

Attention Homes Emergency Town Hall
Friday, July 31, 2020
3:00 - 4:30pm

Reason for Meeting Being Called

On Thursday, 7/23/2020, we were made aware that a tenant of 1440 was involved in an incident at the Circle K in Boulder. It is our understanding from the arrest affidavit that there was a physical fight over a bicycle, which resulted in the death of another person. The person who passed away is unrelated to Attention Homes.

The tenant, Brian Farrar, was booked into the Boulder County Jail just after midnight on Friday, 7/24/2020. Bond was set at \$1,000,000. Attention Homes immediately started the eviction process of Brian to ensure he did not return to the building.

According to the affidavit, this was an isolated incident, and no other residents or AH participants were involved in the altercation.

Panelists: Chris Nelson (CEO), Kristine Edwards (COO), Andrew Burwick (Board Chair), Fiona Bertell (Executive Assistant)

Chris Nelson:

- Submit questions and comments via Q&A chat box
- We acknowledge that zoom is not ideal format so please understand if kids or dogs interrupt
- Introduces panelists
- Brief explanation of Attention Homes' services and the methodology of the Attention Homes Apartments
- We are here today to acknowledge this horrific crime that has affected the entire community, Attention Homes' residents, and staff. We are here to ensure this never happens again
- If we cannot answer every question here today, we will follow up with you. If there are questions we will not be able to answer, we will let you know why we cannot answer due to confidentiality and fair housing laws.

Andrew Burwick:

- I have served on the Attention Homes board for 5 years and am a resident of Mapleton Hills Neighborhood. My family and I have lived in Boulder for 17 years. We are addressing the current circumstances with the focus and gravity that they require. We are working with the staff of Attention Homes to communicate with stakeholders and the community more broadly. Also as we continue to assess and identify areas for improvement. As we move through this we will remain focused on the organizational mission to help youth transition into successful adulthood. We understand that under the circumstances, many people have more questions and concerns about the programming at Attention Homes.

Q&A:

- **Q:** How are AH youth dealing with this? And what kind of support is needed from the community?
 - Some tenants have gathered to talk about how they can be better ambassadors for the community
 - Tenants have expressed fear and concern
 - This is an isolated incident and the tenants are not a danger to the community, but tenants are worried about how this will look for them. They are scared to be associated with this crime.
 - Later on, we will move to the conversation of how does the community embrace these young people? How do we make them an intricate part of the community?
 - When the time is right, the community can help us heal and build bridges
- **Q:** In light of the recent incident, are there specific changes to your operating policies you are intending to implement, and if so, what are they?
 - This project has many partners involved. We are the service provider, Ross Property Management as the property manager, the city of Boulder, Boulder County, Division of Housing around both our intake, programming, and policies with leases
 - Working with Boulder Police Department to evaluate calls from the building and looking at data to have a clear picture on how we can respond best
 - Additional training for staff - not just in terms of how can we avoid this behavior, but also how can we support tenants through these types of

tragedies?

- Our staff are incredibly competent and this is brand new for our staff to deal with this type of horrific event.
- Constant evaluation - Looking at everything we do to ensure that our policies and actions address the seriousness of this and look at where we can do work to ensure the safety of our tenants and the community. We are not totally sure but will follow up with those answers.
- There are background checks conducted at 3 points, but we are looking into our screening/tenant selection process more deeply.
- We can't say that if someone does or does not have a criminal history they are more or less likely to commit a crime, but we are looking at what are the indicators we can look at.
- **Q:** How many tenants do you have?
 - 39 at this moment.
 - We are in the process of Brian being evicted from building so that he cannot return. Although there is a high likelihood he will not be released.
- **Q:** What do you know about the victim?
 - We do not know much. They were not connected to Attention Homes.
 - We have made ourselves available to the victim's family if desired.
 - We understand there were some witnesses. We do not think at this time they were connected to Attention Homes. We may find out more later.
- **Q:** I know the community members are concerned about image, have other neighbors expressed concern or negative comments about the residents being located in this neighborhood?
 - Yes - from the beginning there were neighbors opposed to this project's location.
 - We utilize emergency response for welfare checks, as well as mental health crises. We are working with law enforcement to understand the depth and frequency of those calls.
 - As scary as it is for neighbors to see lights and sirens, it is scary for residents as well.
- **Q:** How many residents have been charged with assault while living with us?
 - One tenant of the building has been charged with assault since we've opened.
 - We do not have that exact number right now. There is no requirement for tenants to report tickets/charges that happen off site to Attention Homes.
- **Q:** I understand from Boulder Police Department there have been 137 emergency calls within 6 months of operation, including the following: welfare checks, reported stabbing, reported sexual assault, theft/robbery, and an

