

NOMA  
September 6, 2018  
Monthly Meeting  
Montana Ave Branch Library  
smnoma.org

- I. Call to Order
  - A. Announcements
    1. Reed Park 9/15 - "buy local" event from 11AM-4PM - details on NOMA website
    2. Main Library 12PM-2PM & 6PM-8PM - big blue bus changes - Lyft ride share information
  - B. Proposal for 11th Street Historic District – public meeting
    1. 9/18/2018 Mid City Neighbors at the Colorado Center
    2. 9/24/2018 at Main Library
- II. Board Member Attendance: Nancy, Danilo, Jeff G, Jeff B, Caryn, Jane, Todd, Jim, Steve, Evelyn
- III. Approval of the Minutes from August 2, 2018
  - A. Moved by Evelyn, with Board member attendance to be added; Danilo seconds.
- IV. Treasurer's Report
  - A. \$13,900 in the treasury
- V. Membership Report
- VI. Speaker, Alisa Orduna, Special Advisor for Homelessness, City of Santa Monica:  
What can we expect going forward regarding Homelessness in Santa Monica: What is the City doing, how are they coordinating with other cities and the County of Los Angeles?
- VII. Chair's introductory comments
  - A. Santa Monica voted in 2017 to tax ourselves an extra 1/2 cent for homeless services in LA County. Around the same time, LA voted to increase their taxes to increase the number of housing to help the homeless.
  - B. 1.5 years ago, the chamber of commerce and city manager decided that there should be more discussions around homelessness.
  - C. Let's find out more about our resources in SM and in LA County.
- VIII. Alisa Orduna:
  - A. This can be a delicate issue. It involves values, safety, drug use, and other topics.
  - B. Alisa has a vast background in homelessness including many positions in Philadelphia, and California. She is now pursuing her PHD and is a part of LA Mayor Garcetti's team. Santa Monica is leading the way in homeless issues.
  - C. People experiencing homelessness: City of LA - 31,516; County of LA - 53,195. This is a point in time count conducted in January and it does vary.
  - D. For the first time in 4 years, homelessness has decreased. This is due to more people being placed into housing.

- E. Who experiences homelessness (LA County)? 27% mental illness, 15% substance use disorder, 10% both. Domestic violence accounts for 6%. 2/3 of homeless identify as male and 80% are single adults. There has been a 22% increase in people aged 62 or older while all other age groups decreased.
- F. Majority of homeless have a connection to LA. 65% have been here for more than 20 years. 75% lived in LA before becoming homeless.
- G. How are they experiencing homelessness? 75% unsheltered. 25% sheltered.
- H. Measure H: Building a Regional System
  - 1. Countywide .25 cent sales tax anticipated to generate \$355M per year for homelessness services. LA County wide.
  - 2. 21 strategies focusing on prevention, outreach, interim housing, housing production, & retention.
    - a) 98% 1 year retention rate (?), 40% 1 year retention rate when housing used as an incentive.
  - 3. How do you access these services?
    - a) la-hop.org
      - (1) Report someone in your neighborhood if they appear to be homeless and a live person will review your report.
    - b) dial 211
    - c) LA County Dept of Mental Health 800-854-7771
      - (1) This line is not for emergencies, but you can report homelessness and someone will review.
  - 4. Measure H Results
    - a) 12k were placed into sheltered housing, 8,000 were permanently housed, 6,000 were prevented from becoming homeless.
  - 5. In Santa Monica
    - a) \$5M is being invested. 400 emergency and interim housing beds. 300+ supportive housing units to provide long-term stability for vulnerable residents. 4 dedicated homeless outreach team.
  - 6. Priorities
    - a) Preventive measures to keep Santa Monicans from becoming homeless
    - b) Coordinate care
- I. Other Resources
  - 1. State Funding - Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP)
  - 2. \$500M in one-time state funding to address statewide homelessness crisis
  - 3. \$350M statewide funding for continuum of cares (\$180M for LA County)
    - a) These will all increase interim housing, rental subsidies, clinical outreach, etc.
- J. What can I do?
  - 1. Toolkits available at NOMA meeting
  - 2. Advocate
  - 3. Volunteer
  - 4. Give
- K. Member question: do we know how many of these funds are allocated to permanent housing? Housing should come first.
- L. Member Question: How do you decide who gets housing first?
  - 1. Answer: depending on a variety of factors, other means may be employed before assigning housing. Sometimes, other intervention types are more effective.

