

City of Keene
New Hampshire

HOUSING STABILITY AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

September 14, 2022

3:00 P.M.

Council Chambers

Committee Members

Mayor George Hansel, Chair

Councilor Bryan Lake

Natalie Darcy, Human Services Manager

Joshua Meehan

Jennifer Alexander

Doug Iosue

Craig Henderson

Steven Bragdon

Jennifer Seher

Stacie Pickford

1. Approve Minutes of Last Meeting
2. NHCarePath Housing Discussion
3. Collaborative Approach to Public Good Investments (CAPGI) Discussion
4. Update on State of Housing Funding and Programs
5. Committee Report Outline Preview
6. Communications
7. Future Agenda Topics

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

3
4
5 AD HOC HOUSING STABILITY COMMITTEE
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Wednesday, August 31, 2022

3:00 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present:

Mayor George S. Hansel, Chair
Councilor Bryan Lake
Natalie Darcy, Human Services Manager
Steven Bragdon
Doug Iosue
Jennifer Seher
Stacie Pickford
Joshua Meehan

Staff Present:

Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager
Rebecca Landry, Communications &
Marketing Director/Assistant City Manager
Andy Bohannon, Parks Recreation &
Facilities Director
Steve Stewart, Captain, Keene Police
Department
Don Farquhar, Chief, Keene Fire Department

Members Not Present:

Craig Henderson
Jennifer Alexander

8
9
10 **1) Roll call**

11
12 Chair Hansel called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

13
14 **2) Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting**

15
16 Councilor Lake motioned for approval of July meeting minutes. Doug Iosue offered a second for
17 the motion. Minutes approved through unanimous vote.

18
19 **3) Review of Recent Campsite Activity and Available Shelter and Transitional Services**

20 Rebecca said staff are going to discuss what their involvement has been with campsites. Andy
21 Harris, manager of Hannaford's, was not able to be in person at this meeting, but Ms. Landry
22 will be sharing a message from him.

23
24 Andy Bohannon, City Parks & Recreation and Facilities Director started. We put together some
25 notes and background of how we currently manage a campsite when we come upon a campsite in
26 one of the parks. Section 58 33b2 camping within our city ordinances, states no person may
27 camp on city land except with permission from the Director of Parks and Recreation who may
28 permit camping on an occasional groups on a case-by-case basis. The first priority is always

29 safety. Often times we get calls from public regarding a campsite along the trail. Safety is
30 number one for not only the user of the park, but also the staff and the housing insecure as well.
31 Almost all parks and trails are experiencing this at one point or another. Most recently, a site was
32 cleaned up at the Emerald street connection for the rail trail and staff is still working on cleaning
33 it up. Took four people approximately two hours, which equates to eight hours of staff time
34 dedicated to cleaning up trash and debris. Included in that trash and debris was 27 needles. This
35 was right in a very visible location in our downtown. Many of the other locations are not as
36 visible and sometimes we even have sites in our cemeteries. If one was to look at any community
37 survey about Ashuelot River Park, safety is always one of the top issues mentioned and many
38 females report they are not willing to walk alone on the parks and trails.

39 On maintenance level, he had categorized this as a level one. One or two encampments results in
40 response to the report, investigation and determination of what kind of additional response is
41 required. A determination of whether the site is active or abandoned, whether trucks will be
42 needed to access the site, and to gather an idea of manpower required. This information is
43 entered as a task within the work management system, Cartegraph. If the site is active, a call is
44 made to homeless outreach to make a connection and if not outreach is not available, parks and
45 rec staff make the connection. Notice of 24 hours' is provided to the individual and notice is
46 attached right to their tent with a copy of the city ordinance with contact information including
47 resources.

48 Chair Hansel asked Andy Bohannon how many hours is his staff occupied by this. Mr.
49 Bohannon responded that it ranges and is usually heavier in the spring, tapers off a bit and then
50 end of July we see it pick back up. End of the months tends to pick up because individuals have
51 paid the first three weeks and struggle to pay for the fourth week. He was not able to pull exact
52 data, but knows off hand they are six sites they have cleaned up this particular calendar year. He
53 added that they do not have someone that goes out and actively looks for this. If they were to do
54 that right now, there are likely a few that have not been addressed. In Wheelock Park, down off
55 the bike trail headed out towards the highway is a common area and is one that is not maintained
56 regularly. As such, staff do not regularly go unless there is a complaint.

57 Chair Hansel asked if this activity is having a positive result. What happens to the individuals?
58 Mr. Bohannon responded that this year, they have had some of the most positive experiences,
59 actually two within the same week. There was a group of three individuals in a campsite. The
60 clean-up for that site required four pickup trucks full of debris (not personal belongings just
61 debris). The individuals took their belongings and went elsewhere and were not interested in City
62 services. Later, Parks and Rec found a site on the Jonathan Daniels trail and it was those same
63 three individuals. They did pursue assistance from Natalie Darcy and were able to obtain housing
64 for those individuals.

