

Downtown Neighborhood Association  
Wednesday, September 4, 2024  
Central Library of Des Moines

In attendance: Deb Madison-Levi, president; Luke Ifland, vice president; Jordan Locke, Christine Comito, secretary; Jon Cahill, Doug Selsor, Treasurer [absent: David Jennings, Julie Feirer]

13 community members, including City Council members Carl Voss, Linda Westergaard, Josh Mandelbaum

Deb called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm and introduced Melissa O'Neil, executive director, CISS. Launched street outreach team program in downtown corridor MLK to river, 235 to Gray's Lake. Looking at rates of equality, existing health conditions, gender (women more vulnerable on the streets). Peer support, case managers helping on path to success. Community health workers

June

18% of ppl exited to perm housing in 14 days, 12% prev from entering shelter by reconnecting with family or friends, 1762. 88% exited shelter w/in 30 days. 12% chronically homeless (72 people that are seen every day and CISS coordinates with police, fire dept, Iowa Total Care etc for services)

8% of ppl participated in job training program, saving money to pay for own housing

58% of ppl served increased their income upon leaving shelter w/ non govt subsidies = tax paying citizens.

Recidivism rate extremely low. The 12% who continue to need help are what people see. DNA members very helpful in letting CISS know where help is needed. Many dual diagnosis, mental health challenges within this population.

Transient nature of homeless population – on average 8-9%. Last year 78.5% were from Iowa (11.5% from out of state, higher than usual). 50% of those served come from Polk County, many came from Black Hawk county during a particularly cold spell this year, getting more from Ames due to closure of services there, Warren county has some spillover because of drug testing)

Many rural communities don't have services so people end up in the city where there's more people and more services available. Rural Iowa has vacancies but no emergency shelter. CISS helps with support and brings them back to their support system location.

Data informs trends that CISS can research and address.

Melissa & team visited Seattle to see how their Homeless Command Center, which is located right next to Seahawks Stadium, operates. What can we learn when Soccer Stadium comes in?

Activates area, more activity lessens camping opportunities.

KP, staffer, will be coming to DNA meetings for monthly updates.

Josh Mandelbaum spoke about the ordinances before the City Council. He voted against fining for camping, thinks there are better ways to disincentivize. Already have laws against public urination, intoxication etc.

Sgt McKinney

Calls for service, arrests, cases numbers down over the last month

Traffic enforcement team (loop scoop) 4,689 citations, 972 warnings, 219 arrests. Goes through Sept. Will begin to focus efforts on 6th Ave corridor. Downtown foot patrol will also keep an eye on that. Skywalk had few issues. Keep foot patrol officers on street as long as possible. More issues when it gets colder.

Lauren Luerkens, 1000 Friends of Iowa

Nonprofit dealing with land use issues, moving focus to transportation. Offering a free 10-week course Community Transportation Academy, providing a knowledge base

Sept 25- Dec 4. At Central Community Center on Forest Ave, some sessions on zoom. 10 weeks, Wednesday nights 6-8 pm. Various speakers will cover a wide range of topics in first hour, 2nd hour will be guided discussion. Goal: final presentation to decision makers and lawmakers

Business

Jordan moved Jon 2nd, all approved July 31 minutes. Community member asked if minutes can be shared in print at meeting, yes

Treasurer's report – Doug said we have \$7,770 in checking, \$8,012 cash on hand

Jordan moved, Jon 2nd all approved treasurer's report

Membership

157 current members. Luke sending out renewals to lapsed members. Luke soliciting business memberships

Social–Jon recapped last social and learn

Considering a topic of downtown retail for next social and learn

Logo discussion, will solicit feedback in next newsletter

Oct 12 or 13 – DNA group tour with Iowa Architectural Foundation. \$20 cost per person

Community News– Eggroll Ladies will be taking over Bussin' location at Equitable Building.

Hope to open by Nov 1.

No news on Court Center Building or Spaghetti Works

Hub has Ballet Des Moines now

Kaleidoscope construction waiting for interest rates to go down before making plans.

Adjourned at 7:25