

Working Group Attendance

Brian Butcher
Ash Orr
Stephen Prince
Alice Meehan
Colleen Lankford

Public Attendance

Mollie Kennedy - ACLU WV
Liira Raines
Unnamed member of the encampment

Vital Services Working Group Minutes November 18th, 2021 @ 2pm via Zoom

1. Items for Discussion:

***Demolition of two encampments** - Today, two homeless encampments were taken down and demolished by Public Works, located under South High Street and Walnut Street Bridges. Ash was present during the demolition to document.

- Liira stated the camp was leveled. MPD, including Officer Meador, stated items would be held for 14 days, but Liira and photo documentation shows that items were bulldozed through and destroyed.

***Warming shelter** - Training and orientation was held at the Hazel House.

- In order to gain admission to the Bartlett House overflow, all rooms will have to be filled.

- An unnamed individual staying at the encampment stated that he won't be able to make it up the hill to the shelter due to lack of transportation and no safe route to walk. This person does not feel safe at the Bartlett House due to past employee interactions / actions.

- Liira stated that people are unable to get to the shelters, and those who are able to get to the shelters have to hand over sensitive information, which will eliminate those with warrants, lack of ID, or do not feel safe stating who they are. Liira also brought up the concern over LGBTQ+ individuals, specifically those who are Trans.

- Ash and Alice will look into these policies ASAP

***Ruby McQuain bathrooms** - What would it take to open year-round?

- Stephen Prince will go down to see what kind of electrical system is set up in order to make this possible.
- Mention of potential ARPA funds to go towards this, too

2. Concerns to be Addressed:

A. Making sure individuals are aware of / have access to the shelter.

- Confirm requirements for admission: Identification issues (this has not been required in the past)

B. Temperature concerns.

- What if the temperature fluctuates by a few degrees? Will the shelter be closed if temperature creeps up to 41, then re-opens an hour later if it drops to 40?
- Ideally, this committee would like to see the shelters open 24/7, which means staff concerns would need to be addressed.

C. Mobile Shelter?

- Create mobile warming stations under the Farmers Market every night for downtown access.
- Only costs would be heaters and tents.

D. Why are we tearing down homes in the rain and cold, or at all?

3. Next Meeting - Originally set for 12/9 but will have to be rescheduled due to the entire Unsheltered Group meeting. Looking at 12/19

4. Meeting Adjourned at 3:11pm