

Belltown Community Council
General Meeting
Wednesday, December 12, 2012

Minutes

1. Call to Order
President Campbell called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.
2. Broad Street Improvements
The board is sending a letter of support of the improvements to Broad Street as part of the Lake-to-Bay Loop.
3. Marty Hartman, Executive Director of Mary's Place
 - a. Marty last came in August to say they would be renovating 314 Bell and reopening it as an overnight shelter for women and children. The improvements have been completed just in time for the holidays. They have partnered with the Union Gospel Mission to operate it. Marty introduced Stacy Cleveland, director of Hope Place.
 - b. There will be opportunities for volunteering to serve dinner, and they can use donations such as diapers, wipes, school supplies, and blankets.
 - c. Tomorrow night everyone is invited to an open house from 5 -7 PM. Bring a blanket or two if you can.
 - d. The shelter will open at 5 PM each night, with lights out by 9.
 - e. Question: How many people will the shelter serve? They hope to have a maximum of 48. The shelter is very basic, with mats, cots and playpens.
4. Sally Bagshaw, Seattle City Councilmember
 - a. What Marty is doing in Belltown is special, unlike anything in any other neighborhood. Thanks to Marty and to Tara from Plymouth Housing.
 - b. Have worked very hard the last several years to bring community together. Working with police, social services, neighborhood leaders. Sally Bagshaw lives downtown on 1st Avenue. Seen big changes, but still see people sleeping on sidewalks, buying drugs during the day, prostitution. Government can't fix everything. Building relationships with community councils, businesses.
 - c. A few years ago, she and Tom Rasmussen were walking down 3rd Avenue. There were needles on the sidewalk right outside Macy's. People going into the payday loans place with no shoes on their feet. They went to the police, the Downtown Seattle Association, Metro, Seattle Public Utilities...how can we make this better? They went to Cleanscapes, who helped to clean alleys for a year at no charge.
 - d. The 3rd Ave initiative expanded to the Center City initiative. Merely pushing bad behavior from place to place doesn't help. Instead, work with social services, parks, and police to identify hotspots. Arrest the dealers, but find way to help addicts – housing, addiction treatment.
 - e. The police only had two options: take them to the Psych Ward at Harborview or King County Jail. They imagined a Crisis Solutions Center – renamed DESC. It

took 7 years to get from concept to reality – opened this summer on Plum Street, half a mile from Harborview.

- f. The facility has 32 beds and serves the county, not just Seattle. At this point beds are still underutilized. This gives SPD another alternative. Citizens can call police if they see someone who is not well and needs help.
 - g. The Mayor's office is working with clubs to get rid of promotional handbills, and the clubs have been responsive.
 - h. Businesses have complained about some of the people who frequent Westlake Park. Just recently, the City has sent case managers into the park to talk to individuals and identify needs. They are starting to move people out of Westlake into better situations.
 - i. Question: Plymouth is "home first". A lot of people say that when people are close to the vices, that hurts them. Downtown is where things are available.
 - i. They do want to provide housing throughout the city. There is an effort underway to open a similar facility in Lake City, opposed by a small vocal group of residents. They also need the other cities in King County to pay their fair share. Many people in need end up in Seattle because it is the only place services are available.
 - j. Question: Why is Plymouth building on 3rd Avenue? Couldn't get more bang for buck elsewhere in the city?
 - i. The reason this is the right place is that it is replacing a facility that serves 235 transient individuals every day. This facility gives stabilized, invested residents a home. One floor of retail, 6 floors of apartments. 61 studio apartments. 61 people who are paying rent and invested in their block.
5. Tara Connor – Plymouth Housing
- a. Plymouth has purchased the 3rd Avenue property. Tara has been with Plymouth for 16 years, and the organization has existed for 30 years.
 - b. House people who are coming from homelessness into housing and provide services on-site. We hear a lot of residents – I couldn't get clean on the streets, but now that I have a safe place to be, I can focus on my addiction. Doesn't always work the first time. They constantly work to help people heal. Not solely about getting people into housing and nothing else.
 - c. Question: your website says you don't monitor or anything.
 - i. Tara would love to see where it says that.
 - d. Plymouth doesn't have unlimited resources, so they have separate facilities for when people get to a point where they don't need 24/7 monitoring. There is a very rigorous evaluation before they are accepted. Have re-housed more than 90 people in similar facilities to this one, and only in two instances have people gotten into trouble.
 - e. Question: you said budgets are tight. Why do you keep locating facilities in one of the most expensive neighborhoods?
 - i. A lot of neighborhoods fight it very strongly. A lot of services are downtown. The people who will be in this building already live downtown.

- f. But if you put everyone in the same neighborhood it makes it easier for those who would prey on them?
- 6. Sgt. Paul Gracy
 - a. There is a letter circulating that insinuates the SPD is saying Plymouth Housing is the problem. The SPD could not and would not say that. They work very closely with all groups to try to bring community together. They have worked closely with Plymouth in the past.
 - b. Direct patrolling is when there are a couple of officers assigned to an area all day. Pike/Pine has always been a problem, and likely always will be. Don't know the answer there. Getting people into services is the right thing. Getting them into housing is the first thing.
 - c. Question: Have called 911 before to report drug activity, but it does not seem to be effective in addressing the problem.
 - i. Be vigilant, call 911. Don't give up. Eventually the offenders get tired of going to jail.
 - d. These problems are not unique to Belltown: Sgt Gracy gets the same questions at meetings in the International District and Cascade. Years ago, few people lived downtown. They would go home at 5 PM and no one cared what happened on downtown streets at night.
 - e. Every few days, SPD identifies new hotspots and stations officers there all day long.
- 7. Asset-Based Community Development training - Eric Likkel

They are applying for a "Small Sparks" grant from the City, and the event will be open for free to anyone in Belltown. They are aiming for February 9.
- 8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 PM.