- M. Member Statement: Research from The Great Depression showed that vocational training helped to employ more people and lower homelessness. Today's school prepares students for college, but not to make a living.
- N. Member Statement: I was always taught to not engage with homeless. The tool kit instructs us to say "hello" to the homeless. This seems dangerous.
1. Response: The guide is not telling you to engage with people experiencing homeless. It is saying that we should not ignore homelessness.
- O. Chair statement: We have a county health director who noticed that many people ended up in emergency rooms solely to find shelter. The director took some of his budget and allocated it to housing.
- P. Member Statement: Nextdoor reports people being attacked by the homeless. I won't be engaging with the homeless.
1. Response: Please provide this information to the resources indicated. We want to have this information so that we may respond to it.
- Q. Member Question: Is there a housing program established in SM? How many homeless do we have in SM? What is the plan for placing violent homeless people?
1. Answer: Yes. This is provided by StepUp on 2nd street. We have around 1,000 homeless population at last count. Mental health laws can be challenging. 5150 can be initiated by law enforcement to enact a 72 hour hold. After the 72 hours, many become lucid and are discharged.
- R. Chair Statement:
1. In the 70's, mental health facilities were largely abolished
  2. The advent of SSI Supplemental Security Income allowed people a minimum amount of money to live on.
  3. There was a movement by which people that were not a danger to themselves or others would no longer be "warehoused" in mental health facilities.
  4. The state voted to decriminalize some of felonies into misdemeanors
  5. Also, in LA county, we have more people in jail than any state in the country or any other country.
- S. Member suggestion that parking structures be used when available as safe sites.
- T. Bill Parent - Chair of Social Services Commission and Co Chair of The Steering Commission on Homelessness in Santa Monica
1. In the early 2000's, there was a surge in homelessness in Santa Monica. In 2016, there was another spike upward.
  2. Networks like Nextdoor provide a place to vent, but do not effect change.
  3. There are plenty of opportunities to join democratic institutions which focus on solving these problems.
  4. Safe Parking Model: Provides overnight parking spaces for homeless to stay. 150 people in Santa Barbara have designated safe patrolled area to live in their cars.
  5. SM Homelessness Steering Committee. Next meeting 9/12/2018 at 6pm at Roosevelt School. Many professionals get together at these meetings to have these conversations in a constructive manner.
    - a) This year's spotlight is on mental health. That is the place where the need is the greatest and the problem is the most difficult.
    - b) One initiative: Providence St John's has no psychiatric beds and the nearest ones are in Torrance. Can we get them to add resources?
    - c) Chair encourages participation at meetings to help make a difference.
  6. Member Comment: Santa Monica is the 3rd richest city in the country, but everything that you're talking about costs money.

- a) Response: There are higher instances of poverty among the elderly due to high costs of rent.
- 7. Member Comment: Santa Monica has been building unnecessary developments for 20 years. We need to convince the city to make different decisions.
  - a) Speaker's response: LA used to have a housing plan called "Containment" and it centered on having a "Skid Row." Once this area gentrified, homeless began to get pushed out. In the last 7 years, the visible homeless population has moved all over the city.
- 8. Member question: What is "Bridge Housing" and are we considering it?
  - a) Answer: There is an experiment around this idea in Venice. They offer permanent supportive housing, bridge housing, and shelters. Bridge housing is minimal (looks like the locker room of a golf country club) and food is provided. If we build one of those in a neighborhood with a lot of encampments, then people will move into them and begin moving towards becoming self sufficient. This is a new experiment and until we see it work, it is a very hard sell. Some do not believe that it will work.
- 9. Member question: Why do homeless pick the place that they want to be?
  - a) Answer: In places like Santa Monica, this is where the buses end. In places like Van Nuys, different areas like rail yards attract the homeless. This phenomenon of homeless unsheltered "communities" is relatively new.
- 10. In NYC, the city established a "right to shelter" and there are shelters everywhere to support this. In LA, we have a "right to sleep on the sidewalk" (and better weather). We have enough beds for everyone who wants one, but not everyone wants one.
- 11. Member Question: How did the OPCC become what it is? It seems poorly placed.
  - a) Answer: That is before my time.
  - b) Chair response: The board of OPCC talked with residents door-to-door to build the daybreak shelter.
- 12. Speaker: Every 6 weeks, I do a walk and count homeless. A few stories:
  - a) Our main library last year contained 90-110 homeless per day in the daytime. Now that number is closer to 40.
    - (1) Why are people in the library? Because the library provides resources in a safe space.
  - b) SM does not have a tent city because we have enough shelter beds. LA can't do that. There is a huge encampment on Rose and 3rd in Venice. Around 60 people have been moved into shelters, but 60 more have taken their place.
- 13. Member Question: How much does SM's temperate weather have to do with homelessness?
  - a) Answer: It does. You can't force someone off of the street unless they are a danger to themselves or others. This makes it difficult to shelter homeless people from an environmental risk perspective.
- 14. Member Question: What types of legislation can help people make decisions and get themselves off the street?
  - a) Answer: Last year, the county supervisors voted to broaden the definition of who is a danger to themselves. This has led to street medicine, medical exchanges, etc. There are also measures being voted on which give more power to executors of estates.
- 15. Chair Statement: Several years ago, there was more funding for mental health services. It was known as the millionaire's tax. That money has accumulated to billions and has not been spent. The interest alone is in the billions. Why?

- a) Parent:: Part of it is a scaling program. The government doesn't run these programs, non-profit organizations do. There is also a shortage of available doctors to support these efforts.
- 16. We are making a difference. I encourage you to join the Homelessness Steering Committee on 9/12/2018 at 6PM at Roosevelt. I have seen the discussions and the allotment of resources. Join the conversation.

IX. Public Comment

- A. Can we add smnoma.org to the agenda mailing?