



May 21, 2015

# Update on Dignity Village

140814B

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# Background

- Currently few government-run homeless camping facilities in U.S.
- Staff directed to:
  - research and identify other such facilities across the country
  - determine what guidelines, rules, and regulations are being used to manage such facilities
- Conduct stakeholder meetings
  - Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry (ACCHH) Management
  - Dignity Village residents
  - Oversight Board Workgroup
  - Solicit input on rules, regulations, and guidelines to best govern the Property
  - The final document would be submitted to the Gainesville City Commission and used as a basis for future discussions.

# Meetings with Dignity Village & Empowerment Center Staff

- Two formal meetings held with residents of Dignity Village
- Conducted random individual interviews with residents of Dignity Village
- Met with the staff of Empowerment Center to discuss the role and relationship between the two entities

# Additional Meetings Held

- Gainesville Police Department Chief Tony Jones and Captain Hemerlson
- Gainesville Fire Rescue Chief Jeff Lane and Chief Joanne Rice
- Dignity Village Community Advisory Committee
- Alachua County Assistant County Manager and Community Support Services Staff
- Tacachale Superintendent and the facilities staff

# Telephone Interviews

- Annette Gilley
- Arupa Freeman
- Randy Stacey (provided written comments regarding governance at Dignity Village)
- Cliff Smith, City of St. Petersburg
- Katrina Young Assistant Manager, Walmart Corp.
- Cheryl Meadows, Retired Social Services Director, Cincinnati, OH

# Internet News Articles (25+ read/reviewed)

<http://www.businessinsider.com/the-jungle-largest-homeless-camp->

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/09/kansas-city->

[http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/24/us-usa-chicago-homeless-idUSKBN0K11UY20141224nderground-homeless-camp\\_n\\_3045943.htmlIn-us-2013-8?op=1](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/24/us-usa-chicago-homeless-idUSKBN0K11UY20141224nderground-homeless-camp_n_3045943.htmlIn-us-2013-8?op=1)

<http://www.foxcarolina.com/story/28339208/judge-could-decide-fate-of-downtown-homeless-camp-tomorrow>

# Document Review

- The 2013 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress (US Department of Housing and Urban Development)
- The 10-Year Planning Process to End Chronic Homelessness in Your Community: a Step by Step Guide-U.S. Interagency Council on Homeless
- Empowerment Center Minutes, Notes, and Reports
- Alachua County 10-year Plan to End Homelessness
- List of Tent Cities In the United States
- List of Tent Cities in Florida

# Document Review

- Change in Criminalization laws since 2011
- Office on Homeless Year 1: FY 2011-2012 Quarterly
- City Commission Updates on Empowerment Project
- Final Report of the Homeless Task Force: Austin, Texas July 2014
- License Agreement between City of Gainesville and the ACCHH
- Incidents Investigation Reports Gainesville Police Department
- Other related documents



# Document Review

- FL Administrative Code Chapter 64e-16
- Dignity Village, Portland, Oregon
- Pinellas Hope, Pinellas County, Florida
- St. Louis, Missouri, City Council Minutes

# Summary of Findings

- In U.S., fewer than five government-sponsored camps
- Cities and Counties throughout the U.S. are dealing with the issue of unsheltered homeless
- Due to substantial increases in population and related issues, homelessness has been criminalized through ordinances and regulations causing a significant backlash from advocates
- One-half of the homeless population in the U.S. is in five states:
  - California (20% or 113,952 people)
  - New York (14% or 80,590 people)
  - Florida (7% or 41,542 people)
  - Texas (5% or 28,495 people), and
  - Massachusetts (4% or 21,237 people)

# Summary of Findings

- Central themes emerged focused on three areas:
  - Safety (crime, drugs)
  - Sanitation
  - Health
- In order to address these primary areas of concern, several ideas regarding regulations, rules, and standards were discussed
- Involvement of advocates in the Dignity Village planning process is critical
- Specific camping guidelines are needed
- Residents are beginning to self-govern

# Pinellas Hope

## St. Petersburg, Florida

- Tent camp just north of the City of St. Petersburg established in 2007
- Sited on wooded land owned by the Catholic Diocese of St. Pete; Run by Catholic Charities
- City of St. Petersburg contributed \$250,000 in first year
  - City crews helped clear land
- Initially held 250 single-person tents set up in rows, expanded to about 270.
  - At capacity since its opening.
- The camp's residents range in age from 18 to mid-70s, and no families are allowed.

