

Neighborhood Advisory Meeting Minutes
09.15.20

Neighbors: Sarah Silver, Judy Nogg, Bill Spencer, Anne Schwarting (GS), Melody Lyle, Nate Fristoe

Guests: Zac Shaffner (DOH), Tricia (Ross Prop. Mgmt) , Brooke Akins (Ross Prop. Mgmt), Carey Weinheimer, Peggy Jessel (Board), Barb Guastella (MHP), Leslie P (onsite property manager)

Staff: Elly Johnson, Fiona Bartell, Chris Nelson, Alex Bergland, Kristine Edwards, Megan Bruce

Tenants: A, Toby, Savannah, Miami

Facilitators: Ron and Susan Kertzner

Purpose: Continue conversation

Chris: Context and history is complicated. Worked with community to address concerns, as project progressed. City council provided motivation and guidance to meet with neighbors

Sarah Silver: Feels sending out an agenda without consulting with them doesn't feel collaborative. Looking forward to hearing what Zac has to say about leases

Zac: We are a funder. Always looking to implement shared goals and best practices. AH is required to follow our guidance and expectations. Housing Assistance Payment Contract (HAP) - tenant pays 30% of their income and then the rest is paid by contract. Not a transitional housing project, it's supportive housing. Supportive housing is harm reduction, motivational interviewing, trauma informed care. Done in a very particular way. Established benchmarks.

Key Benchmarks to Evaluate Supportive Housing: Reduce recidivism, at least 85% in housing do not return back to homelessness. Increase stability amidst tenants.

Sarah: Things supportive housing cannot do or happen?

Zac: Someone not participating in services isn't grounds for being evicted. A key pillar of supportive housing is the rights and responsibilities of tenants. Individuals have a lease. Think of these apartments as an apartment complex, they have a property management company, etc. It just so happens that they have additional services. If someone is playing really loud music or engaging in unsafe behavior, we encourage services. Serious lease violations: violence on property in relation to other residents and staff. AH cannot evict folks without getting DOH's input and collaboration. Prevent emergency services by living in supportive housing.

Nate: If tenants are shooting up drugs outside of AH, what do I do?

Zac: Call Ross Property Management during weekdays and on weekends, call the property and ask why they are shooting up outside the property. Law enforcement is often supportive of supportive housing because then they are using it in their homes rather than on the streets. Point of this intervention is to get them into stable housing to prevent overdoses and reduce harm.

Brooke: We want to be good neighbors and that is not safe behavior. We are meeting them where they are at. We would go outside and address the best they can. If escalated, police would be engaged. We would follow up and send a notice, schedule a meeting, discuss lease violations, they'd be looped into case management to work on a plan, follow up meeting with a plan to encourage services and education. If there are ongoing issues putting people's safety at risk, we would have to move towards eviction. Before eviction, we would engage with Mental Health Partners with mediation and engage with Zac.

Zac: There is a cultural reckoning when certain populations come into contact with police. They have fear of police. Professionals in building can engage with them to have the outcome we all want. Reduced or no use.

Nate: Doesn't feel safe when he has to drive his friend home to feel safe because of people shooting drugs. They yelled at me, hey we live here. They were parked outside for 2 days.

Chris: They did not live at AH. We know this.

Ron: What do we do if this happens again?

Sarah: If friends or partners of a 1440 resident stay on the street or car, how do we handle that?

Zac: We are only responsible for the people who live in that building. Setting clear guest policies. Somebody's partner doesn't have housing and seeing someone who does have housing, let's add them to the lease. Let's look at that. Or setting guest policies.

Ross: 4 overnights guests per quarter. One guest during the day.

Sarah: There's only one person per unit except for two bedroom unit according to GNSO.

Zac: Using guest policy, no trespassing.

Sarah: There's a gap there. If they are not found sleeping in the car, there's nothing the police can do. There's a big hole there. It's not okay to tell us we are wrong or that we are being unreasonable to expect that these guiding principles are upheld. If it's not police, DOH, then who is it?

Zac: The property 1440 owns, they must govern that. It is a hole. DOH and AH doesn't have oversight over it. It's having conversation with city and county. There is no one that has oversight over that anywhere in Colorado. It is a problem that needs to be solved. The tools that AH has are not able to solve it.

Ron: Do we want to problem solve together for this hole?

Tenant: We have a newsletter inside of the apts and the issue of people staying in vehicle in the newsletter. We, as tenants, we have been working on it.

Sarah: Yes, let's talk about that.

Kristine: We don't have control over people not in our programs.

Nate: You engaged. You were ill prepared to embrace the population.

Ron: Let's get away from accusations from both sides. It's a real problem. Let's focus on going forward.

Sarah: If we can make progress on this, then we can circle around on other issues.

Zac: Let's talk about harm reduction next meeting.

Susan Kertzner: Do we want to discuss GNSO?

Chris: Until we can get to a place of finger pointing, it's hard to move forward. I think we need some resolution on how we communicate. Thank you Sarah for your communication today.

Sarah: We are communicating better. We are in dialogue. We are only now beginning to understand the problems. Some of those aren't seen as problems by DOH and AH. We could have a small work group. It could be a neighbor, Carey, a resident, someone from AH, and Ross, then we can talk about people living in camping van. We don't need such a big group. 1. Camping stuff 2. Developing dashboard

Susan Kertzner: Proposal on table. This meeting becomes quarterly. And what if we have two working groups? A dashboard group and camping outside group.

Bill: Concerned for safety of tenants and neighbors. More of a safety issue. Rather than talking about camping, talk about preventing homicide.

A: We can't control people. So many supportive services and groups to engage people

Susan: Do we want to move forward with quarterly meetings and two working groups?

Judy: Appreciate comments from tenants and in favor of monthly meetings so we can be aware of issues.

Susan: Process design team. 2-3 neighbors of AH get together with Susan and Ron and design process moving forward.

Susan: Proposal: Take a two month break and let some subgroups do some work.

Peggy: We need to narrow down the topics of conversation for these work groups. If it's operations and how we operate our program, then there could be push back. There are going to be some subjects that we need to handle on our own and aren't available for consensus from the community.

Susan: Dashboard, safety, camping out.

Sarah: We understand your boundaries. Item #4 in GNSO, community engagement and dashboard, not saying we should tell you what it needs to be.

Judy: First sentence of GNSO, engage community of ongoing development and operations. We don't want to run it but we want to participate in discussions. Who is included in voting?

Chris: We need to revisit that.

Sarah: Let's go be productive.

Ron: Get small group together to process design going forward. We will reach out for neighborhood, tenant, and staff participation.

Carey: Police are able to support. We need to have broader conversations about safety. Camping in a car does not correlate to lack of safety. We need to flesh this assumption out.

Ron: Set guidelines on how you want to work together.