a defendant comes to Court and is charged. She stated that when the person is placed on probation, the judge will order an evaluation and treatment. She said that this is the end of the judge's oversight. The probation officers across the state are overworked and they are assigned an individual. The purpose of the Drug Court is that services entail treatment process under the oversight of the Court with weekly updates. She said that most are heroin addicts. She said that many of the addicts are desperate to go to Drug Court so they can get treatment and help. She said that they wait in jail until such time that there is an available bed. She highlighted that fact that this is a rehabilitative response as opposed to a punitive response. She told of former drug court participants who seemed to be doing well and later overdosed. These incidents are heartbreaking but there has been great number of success stories.

Judge Sragow stated that an analysis of 150 Drug Courts nationally show that the recidivism rate of defendants who have graduated from Drug Court has decreased 25%. She stated that participation in Drug Court leads to a 20% reduction in drug abuse. She stated that one of the important things is that

delay in access and treatment is one of the main reasons for program drop outs. She noted that she has an addict that has sat in jail for three months waiting for a bed. Judge Sragow spoke of another program called Changing Lives Through Literature. She said that one Drug Court defendant described to this group that a minute does not go by where he does not think about getting high. She noted that he is currently doing very well but this showed her how difficult it is not only to graduate from Drug Court but to also stay clean. She noted that the Chief Justice of the Court system in Massachusetts is trying to establish a Drug Court in every District Court. The Cambridge Drug Court is doing very well but could always do better with more funds.

Councillor Toomey stated that next year we are faced with the legalization of marijuana. He asked Judge Sragow that if in her opinion this would lead to more addiction. Judge Sragow responded that she believes in legalizing marijuana for medicinal purposes only. She stated that she is against legalizing marijuana for recreational use. She stated that when she looks at criminal records of everyone in Drug Court, every heroin addict has convictions beginning with marijuana.

Marylou Sudders stated that she, too, is opposed to the legalization of marijuana.

Vice Mayor Benzan spoke about job training as part of the Salvation Army program. He asked if there is any partnering that is taking place with the Salvation Army. Judge Sragow stated that they have partnered with the Salvation Army. She explained that there is a list of employers that are CORI friendly and the Drug Court has been helping defendants obtain jobs. District Attorney Ryan added that the job training piece is critical but when looking at people with serious addictions, there is a lot of life skills that must be learned before placing a person in a job. She stated that job skill training and education is something that needs to take place at the end of a long road.

Vice Mayor Benzan asked if the pharmaceutical companies are involved. District Attorney Ryan stated it is important to remember that the history of drugs is that they were made to be used for end of life needs. She stated that these drugs have now become mainstream. She noted that they are trying to engage the pharmaceutical companies in terms of legislation and education. She stated that there are a lot of health care providers who write prescriptions and do not ask the proper questions.

Secretary Sudders stated that the US consumes 80% of the opioid prescriptions. She stated that the state is targeting prescribers on education. She stated that in 1989 the concept of the fifth vital sign which is managing pain was introduced.

Vice Mayor Benzan stated that he lives around the corner from Salvation Army and a shelter. He asked what the City of Cambridge can do around the issue of not having enough treatment beds. Judge Sragow responded that Cambridge is only one area where Drug Court participants are being placed, explaining that it is more a statewide issue. Secretary Sudders noted that the more we talk about addiction as a medical disease, the more acceptance there will be.

Vice Mayor Benzan stated his hope that the City Council can seek legislation to increase funding for Drug Courts. District Attorney Ryan stated that this is one of the things that Middlesex does well because of partnerships. She said that Lowell is the only Drug Court that was willed into being by those at the table. She said that while it is a long process, it is possible in partnership.

Councillor Carlone asked the panel if there are elements that come to mind immediately that all cities should be doing something to help in this task. Ms. Ryan stated that they are beginning a program to

train school nurses and athletic directors in the use of Narcan. She stated that there are very practical things that do not cost a lot of money that have been put in place. Those things are the creative ways where they can have impact without waiting for resources.

Councillor Carlone stated that until it is stated what is needed, the discussion will never be had. He stated that the city just had a great homeless discussion and in the end one of the needs was money. He stated that he would like that calculation to be done so that it is clear what is needed. He thanked the presenters.

Councillor McGovern stated that he does some consulting for juvenile courts. He stated that within the last 5-6 years, 90% of the cases he works on are a result of opioids and its effect on families. He stated that every time a child witnesses an overdose, there have also been dozens of times that they have witnessed the parents using drugs. He asked about what is being done to help trauma victims. District Attorney Ryan stated that many times an addict will bring his/her children to live with their parents who are able to financially provide for the children. Councillor McGovern commented that schools play a part in this crisis. District Attorney Ryan stated that truancy issues are related to drug issues. Small community hospitals are delivering substance abused babies which provides developmental supports for the children and mental health issues for the mother. Secretary Sudders explained that there will be a new prescription monitoring program announced later in the week.