# Pinellas Hope St. Petersburg, Florida

- Costs approximately \$2.6 million a year to run the camp
  - Approximately one-half comes from donations of food and other items
  - Receives over \$1M in public funding annually
- The camp has a food hall, bathrooms and showers, a laundry room and a few computers for residents to look for jobs and prepare resumes
- Effectively regulates who passes through, which in turn helps keep out illegal activity and violence

# Nothing Lost Outreach (NLO) Pensacola, Florida

- Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida
  - Camp is hidden
  - Not governed
- A 501(c)(3), non-profit outreach program that serves the homeless population throughout the greater Pensacola area
- Privately run by and a ministry of the Pensacola Baptist Church community
  - Receives additional funding through some business partners

# Nothing Lost Outreach (NLO) Pensacola, Florida

- NLO provides services to the homeless population by transporting them from sites and camps all over the city to the NLO camp
- Services provided every Sunday from 2:00 to 6:00 P.M., are haircuts, showers, clothing, a hot meal, tarps, bug spray, and a church service

# Dignity Village Portland, Oregon

- A city-recognized, legal encampment of homeless people falling under the definition of “campground” as defined by Portland city code
- Located on city-owned land near Portland International Airport
- Governed by bylaws, elected community officials, or board of directors, an elected chairman and other corporate officers



# Dignity Village Portland, Oregon

- Offers crude but functional cooking capabilities, social, electric, and sanitary facilities
- Membership is by application review
- Dignity Village states that membership is not limited “based on religion, race, sex, sexual orientation, handicap, age, and lifestyle choice, previous (criminal) record or economic status”
- Incorporated in Oregon as a 501(c)(3), membership-based, non-profit organization

# Dignity Village Portland, Oregon

- Continued membership is dependent upon following the community's rules of behavior, contained in their membership agreement as outlined below:
  - No violence toward yourself or others
  - No illegal substances or alcohol or paraphernalia on the premises or within a one-block radius
  - No stealing
  - Everyone contributes to the upkeep and welfare of the village and works to become a productive member of the community
  - No disruptive behavior of any kind that disturbs the general peace and welfare of the village

# Dignity Village Portland, Oregon

- Resident services provided:
  - Showers
  - Sanitary facilities
  - Private and communal food and flower gardens
  - Communal cooking and refrigeration facilities
  - Emergency transportation
  - Access to education
  - Access to counseling

# Opportunity Village Eugene, Oregon

- Opportunity Village utilizes Andrew Heben's Transitional Village model as outlined in his book, *Tent City Urbanism: From Self Organized Camps to Tiny House Villages*
- OVE includes 30 tiny houses, each about 60 to 80 sq. ft. This model is supported by a common kitchen, restrooms, workshop, and gathering areas
- OVE functions as a self-governed community with oversight by the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
- The village opened in August of 2013 and has since received national media coverage in sources like CNN, PBS, MSNBC, and Buzz feed, and has helped inspire similar grassroots initiatives throughout the country, such as OM Village in Madison, Wisconsin

# Emerald Village Eugene, Oregon

- Emerald Village provides an innovative approach to permanent, affordable housing based on a similar village model
- The project is currently in the planning stages and will include around 15 tiny houses (120-250 sq. ft.) with a common gathering facility
- Residents at Emerald Village can have limited equity in their homes through a Limited Equity Cooperative (LEC)
- LECs allow residents to own some equity in their home, but if sold, the sale price is limited to that which they originally paid. Many benefits related to home ownership are provided through the LEC, while spreading the risks and costs across residents or shareholders

# Recommendations: Dignity Village, Gainesville

## Short Term

- A. Develop and advertise immediately a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Management of Dignity Village or waive the RFP process with a focus on contracting with local homeless advocates and service providers.
  - o This recommendation should occur immediately as the City determines further policy direction.

# Recommendations: Dignity Village, Gainesville

- B. Convene a team to address the design and budget development of Dignity Village, to include representatives from the following:
- Gainesville Fire Department
  - City Codes staff
  - Alachua County Health Department
  - Budget representative
  - Gainesville Police Department
  - Contract nonprofit
  - Housing Department and
  - Residents from Dignity Village

# Recommendations: Dignity Village, Gainesville

- C. Decide if Dignity Village will house persons who only want to live outdoors, or if it should become a transitional housing model for homelessness, or a combination of both.
- On the following three slides are visual representations of Andrew Hebens' three models for creating an organized tent encampment or tiny house village to create productive, clean and viable housing for the homeless.

*Tent City Urbanism: From Self Organized Camps to Tiny House Villages, Andrew Heben*