65 Notice states 24 hours, but they will often request 48 hours to connect with individuals. Mr.
66 Bohannon grants that and is very receptive to giving time to allow individuals to obtain
67 assistance. Ultimately, sometimes that does not happen.

68 Councilor Lake asked Mr. Bohannon if he through there has been an increase over the years in
69 the number of people camping.

70 Mr. Bohannon responded yes. The majority is often times from someone new to town and so the
71 conversation relates to where have you been, how did you get here, etc. Common responses

72 received include needing to get away from drug-infested locations, which the campsite allows.
73 Mr. Bohannon will often then point out that camping is not allowed as it is against City
74 Ordinances and works to try to connect them with services. He noted that he has often observed
75 that the tents and sleeping bags used by the individuals are brand new and probably donated.
76 Brand new items, used for a night or two and then abandoned and end up in the trash. It is
77 frustrating and not a good use of someone's good will intention.

78 Doug Iosue asked if Mr. Bohannon would be able to give an estimate of percentage of time
79 people are amenable to services. Mr. Bohannon responded that it is roughly 50/50.

80 Stacie Pickford spoke and thanked others for the work they do. She asked Mr. Bohannon what he
81 thought were the top barriers to the work you do when people do not want to seek help.

82 Mr. Bohannon responded that often these individuals do not want to be in shelter; they want to
83 be outside. His department and staff do not get into past with them. However, sometimes they
84 share anyways. Many have personal reasons why they may not be able or comfortable being in
85 shelter system. If one is to look around site, it is often clear there is a drug issue. Mr. Bohannon
86 thinks services related to drug and alcohol services are imperative. Mr. Bohannon and his team
87 often rely on Kevin MacLean for help on that front as his staff are trained in that, but are
88 certainly not experts. It is common for his staff to receive harassment while cleaning up sites,
89 which he noted was something that actually occurred earlier that day. Mr. Bohannon believes
90 that stronger training, improved services and more community awareness are necessary. He has
91 participated in national efforts to share ideas around methods and ways to address and is always
92 trying and willing to learn more.

93 Ms. Pickford asked what the average length of stay was and whether he had noted that there are
94 frequent repeated stays by the same individual.

95 Mr. Bohannon responded that since these instances are occurring on City property and in a park,
96 the stay is generally short and often noticed within 24-72 hours. Longest he has worked with one
97 individual has been about a week and was due to the individual experiencing delays in lining up
98 services. He stated he is not going to displace someone for one night when services are in
99 process.

100 Rebecca Landry asked whether people give an answer or inkling as to why they choose not to
101 use the shelters and whether he could provide an update on the portapotty.

102 Mr. Bohannon responded that a portapotty was placed in the skate park in mid—June. They
103 worked with company to do so despite their reluctance due to history of damage. By mid-
104 August, it was destroyed. The door was broken off, toilet paper rolls strewn, garbage
105 everywhere, and the toilet seat was damaged. It was removed and lasted a lot longer than he
106 anticipated.

107 Mr. Bohannon added that as for why people decline services, they do not want to be in shelter.
108 They do not want to be under someone's watchful eye and abide by the rules of the shelter or are
109 fearful for one reason or another or due to trauma.

110 Mr. Bohannon was asked if they often encounter children. He responded that yes, they do
111 occasionally encounter that, and there is usually a much more proactive approach where DCYF
112 is often called in much quicker. He noted that parents are often more willing to go and find
113 shelter.

114 Councilor Lake asked if Mr. Bohannon had recommendations for additional city services for
115 those individuals that do not want or cannot take services that might help lessen the impact to the
116 individuals and the environment. Mr. Bohannon pointed out how crucial the mental health
117 connectivity was and the importance of having someone who can navigate and is able to connect
118 to that world to help guide them to a lifestyle change. Behavior management is a significant
119 portion of that and any individual in that role will require a particular set of skills and training.
120 Most individuals they encounter do not want to be there and want to get better, but struggle in
121 knowing the steps to take.

122 Mr. Bohannon added that the trash piece is huge because they are usually in remote sites and the
123 trash is everywhere. The exposed human waste is significant and creates a hazard not just in
124 clean up, but also because it often ends up in our watersheds. If the city was able to help one
125 person or create a partnership with MFS and create those inroads with those individuals, he
126 believes it would make a significant difference.

127 Captain Stewart spoke and stated the Police Department experience was similar to what Mr.
128 Bohannon outlined. Generally, the PD is rarely involved in most of what Mr. Bohannon and his
129 team do. The Police Department has more experience with the bigger sites. Captain Stewart said
130 he has been out there personally and spoken with many of these people and they all have
131 different things that have gone wrong in their lives whether it be substance misuse, trauma,
132 mental health issues, etc.