Councillor Toomey stated that Mr. McKenna was a speaker at the Salvation Army and he was quite impressive. He stated that the Drug Court is a powerful tool. He said that the legislature allocated an additional \$35 million dollars to address this issue. He said that hospitals are required to report incidents that involve drug abusing parents. He stated that the legislature is doing a lot. He stated that the Governor will announce his plan next week. He explained that one aspect is that women will be voluntarily assigned to a treatment program as opposed to a prison. He stated that the Senate will discuss Fentanyl abuse. He asked District Attorney Ryan if Massachusetts has seen increases in Fentanyl abuse. District Attorney Ryan responded that Fentanyl-related incidents have spiked dramatically. She explained that Fentanyl is legal and it is more powerful than heroin.

Councillor Mazen asked about the context of H1242. He stated that this seems to be targeting the distributor and levying penalties. He asked about enforcement and effectiveness in stemming this crime and asked if this is a silver bullet. Ms. Ryan responded that this is a tool, not a silver bullet. She stated that this targets the facts between the distribution and the death and is intended for extreme circumstances.

Councillor Mazen stated that he would like to understand how this convening modifies and informs the City's process.

Councillor Kelley stated that from a City perspective this is a zoning and support issue. All these uses cannot continue to be placed in Central Square that cannot be supported. He stated that through a special permit process and citing there could be a link to a dedicated support network. He stated his belief that this is where City discussions will be the most useful.

Councillor Maher stated that he has family and friends who have gone through Drug Court. He said that the first time was not successful but the second was. He noted the importance of family support and said that many people do not have the support that they need in recovery. He said that from a personal standpoint, he has witnessed much of this and it is a heartbreaking cycle to go through. The impact on the family and children in the family has been very tough. He stated that he appreciates

the great work of the panel to address an emerging need. He said that as a community we struggle with this issue. He added that the face of addiction has changed over the years.

Vice Mayor Benzan stated that he has confidence and faith in the work of those on the panel and thanked them for their attendance at the meeting.

Mr. Rossi stated that the City has a good working relationship with all of the agencies. He thanked the presenters for their attendance at the meeting.

Claude Jacob, Chief Public Health Officer, DPH now spoke about the long term commitment the CHA has on this matter. His statement is attached as ATTACHMENT C.

He proceeded to a presentation entitled "Public Health Response to the Opioid Crisis in Cambridge" (ATTACHMENT D).

Keisha Antoine gave an over view of the OPEN (Overdose Prevention and Education Network) Program. There are four cities collaborating in this: Cambridge, Everett, Somerville and Watertown. She stated that odprevention.org lists overdoes prevention programs.

Talia Schiller spoke about the opioid crisis in Cambridge. The hotspots are Harvard and Central Square. Many people are coming to Cambridge to use drugs. She noted that the bulk of education is on the website stated above. Medication disposal is being encouraged. *Learn to Cope* is a support group for families with substance abuse issues.

Dr. Mark Albanese, CHA, stated that CHA has been very active on a number of fronts related to the opiate problem. He stated this includes educating prescribers and developing guidelines around prescribing as well as training on Narcan. He stated that one area of treatment that has developed into a vibrant program which is the integration of treatment into a primary care situation. He said that this is a collaboration between the specialty addictions treatment team and primary care providers. He said that a crucial part of this is the counseling that is provided. They have heard about medical and physical aspect of disease but addiction is as much a disorder of relationship as anything else. He said that addiction comes with an isolating and lonely existence. He stated that he cannot imagine what it would be like to prioritize getting the next hit of a drug over taking care of a child. He said that it makes sense that the corrective is providing good relationships with people. He stated that they are the coach and cheerleader in the recovery process. This speaks to the importance of good relationships to conquer the disorder of relationships.

Mark McGovern is program director of Cambridge/Somerville Healthcare for the Homeless. He stated that there is a clinic at the Salvation Army and CASPAR. At the Salvation Army they provide care for mostly sober people. He stated that they provide street outreach. He said that he would like to add that most homeless are not substance abusers. He stated that addicts that have become homeless are so far along in their illness that they have lost everything. He stated that it is hard to get people into detox, residential treatment and highly structured programs that can support someone who is deep into addiction.

