

**Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee**

**January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm**

**Zoom Virtual Meeting Minutes (Draft)**

**Committee Members Present:**

Chair Ebony Ross (Durham Public Schools Representative; McKinney-Vento Coordinator)  
Vice-chair Rev. Renee Vaughan (County Faith Community Representative)  
Abena Bediako (Law Enforcement Seat (City of Durham Community Safety/Heart Team)  
Chelsea Cook (Durham City Council Representative) (Proxy for Mark Anthony-Middleton)  
Jonathan Crooms (Durham County Veterans Representative) (Proxy for Lois Harvin-Ravin)  
Dorothy Hardin (Durham City Faith Community Representative)  
Calleen Herbert (North Carolina Central University Representative)  
Eliza Mathew (Duke University Representative; Duke Office of Durham and Community Affairs)  
Charita McCollers (Lincoln Community Health /Health Care for the Homeless Representative)  
Keith Chadwell for Bo Ferguson (City Manager)  
Russell Pierce (County Nonprofit Sector Representative)

Tiffany Solomon (Durham City Lived Experience Representative)  
Tracy Stone-Dino (Mental Health/Substance Abuse Representative; Alliance Health)  
Helen Tripp (Durham County Emergency Medical Services Representative)  
Humphrey Truitt (City of Durham Corporate Sector Representative)  
Samantha Smith (Durham County Manager's Office) (Proxy for Shannon Trapp)  
Wendy Jacobs Durham County Commissioners  
Jay Mebane (Durham County Corporate/Business Sector Representative)  
Shiesha Bell (Youth Homelessness Representative: LifeSkills Foundation)  
Ellecia Thompson (Durham VA Medical Center Representative)  
Shannon Trapp (County Manager's Office) (Proxy Attended)

**Excused HSAC Member Absences -**

Angela Holmes (Durham County Lived Experience Representative)  
Jason Brenner (Durham Housing Authority Representative)

**HSAC Members Absent:**

VACANT (DSS Representative)  
Vacant (City of Durham Nonprofit Sector Representative)  
Lois Harvin-Ravin (Durham County Veteran Services) (Proxy Attended)  
Vega Swepson (Durham Technical Community College)  
Natalie Beyer (School Board Representative: Durham Public Schools)

**Staff Present:**

Colin Davis (Homeless System Manager)  
Jefferey Rawlings (Coordinated Entry Administrator)  
Rikki Gardner (Senior Community Development Analyst)  
Melva Henry, Senior Community Development Analyst  
Anthony Henderson (Senior Community Development Analyst)

Malcolm White (Business Services Analyst)  
Keshia Barnette (Homeless System Management Coordinator)  
Tenya Coleman (Deputy Director Community Development)  
Reginald J Johnson (Director Community Development)

**COC Members Present:**

Tasha Melvin (Families Moving Forward)  
Drew Woten (Open Table Ministries)  
Nicole Lamb (Volunteers of America Carolinas)

Sally Wilson (Project Access of Durham County)  
Shanta Addison (Housing for New Hope)  
Rashawn Stanley (Family Promise of the Triangle)  
Ryan Smith (Durham Community Safety/Heart Team)

**Also Present:**

Chris Noblitt Coalition for the Homeless

Sarah D'Amato  
Beverly McGill

**Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee**  
**January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm**  
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Sheldon Mitchell  
Xavier Cason  
Rachael Mitchell

Christine Morrow  
Paul Grabowski  
Natalie Sprague

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**AGENDA**

**Call to Order and Housekeeping**

- Meeting called to order by Chair Ebony Ross at 3:03 pm with quorum.
- Chair Ebony Ross read the goals of the HSAC and reviewed housekeeping rules.

**Public Comments Period**

- No one registered to provide public comment.

**Approval of August 2024 HSAC Minutes**

- Approval of the December and January minutes postponed until February 26th, 2025 HSAC Meeting

**I. Executive Committee Quarterly Report**

**a. Review of Public Comments**

- **Discussion on how to filter public comments along with future comments in committee meetings.**
- **Objective: Ensure effective addressal of community needs.**

**b. System Search and Webinar Platform**

- **Continued search for a new system.**
- **Progress on implementing a webinar platform for HSAC meetings.**

**c. Funding Request Approval (Agenda Item 5)**

- **Approval of the funding request letter to the city and county (no vote needed)**
- **Amount: \$2.4 million to address homelessness (\$1.2 million each from city and county)**

\* A request was made for materials/letters being discussed to be provided to the committee with the agenda.

**II. Upcoming Point-in-Time Count and Youth Point-in-Time Count**

**Date:** January 27, 2025 at 6:00pm **Location:** PNC Triangle Club, Durham Bulls Athletic Park, 409 Blackwell Street, Durham **Parking:** Under the bridge at the corner of Blackwell Street and Jackie Robinson Drive, on the street, or in the south parking deck across from the stadium

**a. Event Details**

- **Start Time:** Doors open at 6 PM.
- **Venue:** PNC Triangle Club at the Durham Bulls Athletic Park.