133 Their resistance to services often lies in their avoidance or lack of agreement with rules, lack of
134 freedom, having been asked to leave previously and no longer welcome. All of these things make
135 it difficult to see where to go with them or how to help them. He noted that in his experience
136 motivation is often lacking. Captain Stewart said he has seen a mix of local people who are in
137 between and down and out and those that just drift into town with no why or reasoning as to how
138 they ended up in Keene. In some other cases, they were sent here from other towns who did not
139 have the resources and have since stayed. Most of the complaints received by the Keene Police
140 Department are relating to the trails and bike paths and due to panhandling that result in park
141 users being uncomfortable.

142 Chair Hansel asked are there any things that City of Keene could help with. Captain Stewart
143 responded that the key is getting at the root of the problems. Doing so, would in turn, address
144 many of the quality of life issues that homelessness impacts.

145 Stacie Pickford asked Captain Stewart how often he comes across individuals who had drifted
146 into town from Cheshire County jail. He responded that while he has seen those instances, more
147 often, it is someone who has been unsuccessful in substance treatment and transitioned to the
148 woods after being asked to leave a shelter like Hundred Nights.

149 Jen Seher asked Captain Stewart is there was a social worker or someone in social services on
150 the team at Keene Police Department. Captain Stewart responded that there is no one on the team
151 with those skills so they rely on referrals to area organizations in those instances.

152 Ms. Seher asked Captain Stewart if something like that would that be beneficial. Captain Stewart
153 stated he could certainly see the benefits of it. The logistics of carving out a specific role and
154 vetting out duplication of services might be a challenge, but he can definitely see the benefit.

155 Captain Stewart was asked by Ms. Pickford if the Police Department finds there are many people
156 camping in their vehicles and how often does that occur or whether that was hard to quantify.

157 Captain Stewart responded that it does certainly happen. It is hard to quantify, but does happen.
158 They bounce around a lot from parking lot to parking lot.
159 Chair Hansel asked the group if there were any further questions. With none, he thanked Captain
160 Stewart for his time.
161 Rebecca Landry noted that Chief Farquhar attended, but would be unable to stay the full-time
162 and introduced him next.
163 Chief Farquhar thanked Ms. Landry and the group for the invitation to attend. In terms of first
164 response, challenges of note are that in these campsites there are no streetlights resulting in dark
165 areas, no house numbers, and no streets. All of these make it significantly harder to find people.
166 The response can be difficult and the remote locations can lead to delays. Timely response is
167 especially imperative with opioid response as time is of essence. If people are mixing drugs, and
168 are administered Narcan, it can cause heart issues and calls can become very complex very
169 quickly requiring sizable resources and become hard on the department. Calls can be difficult on
170 the people involved and the first responders. He noted that in general, most people are happy to
171 see fire department members and are often willing to get help so they rarely run into any sort of
172 physical interactions. Great deal of good will, etc.
173 Chair Hansel asked how many calls are to places that do not have a street address.
174 Farquhar- calls tend to be episodic. There are often highs and lows based on dosing of opioids
175 and when a strong dose comes in, we see more calls. Anecdotal average is 4-6 calls/week and
176 sometimes it jumps to 6-8calls per weekend. He noted that he could certainly provide some more
177 specific numbers. Chair Hansel requested percentage and data.
178 Councilor Lake posed an open question as he has heard quote a bit of commentary around
179 needles. He asked if there were publically available needle disposal.
180 Chief Farquhar responded that the Food Kitchen has needle depository boxes in the bathroom. It
181 sometimes does have the paradoxical effect of people using in the bathrooms. Therefore, risk
182 management is important. He added that IF we could find a meaningful or actionable way to
183 concentrate where those needles are, that would be very helpful. Chief Farquhar also suggested
184 strategies to reduce accidental needle sticks.
185 Chair Hansel asked if he could also provide needle sticks numbers, which Chief Farquhar agreed
186 to provide.
187 Stacie asked what the recommendation for public is if they come across needles. Chief Farquhar
188 noted that as a private citizen, he would not touch it and call the police department or fire
189 department. Longer standing encampments make it difficult because of terrain, natural debris
190 resulting in hidden items and inadvertent sticks.
191 Ms. Pickford asked if it was fair to say there has been a significant increase in the past two years.
192 Chief Farquhar responded that he has only been in his role from early spring to today. That
193 noted, it does seem to be moving up and in speaking with senior officers, it is fair to categorize
194 that this it he most intense that they have seen. Chief Farquhar was thanked for his time.
195 Josh Meehan asked if there a regular census of the encampment performed. Chief Farquhar
196 responded that the City is not doing any sort of census.
197 Chair Hansel opened the floor to Natalie Darcy to speak on transitional services.
198 Natalie Darcy discussed the process. When individuals come in, they are taken in and their staff
199 tries to understand where they are coming from. Families are of utmost concern because there are