Megan Hinds, Program Manager, AIDS Action Committee, Needle Exchange Program, stated that in the past year they distributed 200,000 new needles with over 80% return rate on those needles. She explained that they saw 1200 clients last year. She explained some of the services that are provided

including HIV, HEP-C and other testing. She said that they are seeing a lot more young people and more women. She stated that they have support groups, give referrals, and educate. She said that they have enrolled over 300 people in programs just last year. She stated that they would like to see Cambridge Police use Narcan for overdoses. She stated that she would like the person treated, not the problem. She stated that there is evidence that shows that housing is a significant factor in people being able to achieve long-term recovery.

Kathy Day, Regional Manager, *Learn to Cope Program*, stated that this group meets at the Spaulding Rehab. She noted that Learn to Cope offers support, resources, etc. around the opiate epidemic. She said that while this is not a new problem, it is a growing problem. She stated that they have guest speakers who share stories of hope and recovery. She stated that they were the first parent group to train members in Narcan administration. She stated that *Learn to Cope* has 21 chapters in Massachusetts, 1 in Florida and 1 in Rhode Island. She distributed a brochure (ATTACHMENT E).

Vice Mayor Benzan thanked the presenters and stated that this issue is important because we need to achieve a complete healthy City. He noted that there is a hotspot in Central Square and he did not feel comfortable that the City has a grip on this crisis. He stated his disappointment that no one from the Salvation Army or the Albany Shelter were in attendance at the meeting. He stated that he wanted a short and long term plan in place to address the issue. He noted that housing is critical and he wanted resources deployed today to tackle this problem.

Ms. Hinds stated that new funding has been received for a new outreach program which will allow staff to interface with their clients. She stated that by going into the community she expects to see change.

Commissioner Haas stated that a meeting was convened with all social services and partners in July. The purpose was to think about what can be done differently to have an impact on this problem. It has been an interesting conversation and dialogue. He stated that their social worker has been working to touch people one-to-one. Mr. McGovern stated that they are conducting outreach with one of their Nurse Practitioners with the Police Department, EMTs and EMS as a multi-disciplinary approach.

Vice Mayor Benzan stated that as it relates to Narcan, he would like to ensure that we have the resources necessary to deal with people one-on-one. He stated that he walks through Central Square every day and he is not seeing any benefits. He noted that there are many families that do not want to walk Central Square with their children. He stated that people need to feel safe. He stated that job training is critical. He stated that at the very least he would like the attendees to just walk through Central Square. He stated that he feels that services can be deployed better.

Councillor McGovern stated that we have to have multiple interventions. He stated that it will take a lot of different pieces. He stated that people are dealing with different situations which require different interventions. He stated that this is not about good/bad. He stated that services must be integrated into the community in both a supportive and safe way.

Councillor Mazen asked Ms. Hinds if police presence is the solution we need or not. Ms. Hinds responded that she does not have a solution. She stated that she has not given police presence too much thought. She stated that her organization has a great relationship with the Police Department.

She stated that as it relates to the location of the Needle Exchange Program, they are in that location because that is where there is great need.

Councillor Mazen pointed out that if police presence is the solution, it cannot be the primary solution. He stated that as much as he wants to be serious, being serious has no correlation with getting tough on crime as the primary solution.

Vice Mayor Benzan stated that both policy orders that he submitted were incredibly comprehensive. He stated that he did state the need that people walking through Central Square need to feel safe. He noted that this is clearly spelled out in his policy orders. He stated that he is not suggesting that the approach to be taken is going into Central Square and arresting people.

Councillor Mazen stated that he wanted to understand what the policy orders and Vice Mayor Benzan's comments meant. He stated that he wants a patchwork of solutions that fit together without relying on any one solution.

Mr. McGovern stated that there is focused outreach. He stated that it is difficult to do much when people are out on the street. He stated that providers have conversations with homeless people. They talk about substance abuse and their willingness to get treatment. He stated that they work with the Police Department and the Emergency Department. He added that one of the biggest problems they face is when someone is ready for treatment, where can they go "right now."

Councillor Kelley stated that part of this may be where you are in life. He stated that if you are concerned for the safety of your children, it is a different situation than if you are not. He stated that we need to make sure that the impacted communities get the support services and do not become overwhelmed. He stated that what we are doing now is not working.

Mayor Maher thanked all of the attendees. He added that this is not the end of the conversation but only the beginning. He stated that we have all heard a lot of issues about Central Square but stressed that this is a problem that is not only confined to Central Square.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Councillor Toomey the meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM.

A TRUE COPY:

ATTEST:-

Donna P. Lopez, City Clerk

A list of documents and other exhibits used at the meeting:

Order #16 of August 10, 2015

ATTACHMENTS A - E.