overdose of a guest.

- We continue to look at the data of emergency calls to determine which calls were for what.
 - We will analyze all our calls to ensure we are using this resource appropriately.
 - Stabbing call: this was a misreported incident.
 - Accusation of sexual assault: no charges after investigation.
 - Theft/robbery: I do not have information on that call.
 - Overdose: A guest of the building who was visiting a tenant had an opioid overdose.
- **Q:** How long had Brian lived at 1440?
 - Since late Nov. For a number of months he was doing a good job. We did not have prior incidents with him, although he was involved in a fight with other residents off site.
 - **Q:** Was there a connection between residents/Attention Homes and the most recent Longmont crime?
 - No. We do not know that person and to our knowledge our tenants did not know them. If we find out there was a connection, we will share that.
 - **Q:** What type of services/mental health support do you provide and how have they been disrupted due to COVID-19?
 - Covid has created real challenges in how we do our work. Building community and developing relationships is a core component of our philosophy. With Covid this has been harder to do.
 - Recently we have opened up more traditional counseling types of services, but a lot of that had been happening remotely.
 - Remote counseling has challenges - does the young person have a computer?
 - We continue to adapt.
 - **Q:** What kind of trauma training is offered to staff?
 - We do internal trauma training multiple times/year.
 - We also bring in folks from outside to facilitate.
 - Weekly we are talking about trauma/trauma informed care in staff meetings.
 - **Q:** How many people are at this webinar?
 - 106 at this point.
 - **Q:** Is there support the neighbors can provide to residents?
 - Residents have expressed desire to feel more connected to the community so we want to find a way for them to build relationships with the neighborhood.

- If you pass residents, smile, say hi, engage in conversation if you feel inclined. We've had instances where residents say they don't feel welcome.
- Tenants want to organize a downtown boulder clean up day, plant flowers, etc. as opportunities come up, neighbors can join to support.
- **Q:** Attention Homes has a long history of successfully providing daytime services and smaller overnight services to younger folks, are we considering expanding our staff who are experienced with young adults and familiar with a larger project?
 - We have been working with this age group (18-24) for 10 years and did hire Transition Specialists for this age group in particular.
 - Yes we are always looking to add more experienced staff.
 - Our staffing patterns are 24/7 and we brought on a 3rd party security company to monitor the building. We are looking at how we can ensure this is most helpful (i.e. do grounds sweeps more often, etc.). We have a front desk person always on so that they can enforce guest policies and be there for questions and emergencies.
 - Our job is very much to have enough people in the building that we can have a relationship with. A Program Manager is there full time. Admin office is connected (have been off site since COVID). Also many partners come into space - Clinical Director, Clinical interns, Mental Health Partners, Clinica, E-Town, etc. to ensure many trusting adults are constantly in space.
- **Q:** There are so many success stories, and I appreciate you are addressing this, but please share with us some of the highlights so that we can keep this incident in perspective?
 - A number of successes - young people have enrolled in college, increased their income, already moved out of this supportive housing and successfully living independently.
 - Success is relative - for some it is keeping a job for a month, for others it is addressing their mental health concerns.
 - This has impacted all of our residents. We have most recently seen success in residents asking "what can we do to improve the community" conversations?
- **Q:** What are you doing to engage with the neighborhood?
 - We are open to a public forum - that was agreed on once a year in the Good Neighbor Statement of Operations, if city council is environment I'd be happy to discuss that.
 - We want to communicate transparently/openly and can do better. We are

committed to improving our communication with the community to build that trust.