200 kids involved. First option is to go to shelters and look for space. If space is available- a time to
201 meet with shelter staff is scheduled and they meet with them. If no space is available, they
202 arrange for hotel stays. Occasionally, the individuals are able to pay for a portion for their stay.
203 During the month of August, there had ten different hotel rooms through three different hotels.
204 There was no space available in the shelters. Unfortunately, they lost one hotel. The manager
205 was so upset by an incident that he will no longer rent rooms to City of Keene clients because of
206 that incident. Ms. Darcy noted that she had another call from a manager today that was upset
207 because a tenant brought in an unregistered dog. There is often an extra charge for the dog and
208 they make that clear to them. Hotel agreements are given and outlined to the clients and clients
209 are required to sign. Unless the hotel says it is ok, they generally do not allow pets because of the
210 damage that some of the pets can/have caused. Ms. Darcy noted that they cannot afford to lose
211 any more hotels. Unfortunately, when these things happen, it reduces capacity for all.
212 Her recommendation would be find more transitional housing where mental health issues can be
213 addressed. Hotels do allow some individuals to have certified service animals as long as they are
214 certified. This does not include therapy pets.
215 The main issue right now is hotels are being booked out on weekends because of colleges and
216 weather/leaves. This significantly limits options available for people in need of housing.
217 Chair Hansel noted that he would make sure her recommendations are noted.
218 Ms. Landry asked Ms. Darcy with incident previously mentioned, what was the nature of the
219 abuse to the property? The individual had been found unconscious and had been huffing gasoline
220 in his hotel room and had an open container of gasoline in the hotel room with him along with
221 two unauthorized guests.
222 Elizabeth Dragon wanted to response to Jennifer's earlier questions. Ms. Dragon noted that the
223 City has been having conversations on how to incorporate mental health services and police
224 services. Chief Russo has been working with MFS the past few years and while we had a great
225 relationship between the organizations, we have not been able to move that initiative forward as
226 social workers are lacking. Conversations have been happening on how else we might address
227 that. Another thing they are looking at is a position in Natalie's office, in which the job
228 description is being revised to include outreach. City has a great a partnership with Kevin and
229 Southwestern Community Services. We are trying to make stronger connections with the three
230 shelters and the City.
231 As part of that, we have revised the MOU to talk about ways to strengthen that. They want
232 information on how are we determining where the individuals are coming from, where they go,
233 what services were received, etc. The City asked the State to become part of their homeless
234 reporting agency. Natalie has agreed to take on the training and confidentiality agreements to
235 take that on.
236 Other thing is that The State of NH had sued regarding the opioid issue. This council knows we
237 received 15% of that as part of that reward. It is not a lot of money. We complained that it was
238 not a lot of money. As a result, they put Ms. Dragon on the commission. This commission is
239 looking at giving out grants for the larger awards. She has asked Chief Russo to look at the grant
240 application. Chief Russo just retired today and Sept 9 is the deadline so it will not be for this
241 round. City of Laconia has had an outreach person that works at the PD but they follow up on all
242 the substance use calls and connects them with resources as well as provides tracking on them.

243 We are far from having a proposal to put forward, but these are things that are in the works and
244 have funding sources have been identified.

245 Chair Hansel thanked Ms. Dragon, notified that he will have to leave, and asked Ms. Landry to
246 take over as chair.

247 Ms. Landry discussed that Andy Harris is store manager for Keene Hannaford Store and came to
248 speak to the City recently. Overall message has been that his approach has been to try to help the
249 person rather than just call the police for someone stealing.

250 Rebecca Landry read two e-mails from Andy Harris testifying to his experience and views as
251 manager of Hannaford's involving people stealing, destroying property, and using panhandling
252 money to buy alcohol as well as a positive outcome including four current employees that were
253 previously homeless. In his message he also suggested signage to dissuade the public from
254 giving funds to panhandlers.

255 Ms. Landry asked if anyone had any more questions or comments.

256 Ms. Pickford asked if there is a city ordinance concerning panhandling. Captain Stewart
257 responded that there is no City Ordinance regarding panhandling. He noted that there is not
258 likely a legal one in the country as most of the courts regard that as free speech and protected
259 speech. Only way to address it is in regards to the manner in which they are panhandling
260 (intimidation, aggressive, etc.).

261 Ms. Seher asked if there was or if Ms. Darcy could provide an average cost that the city pays for
262 hotels rooms per month/ week. Ms. Darcy responded that it ranges from \$1100-\$1300/week.
263 That cost is in addition to the monies that the city puts out for shelter services.

