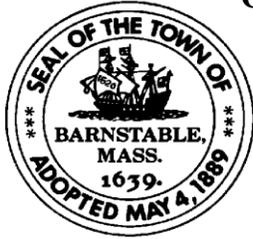


TOWN COUNCIL

Committee to Assess Homelessness in the Town of Barnstable



Selectmen's Conference Room

May 1, 2018

6:00pm

MEETING MINUTES

I. BUSINESS

A. Roll Call:

Members present: Chair of Committee Councilor Jennifer Cullum; Vice President of the Town Council; James H. Crocker Jr.; Councilor Britt Beedenbender; SGT Jennifer Ellis, Barnstable Police; LT Jeanie Challies, Barnstable Police; Mark Ells, Town Manager; **ABSENT:** Councilor John G. Flores; Councilor Debra Dagwan; Member at Large, Deb Krau;

Chair of the Committee opened up the meeting at 6:05; Chair of the Committee, Councilor Cullum asked for public comment, Elizabeth Wurf Bain gave a brief explanation about a meeting she had attended that the topic was homelessness, and wanted the Committee members to know that others are talking about the issues gave the legislative update on H3881; which is the Bill that Councilor Cullum worked on with Representative Crocker, that has not completely died, however needs some more work so Representative Will Crocker has met with other Representatives from different parts of the Commonwealth that are also having issues with saturation, and they too have tried to craft some legislation regarding the Dover Amendment, so they are going to look at ours that was submitted with Representative Crocker and also theirs as well, and maybe between the two of them we may be able to craft something that could at least get to the House floor. There was also discussion regarding sober homes legislation, inspection within 60 days of sober homes opening, and also an inspection on the homes that open for education.

Town Manager Mark S. Ells mentioned June 14th is the next Town Managers meeting, and he will bring this up at that meeting as well to see if there is an appetite to discuss this.

Chair of the Committee asked if our Town Attorney, Ruth Weil has made any progress with any of the lawyers that were suggested regarding this type of zoning or crafting of legislation to protect the towns from saturation. Town Manager, Mark S. Ells stated that Attorney Weil is in the process of retaining a firm that deals with this type of issues such as spacing requirements for group homes, zoning issues regarding group homes, petitions to prohibit group homes, types of enforcements, and as soon as she has anything to report she will be here to report that. Attorney Ruth Weil called the area and looked for a firm that was an expertise on both sides and became recommended, so we are pursuing them.

Chair of the Committee would like Town Manager Mark Ells to reach out to Jack Yunits as well to see if there is anything the County is doing on their end, or if they will be willing to get on board and help us out with this. Councilor Flores is going to be able to report to the Committee when he is here next time after he spoke to the Selectmen's Association, he will brief us on who he spoke to and what they had to say about supporting us.

Vice President James Crocker Jr. asked the Barnstable Police now that the weather is getting better if they are seeing an influx of individual coming here again, or if there are any camps that they have been notified about. SGT. Ellis mentioned she had not been on the streets lately because she has had a change in her assignment. Officer Jenkins is the current Officer that is the only one right now that

is dealing with the homeless. Anytime there is a camp or what looks like an area that is being populated by homeless, Officer Jenkins is right on top of it and moves them out and moves them along. SGT Ellis also stated that there are some individuals that we just can't get through to, they constantly want to be in the woods, and there isn't too much we can do with them other than keep dismantling the camps and moving them each time which is what we do. There is a chronic elderly man who we trespass all the time from the bandstand on the Village Green, each time he is arrested the judge just keeps letting him go, so our hands are tied with some people. SGT Ellis said we are out there and we are staying on top of it. Chair of the Committee asked if Officer Jenkins should come in and meet all of us so that he knows us and we know him. SGT Ellis said that would be a great idea, she will bring him in. Chair of the Committee asked who else accompanies Officer Jenkins. SGT Ellis stated no one, he is alone. Vice President James Crocker Jr. stated that seems a little light from what we had in the past. SGT Ellis mentioned that some of the officers that did it last year were promoted and given different assignments, so we will see who the next police Chief is and who they may assign to this.

Chair of the Committee wanted also to mention that Mr. Hetzel who spoke in front of the Town Council and thanked the police for saving his life and let a very heartfelt letter thanking the Chief and everything that the Impact Unit has done for this Town, so thank you for all you and your officers did and continue to do.

Councilor Beedenbender asked if this Committee since she is new, have we had the Social Service agencies here to speak to us, Chair of the Committee said yes, and then they do not come back, or they do not talk to us anymore after they come here because we ask tough questions and they do not like to be questioned on anything. Chair of the Committee stated that if this Town stopped our Police from doing what the Social Services agencies should be doing they may be doing a lot more and you would not have to. SGT Ellis also stated that we as police have to be real careful about making homeless a crime, because the laws that protect the homeless are much stronger, they have more rights. The Police are always trying to strike a balance between the laws and their rights.

Chair of Committee mentioned that the Towns needs the state to help, the day the mental hospitals and facilities closed it opened the flood gates for the problems that exist today. We need mental health facilities and treatment facilities, something else besides jail for the chronic mentally ill.

Vice President Crocker stated that the reality is if we allow these individuals to enter the woods again and declare these camps their homes, the judges are more likely to side with the individual that is homeless because this is their home and they have stated that; so we need to be diligent and not allow them to enter the woods and set up camp.

Chair of Committee Councilor Cullum stated she does not want to lose the Village Green again to the Homeless like 2 years ago. Town Manager Ells stated we will not go back, he will make sure. Chair of the Committee asked about using officers from other Towns as well so that officers do not get burned out, Barnstable trains other police officers from others Towns regarding how to handle the Homeless, so why not rotate the officers you train as part of the training make it part of the rotation training, that way you are not getting burned out. SGT. Ellis said she likes that idea; she will look into that to see if can be done. Councilor Cullum mentioned that we share officers all the time, but Brewster doesn't have the issues Hyannis has, so they may never use the training, but if they are rotated into it when they are training they can get exposed to it on the job training.

Vice President James Crocker Jr. made the motion to Adjourn; Councilor Beedenbender seconded the motion, all members present voted in favor of adjournment.

ADJOURN: 7:00pm

NEXT MEETING: May 1, 2017 at 6pm Selectmen's Conference Room