- **Q:** How many tenants live there? What is age range?
 - 39 tenants are currently living at 1440 Pine St.
 - 18-24 years old is the age range.
- **Q:** From what I understand this dispute was over a bicycle; are residents allowed to have bikes, cars, skateboards, etc.?
 - Yes they are allowed any mode of transportation and we have done our best to get bikes into the hands of residents through community partnerships.
- **Q:** There are a number of churches. Have tenants expressed interest in being involved?
 - We are not affiliated with religious organizations, but we do support young people who have a desire to be involved in those communities.
 - We also have strong relationships with local churches so that we can stay up to date on what is happening in those communities.
- **Q:** Do we offer crisis prevention/nonviolent intervention training?
 - Yes we offer crisis de-escalation and nonviolent intervention training.
 - We have a policy not to put hands on program participants, which is a contributing factor to increased 911 calls. We are reevaluating our policies around this.
 - We make our trainings available to residents as well.
 - In addition, we also offer:
 - Family systems training
 - Harm reduction training
 - Cultural competency training
 - Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) training
 - All trainings are available to program participants
- **Q:** What are your plans to communicate changes you are making?
 - We will first and foremost share changes to the neighborhood working group.
 - We will share substantive changes on our website.
 - We have a lot of evaluation to do in regards to what changes need to be implemented.
- **Q:** What evidence do you have that this free housing is helping residents with their addiction?
 - This is not free housing. Tenants pay 30% of their income for rent.
 - One tenant pays a little over \$1,000/month.
- **Q:** How many residents have jobs?

- As of now, 17 are employed. 7 are in school. The remainder are looking into trade programs, employment, and education.
 - We saw a large number of tenants lose their jobs when COVID hit.
- **Q:** Do the overnight emergency personnel have narcan?
 - Yes, not only is it onsite for staff we provide it to tenants as well. Anytime narcan, an epipen, etc. is administered, we need to report to EMS.
 - We provide trainings on the usage of those intervention therapies
 - At this point we have had one administration of narcan.
- **Q:** Do we offer in-house mediation for conflict that arises between tenants? Do we practice restorative justice?
 - We work with the city to address/resolve conflict. If a tenant is unhappy with staff, a 3rd party mediation is brought in.
 - Yes we practice a restorative justice approach. We have a person on our board who was instrumental in bringing restorative justice to the District Attorney's office.
- **C:** As a parent of a tenant I can say she would not be where she is without your services.
 - We are glad to hear that. We know without this type of intervention, many young people die on the streets or are subject to a lot of trauma, assault, etc.
 - Most young people in our programs are thriving.
- **C:** We may have agreed to one open meeting per quarter in the good neighbor agreement
 - Yes, but we are happy to have more/as many as we need.
- **C:** (Chris Nelson): We are looking at moving our Good Neighbor Statement of Operations and neighborhood advisory meeting minutes to a more accessible place on our website and maybe posting a public forum of some type for people to post questions and concerns.
- **Q:** How are staff and board doing amidst all of this?
 - It's tough, but we do have clinical support for staff and residents.
 - Our current Board of Directors has been supporting staff tremendously.
- **Q:** All things considered, how many had jobs prior to COVID?
 - At one point we had 27 employed and a number in school.
- **Q:** What evidence do you have that this housing helps people with addiction?
 - We are not a treatment facility so we are not necessarily here to "help people" with addiction.
 - There is a lot of evidence that without stable housing, substance use recovery is much more likely to not be possible.
 - Supportive housing is an evidence-based intervention to prevent relapse.