264 Ms. Landry opened it for public comment.

265 Joy, member of party for social liberation, 36 Ellis Court. He stated that it seems quite clear that
266 you have laid out all the issues, difficult of access, difficulty of legally addressing the issues,
267 community services challenges, and the unacceptable conditions, such as shelter, lack of freedom
268 and how anyone of us would be unwilling to accept those conditions if they came from our
269 mortgage company. Believes that we should extend the same humanity to these people and we
270 ought to recognize that the only proper way to address this is to expand housing options for these
271 people. If you do not have a home to go to at the end of the night and know that your rights will
272 be respected and addressing the basic needs of individuals, we will never address this issue as a
273 community.

274 Tom Julius, Gilsum, NH but employed in Keene for 40 years and is the chair of Monadnock
275 Interfaith Project (MIP). They are focusing on housing as a topic in our community. Would like
276 to thank the city of Keene for posting signs directing people to public restrooms. MIP brought
277 this topic to City of Keene some time ago after hearing people's concerns. Public signs are
278 emblematic of the City's willingness to respond and the impact that comes, as people are willing
279 to focus on solutions. Good things happens when local government are responsive to ideas that
280 come from citizens. He thanked everyone for leaning into this and getting it done. He expressed
281 his tremendous gratitude for the responders working with unsheltered people in wholehearted
282 and compassionate ways.

283 He noted that he has been a member of church in Keene for many years and one of his fellow
284 members who knows MIP is working on housing ideas sent an e-mail in the past few weeks. He
285 obtained her consent to read it, she says, "I am gathering information for resources currently

286 available for people living out of their car. Son will no longer have a place to live after 9 days.
287 Had a major expense for his car and has concluded that living out of his car is his best option.
288 Son has various mental health challenges. Our son has been successful on several fronts, full
289 time job, car, case manager he trusts and a good family relationship but had not been able to find
290 affordable housing in this area. He has been at the top waiting list for a studio apartment for
291 months. Would appreciate legal, safe and sanitary places he could park at night while waiting for
292 housing.”

293 Mr. Julius points out that this is an experience of real people in our community. Exemplifies for
294 need of variety of housing options from safe tenting, to shelters, to coordinated services and
295 access to more housing. He urged all to keep thinking at levels of scale from concrete doable
296 solutions to coordination of civic, county, and social service groups addressing housing stability
297 and thinking in the results, focused systemic ways to do something.

298 Ms. Pickford asked if he had found a place to park. Ms. Landry encouraged Mr. Julius to connect
299 the family with Ms. Darcy, to which he replied that he had.

300 Mike Hall, administer of Keene Unitarian Universalist Church. His background is in substance
301 use, through his work has gotten to know many affected individuals, and strongly believes it
302 would be a good idea if the committee works towards getting a social worker to liaise between
303 the city and people. Mr. Hall mentioned that Phil Wyzick is leading committee on trauma
304 informed communities. He urged more interaction. He urged the group to be careful, that unless
305 we know otherwise, assuming that it was unsheltered people who damaged the portapotty. He
306 appreciates learning more of what the city does and does want to ask to get back to stability of
307 housing. He pointed out the numerous concrete things that we can do and while some may be
308 temporary, some are more long-standing and permanent.

309 Ms. Landry responded that the group has met 4-5 times. Moving forward they will begin to look
310 at recommendations and start talking about the ways in which we would like to move forward to
311 make recommendations to city council. She made note that it would be broader than just
312 covering housing issues for unsheltered folks.

313 **4) Communications and Supporting Documents**

314

315 With no further comments from the public, Ms. Landry noted that they did receive messages
316 from Ms. Seher with some interesting resources that we all look at. It was included in the agenda
317 packet. Would encourage folks to look at that.

318 Have also received a number of post-cards. Copies are available in the agenda packet and
319 available to the public.

320

321 **5) Future Agenda Topics**

322

323 Ms. Pickford wanted to suggest access to mental health, building more family housing, NIMBY
324 (not in my backyard mentality) and how to fight that.

325 Mr. Iosue asked if someone was putting together an outline of ideas and recommendations for a
326 summary in writing and beginning in the September meeting. Ms. Landry said she has been
327 collecting them and taking notes and will submit a list next month representing topics covered
328 and high points.

329 Josh Meehan added while talking about housing solutions, discussions include the housing first
330 model, which is recognized as most successful method with low barrier access. Think it might be
331 helpful to learn a little more about housing first as we consider housing solutions. Ms. Landry
332 agreed to include that.

333 Ms. Seher added that everyone should keep minds open to being person first and talking to
334 people where they are at. Housing first can mean figuring out who the person is first. Most
335 people who are struggling do not want to be identified as someone with a mental health issue. If
336 we are really talking about people at risk, we need to figure how to talk about people in the most
337 respectful way possible with the fewest barriers possible.