# Tent City Urbanism

a **SANCTUARY CAMP** model

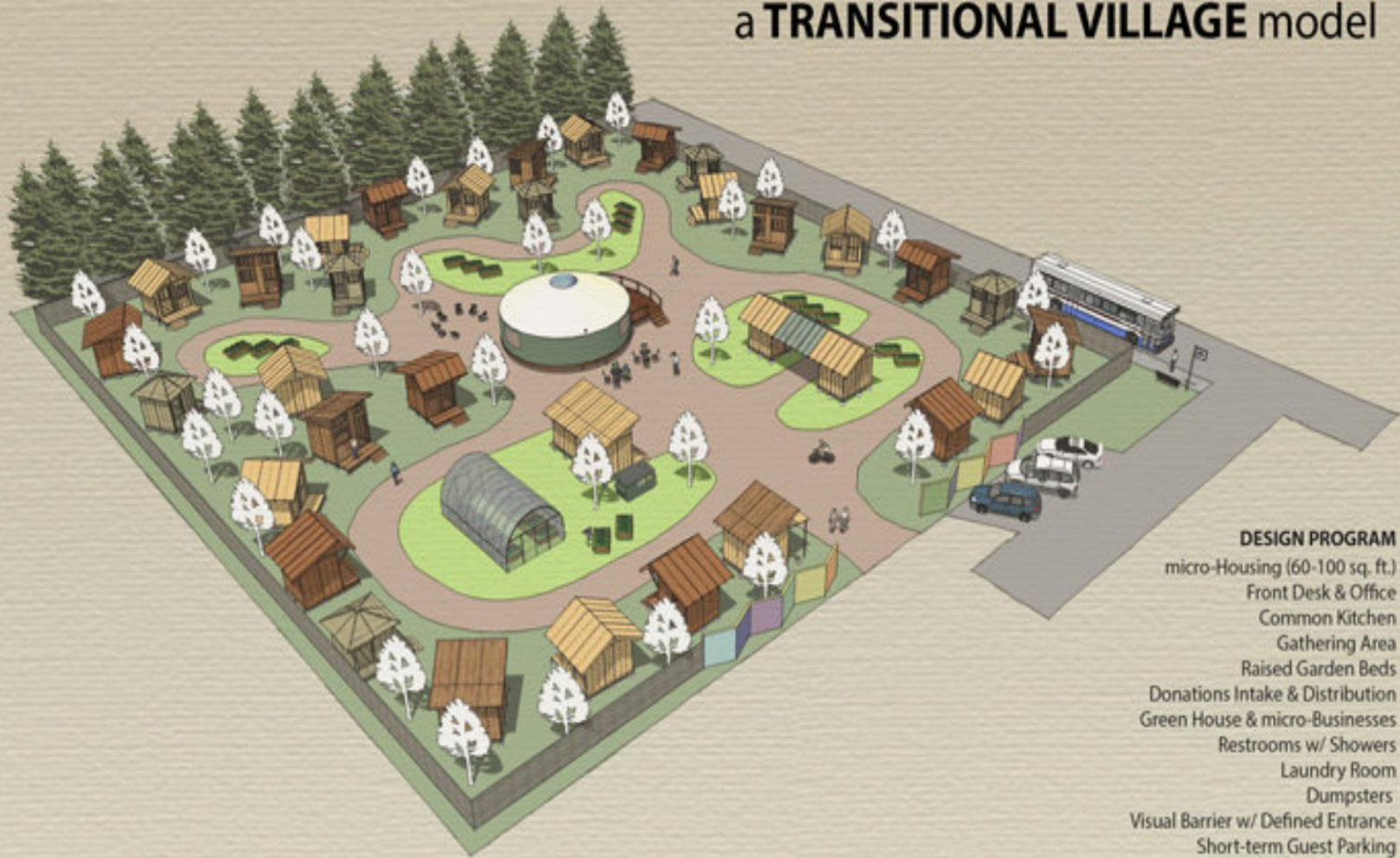


## DESIGN PROGRAM

- Tent Platforms
- Front Desk
- Cooking Area
- Gathering Area
- Raised Garden Beds
- Fire Pit
- Donations Intake & Distribution
- Visual Barrier w/ Defined Entrance
- Portable Toilets
- Hand Washing Station
- Dumpsters
- Short-term Guest Parking
- Bus Stop Access

# Tent City Urbanism

a **TRANSITIONAL VILLAGE** model



#### DESIGN PROGRAM

- micro-Housing (60-100 sq. ft.)
- Front Desk & Office
- Common Kitchen
- Gathering Area
- Raised Garden Beds
- Donations Intake & Distribution
- Green House & micro-Businesses
- Restrooms w/ Showers
- Laundry Room
- Dumpsters
- Visual Barrier w/ Defined Entrance
- Short-term Guest Parking
- Bus Stop Access



# Tent City Urbanism

an **AFFORDABLE VILLAGE** model



## DESIGN PROGRAM

- micro-Housing (120-160 sq. ft.)
- Common Kitchen
- Gathering Area
- Restrooms w/ Showers
- Laundry Room
- Raised Garden Beds
- Dumpsters
- Resident Parking
- Bus Stop Access

# Recommendations: Dignity Village, Gainesville

- D. Implement an intake process that involves rules and camp ground regulations (See Appendix B for Suggested Dignity Village rules/regulations.)
- E. Decide if the City Commission will enter into a contractual agreement with the County to manage Dignity Village.

# Recommendations: Dignity Village, Gainesville

- F. Develop a distinct and separate address for Dignity Village.

Currently it is believed that Dignity Village is an extension of, and part of the Empowerment Center. This is not the case. There have been multiple Gainesville police and fire calls, and because there is not a distinct address for Dignity Village, separate from the Empowerment Center, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine from a record review which calls were directed to Dignity Village. Officials at the Empowerment Center indicate they would welcome a distinction between the two entities. **(Done)**

# Recommendations: Dignity Village, Gainesville

## Long Term

A. The City, County and Service Providers should revisit the Ten Year Plan to end Homelessness and develop a revised long- term homeless policy

Thank you

Questions?  
Comments?