**b. Special Considerations**

**Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee**  
**January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm**  
**Zoom Virtual Meeting Minutes (Draft)**

- **No Separate Event for Families Sleeping in Cars:** Due to time constraints and location issues.
- **Team Handouts:** Will note where families are sleeping; additional supplies for families include extra hygiene items and small toys for children.

**c. Surveys and Outreach**

- **NC Harm Reduction:** Conducting unsheltered surveys during their normal outreach on Wednesday; will ask where people were sleeping the night of the 27<sup>th</sup>.
- **Youth Count (Under 18):** DCS staff (Durham Public School staff) will provide information via email and conduct surveys for unsheltered families.
- **Youth Count (Ages 18-24):** In discussion to coordinate an event with the Boys and Girls Club; if unavailable, unable to consider the Emily K Center and the YMCA downtown for future events.

**d. Hospital Coordination**

- **VA Hospital:** Set to survey.
- **Duke University Hospital:** Information provided to staff.
- **Duke Regional:** Coordination ongoing; Russ to reach out to contact.
- **Note:** Surveys should not impose on emergencies.

**e. Participation and Support**

- **HEART Participation:** 16 responders replacing Durham Police Department; they have direct access to Emergency Services.
- **Team Setup:** Housing for New Hope to set up teams for the night of the event; working on maps and team assignments.
- **Team Handouts:** Information on locations, team members, and team leads; will be distributed just before the PIT count due to potential changes.

**f. Training and Registration**

- **Team Lead Training:** Recorded and brief; clarifies the role of team leads.
- **Last Training:** Scheduled for January 21 at 6:30 PM.
- **Registration:** Currently closed as maximum number of volunteers reached.

**III. White Flag Update**

**a. Forecast Monitoring**

- **App Used:** AccuWeather
- **Weather Thresholds:**
  - Open 20 overflow beds when temperatures are forecasted below 32°F or below 35°F with precipitation.

**b. Communication and Activation**

- **Lead Agency:** Sends out an email every Monday, forwarded from Open Table Ministries.

**Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee**  
**January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm**  
**Zoom Virtual Meeting Minutes (Draft)**

- **White Flag Shelter Activation:** Announced in the Monday email.
- **Website Link:** Provided for checking shelter activation dates.
- **This Week's Schedule:** Shelter open every night except Friday night, as it does not meet the White Flag requirement.

**c. Shelter Operations**

- **Overflow Beds:** 20 beds available.
- **Check-In Times:** Between 7:00 PM and 8:30 PM.
- **Early Check-In:** Started at 5:00 PM on Friday.
- **Later Checkout:** Coordinated transportation for better access.

**d. Additional Overflow Capacity**

- **Other Shelters:** Families Moving Forward and Urban Ministries also providing overflow capacity on the same nights.
- **Capacity:** Reached towards the end of last week.
- **First Come, First Serve:** Basis for access.

**e. Communication with Neighbors**

- **White Flag Notifications:** Important to communicate when the shelter is operating and when it is not.
- **Entry Point Contact:** Encouraging everyone to call Entry Point regardless of the shelter they are accessing.
- **Referrals:** Required for Urban Ministries and Families Moving Forward overflow beds but not for Open Table Shelter at Yates Baptist Church.

**f. Future Operations**

- **Anticipation:** Continue operating the shelter as long as needed.
- **AccuWeather:** Recommended for checking the 10-day forecast.

**g. Additional Discussions**

- **Turnaways:** Commissioner Jacobs asked if anyone had been turned away; Drew indicated no one has been turned away.
- **Referrals Report:** Colin is running the report – 10 families have been referred, one has shown up.
- **Overflow Max Capacity:** Open Table Ministries (OTM) has maxed twice; Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD) has maxed once.
- **Website Update:** Councilmember Cook indicated that the City website has been updated to indicate White Flag nights. They also mentioned hearing that families often do not want to come to the shelter for fear of Child Protective Services (CPS).
- **Transportation Options:** Charita McCollers suggested exploring transportation options to White Flag at Yates. Transportation was offered in the past.

**IV. Tent Policy and Encampment Response Policy Update**

**Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee**  
**January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm**  
**Zoom Virtual Meeting Minutes (Draft)**

Encampment response policy adopted by City Council and County Commissioners in 2018. The discussion centered on the clarification of issues related to tents and the encampment response policy.

**a. Encampment Response Policy**

- **Trigger:** Policy is activated anytime an encampment (defined as one person) is flagged and complained about.
- **Procedure:** The Unsheltered Coordinating Agency investigates and coordinates with multiple City and County departments to assess, engage, connect, and make recommendations to the City Manager or County Manager on the status of the encampment.
- **Health or Safety Concerns:** Encampments are removed if they pose health or safety issues. The City or County takes steps to mediate and remediate the environment.