338 Ms. Landry agreed and noted the suggestion.

339

340 Next meeting is next Wednesday. Given it is only one week away and Ms. Landry would be
341 away at a conference, she wondered if the group would entertain next meeting date no sooner
342 than second Wednesday of September?

343 Ms. Landry noted that September 14th will be the next meeting date unless a quorum is not
344 possible.

345

346 **6) Adjournment**

347

348 There being no further business, Co-Chair Landry adjourned the meeting at 4:25PM.

349

350 Respectfully submitted by,
351 Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

352

353 Reviewed and edited by,
354 Rebecca Landry, Assistant City Manager/Communications & Marketing Director

355

From: Stacie Pickford <staciebaez22@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 5:26 PM
To: Rebecca Landry
Subject: Transitional Supportive Housing - Families in Transition

<https://www.fitnh.org/housing/transitional-supportive-housing/>

Sent from my iPhone

From: Stacie Pickford <staciebaez22@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 5:27 PM
To: Rebecca Landry
Subject: Recovery Housing - Families in Transition

<https://www.fitnh.org/housing/recovery-housing/>

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Stacie Pickford](#)
To: [Rebecca Landry](#)
Subject: ABOUT SHELTER FROM THE STORM
Date: Thursday, September 8, 2022 5:09:33 PM

This Shelter From the storm info .
<http://www.shelterfromthestormnh.org/html/about.html>

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Stacie Pickford](#)
To: [Rebecca Landry](#)
Subject: Homeless in Worcester: Does the city need more shelters? There's chronic homeless count of 40-60 in 2nd largest city in New England, keene has 60 persons living unsheltered to date
Date: Thursday, September 8, 2022 5:19:40 PM

This article mentions the Worcester county "quality of life task force" while Keene's population is much smaller a smaller team could be developed rather quickly. Kevin McLean would be a great person to follow up with as he successfully organized the same kind of model in another area and I would say the team effort to reduce harm is necessary for those living unsheltered and the community

<https://www.diocesewma.org/homeless-in-worcester-does-the-city-need-more-shelters/>

Sent from my iPhone

ATTENTION: AD-HOC

A CONVERSATION ON WHAT NIMBYISM IS AND HOW TO IDENTIFY IT AS A BARRIER TO OPPORTUNITY

KEY ITEMS

- Over 60% of the residents in NH have voted for additional affordable housing, they see the need and support it.
- Despite false belief systems, multi family's DO NOT bring abutters property values down.
- MIXED income populations(not only 55+) (not just low income) but a nice affordable mix of incomes. Benefits all.
- NIMBYism(Not In My Back Yard) is real . People will assume a multi unit in a single family neighborhood will crunch the school system.The same people have forgotten that this is housing for teachers too.
- In May 2022, I worked on a final project with a graduating class at KSU. You wouldn't believe the talent that would stay local, if housing was available and affordable. This is talent that includes teachers!
- Another example would be of a veteran that served 20 years in the armed service, fought for our freedom, and after another 30 years retired from his manufacturing job. Unfortunately, he could not enjoy retirement due to the building he lived in being bought out and flattened..(is now staying with a friend on their couch)
- Locations within 10 miles from medical care, downtown businesses,and employment opportunities, are attractive when providing housing for more workers.
- Traffic fears are inevitable but other examples of travel would be, riding bikes, getting in exercise on the way to and from work.
- NIMBYs will complain about the street traffic and make it comparable to a New York City rush hour.
- With mixed income options it lessens the stigma against multi family housing. Increases opportunities and is an equitable housing option.
- Multi family properties that are built on hills will be disputed because of flood fears by neighbors. Understandable ?Sure! As long as developers are providing a solution ie. Water catch basins, drainage solutions, crushed stone and replacing trees and water sucking shrubs (rhododendrons, Mt laurel etc) all love water and add picturesque landscape.
- There is our youth in our community. The only way to increase opportunities for our future and youths' future is to break down barriers and start providing now.
- Housing is a human right. No person shall be considered less than or greater than to be given shelter.
- In 1988 the last item to be amended by the fair housing act is discrimination "based on familial status."
- Familial Status is the makeup of a family. " having a child under 18

From: Stacie Pickford <staciebaez22@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 8, 2022 5:25 PM
To: Rebecca Landry
Subject: September is national suicide month
Attachments: 2020-state-fact-sheets-new-hampshire.pdf

Remember the lives that exist here today are not gone , and the ones that have passed on are never forgotten ! There is data relative to those whom have died while unsheltered in the state of NH. It is sad that the second leading cause of death for kids as young as 10 yrs old in our state is suicide. We(community as a whole need to reach out to our youth and let them know they have support)!!!