Our program is new and it takes time to collect that data, but you can easily find research and data to support that. Chapin Hall recently conducted evidence review online.

- But we do not have a full year of operations under our belt yet to share our outcomes.
- **Q:** How would you describe the sense of community at Attention Homes Apartments?
 - Pre-COVID, it was strong. We were able to bring in food, have social activities, etc. Now, we are doing everything we can to prevent the transmission of COVID so it is tougher but we are doing what we can to continue to instill that sense of community, because we fully understand the importance of that.
- **Q:** Did the January incident result in a death?
 - Yes. It was a death due to an opioid overdose. We do not know which type of opioid was involved. It was the guest of a tenant. It happened on 1/27.
- **Q:** What changes have you made so this doesn't happen again?
 - We are working on that. I do not mean that to minimize, we are doing everything we can to evaluate our current screening practices, policies, interactions, etc.
 - Working with young people on gaining more skills around conflict resolution and emotional management.
- **C:** Thank you for the work you do. I can't imagine how much harder these young people's lives would be without this support.
 - Thank you Judy - very true. We feel privileged to work alongside young people and witness them thrive.
 - Without these interventions, many people pass away or fall into a cycle of homelessness.
- **Q:** If a resident tests positive for COVID, how is it handled?
 - At this point we have not had a positive test for program participants in any of our programs. We have set up isolation areas in our programs if this were to happen.
 - There is a public recovery center.
 - If anyone at Attention Homes Apartments tests positive, we would support that person isolating in their unit. Each unit has their own ventilation so as not to endanger the full building.
 - We have a Continuity of Operations Plan that was widely shared with community on how we will address a positive COVID test.
 - We have access to testing and medical care.

- **Q:** What about other partners? Shouldn't they be on this call?
 - We are the service provider, and cannot speak for other partners, but that does not absolve us from any responsibility.
 - I can't speak to what further communication looks like from those entities but will share that with you when we know.
- **C:** We at OutBoulder will remain committed to Attention Homes.
 - Thank you Mardi. Our community partners mean so much to us.
- **Q:** How can the city help?
 - They have been and continue to be a wonderful partner of ours, so thank you.
 - Moving forward we can look at a public forum to air all this out.
 - Continuing to work closely with the City Council.
- **C:** You have our full support at Boulder County Aids Project, and the transformative work you do.
 - That means a lot; thank you Frank. You do transformative work as well. All the community partners on this block are critical.
- **C:** (Chris Nelson): As we learn more information moving forward regarding this incident, we will share it. We will be meeting with the neighborhood in the next couple weeks. It will be responsible of us to have a larger community conversation on changes we have made.
- **C:** This was helpful.
- **C:** First United Methodist Church remains committed to this project.
 - Thank you we would not be here without your support.
 - First United Methodist Church owns the land this project was built on.
- **Q:** Has there been helpful feedback from any of the residents regarding how they feel their experience has been? I know it's important for them to know they have some voice.
 - We use a positive youth development model which is about elevating program participants' voices.
 - Yes, we are consistently getting feedback about their experience and suggestions from them.
 - We are constantly evaluating what we can do based on that feedback.
- **C:** Please let the youth know they have the support of the community behind them. Prayers from a St. John's member.
 - We do have a lot of support and we have a lot of work to do, so those two things cement in our mind that we can do better and will only benefit the program participants at Attention Homes.
- **C:** You are doing great work and proud that you are here in Boulder.
- **C:** Thank you. Attention Homes is such an important part of the community.

- Thank you. We want to be part of this community.
- **Conclusion:** We are a community and this is a tragic event that this community will need to heal from. I know that a large number of people on this call (i suspect everybody) wants the best for people in this community. I am looking forward to making progress together and am deeply appreciative for all of you taking the time.
- Attention Homes Gala is Saturday August 8. Info on website.