**b. Tent Distribution Policy**

- **Current Status:** There has never been a tent distribution policy adopted by the HSAC or the Continuum of Care.
- **Tent Stoppage Incident:** The stoppage of handing out tents was due to an encampment in City Plaza. The City Manager ordered General Services to clean up the location and the Community Safety Department (HEART) was asked to stop handing out tents until a tent distribution policy could be developed.
- **Policy Development:** The Policy and Planning Committee is working on a tent distribution policy to ensure tents are used effectively within the homeless system.

**c. Data on Encampments**

- **Encampment Complaints:**
  - 2022: Approximately 70-72 calls about encampments.
  - 2024: 151 complaints about encampments within the city limits.
- **Increasing Numbers:** As the homeless population and number of unsheltered individuals increase, more encampments are being reported.

**d. Policy and Planning Committee**

- **Discussion:** The committee is discussing how tents fit within the overall homeless strategy and how they can be used to provide temporary shelter.
- **Guidance:** The National Alliance to End Homelessness provides guidance on tent policies. Other jurisdictions, like one in Oregon, have developed tent and tarp distribution policies.

**e. Clarifications**

- **No Tent Ban:** Durham is not a "no tent" city. There is no policy that prohibits tents in the city.
- **Community Development:** Emphasizes the need for a tent distribution policy and plans to work on a valuable option for tent usage within the homeless strategy.

**f. Additional Discussions**

- **Encampment Data:** Durham One Call receives many calls about encampments, highlighting the increasing number of unsheltered individuals.
- **Special Meetings:** Plans for special meetings to finalize the tent distribution policy.

**Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee**  
**January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm**  
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**V. HSAC Funding Request Letter to City and County**

**a. Discussed in Executive Committee Quarterly Report  
Funding Allocation**

- **Support Areas:**
  - Homeless diversion
  - Street outreach
  - Flexible housing vouchers with supportive services
  - Increased emergency shelter capacity
  - Day services
- **Request Breakdown:**
  - \$1.2 million from the City of Durham for diversion outreach and flexible housing subsidies.
  - \$1.2 million from Durham County for shelter capacity and day shelter services starting July 1st, 2025.

**b. Review and Feedback**

- The Executive Committee reviewed the funding request letter.
- Provided insights and feedback.
- The letter has been updated, signed, and will be sent to elected officials by the end of the week.

**Additional Discussion -**

**VI. Preliminary Report Multi-Family Projects- Tenya Coleman**

**Topic:** Funding for multi-family projects.

**Report:** A report will be sent after review by Deputy City Manager Chadwell. Preliminary information is provided.

**b. Project Overview**

- **RFP 1 and RFP 2:** Five projects selected.
  - **Affordable Community Residents Association:** Project for persons with HIV and AIDS (excluded from unit numbers here).
  - **CASA:** Complete.
  - **Crescent Road:** Complete.
  - **Harriet's Place:** Underway.
  - **Hardee Street:** Almost complete.

**c. Communication and Participation**

- **Tenant Selection Plans:** Colin and the Multi-Family Team reached out to projects to get tenant selection plans and find pathways for housing rental units through the CoC.
- **CASA:** Already had 10 households go through the CoC.
- **Other Projects:** Using similar processes.

**d. Tax Credit Projects**

**Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee**  
**January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm**  
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- **Crescent Road and Harriet’s Place:** Tax credit projects with their own set aside for households with 30% or less Area Median Income (AMI).
  - Meetings ongoing to coordinate CoC household inclusion.

**e. Unit Allocation**

- **Total Units Set Aside:** Approximately 59 units.
- **RFP 1:** Specifically for households with 30% or less AMI.
- **RFP 2:** Assists tax credit projects with the NCDHHS Targeting Program for low-income households with disabilities.

**f. Collaboration with Properties**

- **Cedar Trace and Cy Ridge Station:** Outreach to get CoC referrals.
- **Ongoing Communication:** Coordination with property teams for unit availability.

**g. Tax Credit Requirements**

- **Low-Income Housing Tax Credits:** Requires Targeting Program set asides for homeless households.
- **Collaboration with NC DHHS:** Important for accessing tax credit properties.

**h. Example Projects**

- **Hardee Street:** Joint DHIC and Self-Help project with Targeting Program implications regarding the Targeting Program. 14 units referable through the Targeting Program.

**Upcoming Meetings:**

- Executive Committee Meeting, 1st Fridays February 7, 2025 @ 10:00am-11:30am
- Policy and Planning Committee Meeting, 2nd Mondays, February 10, 2025 @ 10:30am-12:00pm
- Performance Management Committee Meeting, 2nd Thursdays, February 13, 2025 @ 10:00am-11:30am
- Next Full HSAC Meeting, 4th Wednesdays, February 26, 2025 @ 3:00pm – 4:30p
- Policy and Planning ad hoc Tents in Durham- Listening Session January 31, 2025 @10:00am-11:30am

- **Motion to adjourn at 4:29 pm by Abena Bediako and seconded by Charita McCollers -**

**Durham Homeless Services Advisory Committee  
January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm  
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**Minutes prepared by Jefferey Rawlings**