Sent from my iPhone

Suicide Facts & Figures:

New Hampshire 2020



On average, one person died by suicide every 31 hours in the state.

Almost six times as many people died by suicide in New Hampshire in 2018 than in alcohol related motor vehicle accidents.

The total deaths to suicide reflected a total of 5,199 years of potential life lost (YPLL) before age 65.



Suicide cost New Hampshire a total of **\$222,439,000** combined lifetime medical and work loss cost in 2010, or an average of **\$1,134,894 per suicide death.**



Leading cause of death in New Hampshire

2nd leading

cause of death for ages 10-44

4th leading

cause of death for ages 45-54

6th leading

cause of death for ages 55-64

16th leading

cause of death for ages 65+

Suicide Death Rates

	Number of Deaths by Suicide	Rate per 100,000 Population	State Rank
New Hampshire	279	19.27	12
Nationally	48,344	14.21	

CDC, 2018 Fatal Injury Reports (accessed from www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html on 3/1/2020).



Suicide Facts & Figures: New Hampshire 2020

Suicide Prevention Programs and Initiatives

- The NH State Suicide Prevention Council (SPC; <https://bit.ly/2OqoBfM>) is housed within the NH Dept. of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services, Bureau of Community Health Services. Meetings are posted online and open to the public. NH law (RSA §§ 126-R:1 through R:3) charges SPC with implementation of the state suicide prevention plan; see <https://bit.ly/2q4AyMO> for the latest (2017-2020) plan.
- The NH Suicide Prevention Annual Report is released each fall; reports from 2012-2018 can be accessed through the SPC website. Reports are produced by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - NH and the Connect Suicide Prevention Program, SPC, and the Youth Suicide Prevention Assembly, an ad hoc committee of individuals and organizations that meets monthly to study the issue of suicide and look at prevention and postvention across the lifespan.
- NH law (RSA § 193-J:2) requires, effective 7/1/20, that each school district and chartered public school develop an evidence-informed policy to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to suicide, including educating students on warnings sign and help-seeking strategies. It also requires at least 2 hours of youth suicide prevention training annually for faculty, staff, and designated school volunteers. NH law (RSA § 186.11) also requires the state board of education to provide youth suicide prevention information to all public and private schools to facilitate the delivery of appropriate courses and programs.
- NH law (RSA § 330-A:10) requires, for licensed mental health practitioners, that at least 3 hours of the continuing education units for biennial renewal be from a national evidence-based or best practices training organization in the areas of suicide prevention, intervention, or postvention and how mental illness, substance use disorders, trauma, or interpersonal violence directly impacts suicide risk.

Get Involved

The **AFSP New Hampshire Chapter** brings together people of all backgrounds in communities throughout the state to fight suicide. We help fund research, offer educational programs, advocate for public policy and support those affected by suicide.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact:

AFSP New Hampshire
newhampshire@afsp.org

Become an Advocate

AFSP's New Hampshire advocacy volunteers build relationships with public officials and advocate on behalf of sound suicide prevention policy.

Visit afsp.org/advocate to sign up!



American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention

603 Life Skills

Stacie Pickford Baez

September 7th, 2022

Attention: Rebecca Landry

Attention: Ad Hoc housing stability committee

Firstly, I wanted to take time to say thank you for including me as a person with lived experience to the table. Throughout our time together I have spoken a lot, but not in relation to my personal experience. I wanted to do so before the end, so here it is;

I was born in 1982 at Monadnock Community Hospital in Peterborough NH, to a couple that had big dreams and the best intentions for my life. I also made their son, Thomas, who was 6 at the time, a big brother. Unfortunately, my parents could not work through differences and my life in early childhood years was split between visiting times and two homes. My mother remarried and at the age of 6, I was blessed with the births of two more brothers who were 'Irish twins' (born a year apart).

Life was great as a kid even with the adjustments that were made in my early years. I had 3 siblings, 2 healthy parents, my church family and I was active in sports, got decent grades and I had thoughts, dreams and had developed goals to achieve them.

That was until I hit pre-teen years and (not due to natural life changes) but due to untreated health issues my mom had combined with her second divorce and in her inability to cope she turned to illegal substance use and alcohol. Those were the choices that were made in her most desperate hour that had the most negative affect on me and my siblings. We witnessed domestic abuse, more than once from short term boyfriends, and with respect to privacy that was only a slice of the abuse we would experience within a couple of years.

Eventually the unhealthy lifestyle broke our family apart. My mom became homeless, after owning 3 homes. I luckily had the stability of my father to fall back on and went on to reside with him. My oldest brother went to my gram's with my mom, and my two younger brothers went on to live back and forth between my mom (when she was stable) and primarily with their father and new step mother. I tried to adjust to the full time living with my father, which I started off strong with a spot on all star softball and AAU basketball, I tried to embrace the support of my paternal side of the family. Through all the trauma before residing with him, and through all the silent suffering, and trying to be so strong, I eventually broke out into rebellion. That led to 7 youth placements within 4 ³/₄ years from the ages of 13 through 17.5

I was shuffled through the system like a game of cards. My education was not anything I could brag about, and when I aged out I was left to fend for myself with no transition at all. I went to live on my own in Vermont shortly after a quick stay with my mom, who was at this point caught up in the spiral of alcoholism. I had a terrible time trying to enroll myself into high school, and felt discouraged that nobody could figure out any of my credits. Not knowing how to fight for myself I quickly settled for my GED and went on to work two jobs and pay for my own apartment, all while studying for my paralegal. Paying for each individual credit.

My fun time was taking my little brothers when my schedule would allow. I loved every chance to spoil them, and to set an example of what can be. If only I had held that momentum and left my worries of the world with GOD. Instead I made what I thought were friends and experimented with drugs and alcohol and went on a fast track to the deep, dark hell of addiction, and fell victim to the same evils that created hate in my heart so many decades ago. I became everything other than what my parents dreamed of the day they welcomed me into this world, at least those were the thoughts that kept me down and in the anger, hurt and disappointment that anchored me to being a victim. I eventually made my way out of the darkness and learned how to fight for myself. I had periods of recovery and continued my education with a focus in business administration in 2014, while staying at home to care for my very own "Irish twins" and eventually evolved into a concrete survivor. And that happened over time with the man I'm married to today, and the three beautiful children we created. While we experienced homelessness at the beginning of 2018 after losing our lake house to a sketchy sale by owner deal, we found Shelter From The Storm (SFTS) in Jaffrey NH. The shelter is a private 501c3 that is sustainable through fundraising, grants and community. There are apartments by private landlords that are given to the shelter guests to use. Which works great when you're feeling like a walking label, I felt included in my community without the judgment. Through scattered apartments throughout town vs a shelter building everyone knows makes a huge difference in confidence, privacy, and helps to peel off the "label" and less stigmatized. Or to feel like the cause of NIMBYISM. During our 8 month stay we saved 70% of our income vs the 30% that was required. (we knew we were getting every dime of savings back upon exit so we thrived to make the best of it, considering rent and utilities are included for the 8 months. We met with our life coach Kevin McLean (who was mentioned several times during the last meeting!!) once a week going over housing applications, and battling old derogatory marks on our credit reports. We discussed goals and he gave me the extra boost to go out and get my recovery coaching certificate through Reality Check. Overall within 8 months we fixed our credit, saved over 10,000 Jose got his Commercial Driver License and I started my journey in the peer support field. We exited the Shelter buying a multi family home. The tenants that lived here when we bought the place are still here and I did not need to raise their rent to succeed in my own life. Jose has since become a successful business owner and I am a fierce advocate for those experiencing homelessness, substance use disorders, I am a trauma informed peer support specialist, recovery coach, speaker for the National Coalition to end Homelessness, a Granite State Leader, and speaker for NAMI NH. On the local everyday life I now am contracted through SFTS to work with guests. My advocacy in the courthouse is batting all wins no losses at this point. I have appealed multiple housing denials for families that have resulted in their permanent housing, I helped in the reunification of a mother and her 3 children, fought evictions and have literally smoked attorneys in the courtroom by using our current NH laws in place. Sorry if it appears I'm bragging, just want to make it a point that all my struggles in the past lead to the heart of everything I do today. God brought me to it and he also carried me through it and to where I am today. My oldest and youngest brothers couldn't find their way out of the dark. Thomas died by suicide in 2010 and my baby brother Ryan died by suicide in 2017, 6 months after my mother passed away from pancreatic cancer. All three of these deaths could have been prevented with support, awareness and community support. All too often a person feels their assets and how much they own materially makes them who they are. Imagine to fall so hard and to feel like you have nothing when you do not have a home. That very thinking goes from "having nothing to feeling like you're nothing". I think with the whole person approach as to what a community can do for the unsheltered NOW, it is equally important to create more multi-family housing, and transitional shelter housing. My brief outline of my life is not specific to examples of unsheltered homelessness but

here's a few ; I slept at Ashuelot park pregnant with my first son, Or the time in my darkest days when I was brought to NYC , things happened there that I still can't talk about. I have slept in unlocked vehicles once at a dealership to sleep peacefully without getting hurt. There was one time I tried sleeping in a tent , man was that a mess I could not set it up and I was horrible at starting fires . This is part of my life, and why I attached the following to be reviewed with this letter on the next agenda.

Thank you all for your compassion and interest in coming together to build solutions!

Stacie Pickford Baez