



Legislative #140814

Update on Dignity Village Review

Staff Charge

- Research and identify other such facilities across the country to determine what guidelines, rules and regulations are being used to manage such facilities.
- Conduct stakeholder meetings (ACCHH Management, Dignity Village residents and the Oversight Board Workgroup and local business owners) to get input and feedback on rules, regulations and guidelines that would best govern the property.
- Develop a final document to be submitted to the Gainesville City Commission as a basis for future discussions

Research Camps

There are not currently many government-run homeless camping facilities in the United States, staff was directed to research and identify other such facilities across the country to determine what guidelines, rules and regulations are being used to manage such facilities.

- **Dignity Village**, Portland,OR
- **Tent Cities Three and Four**, Seattle,WA
- **Nickelsville**, Seattle,WA
- **Camp Quixote**, Olympia, WA
- **Safe Ground**, Sacramento, CA
- **The Village of Hope and the Community of Hope**, Fresno, CA
- **New Jack City and Little Tijuana**, Fresno, CA
- **Temporary Homeless Service Area**, Ontario, CA
- **River Haven Community**, Ventura, CA

Stakeholder Meetings

- Held two formal meetings with residents of Dignity Village as well as conducted random individual interviews with residents
- Met with Empowerment Center staff to discuss the role and relationship between the two entities
- Met with the Community Advisory Committee

Stakeholder Meetings

- Met with GPD Chief Tony Jones, and Captain Helmerson
- Met with GFR Interim Chief Jeff Lane and Assistant Chief JoAnne Rice
- Met with Alachua County Community Support Services Staff and Assistant County Manager
- Met with Tacachale Superintendent and Facilities Staff

Stakeholder Input

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

Online News articles - Reviewed over 25

- <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-jungle-largest-homeless-camp-in-us-2013-8>
- http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/09/kansas-city-underground-homeless-camp_n_3045943.html
- <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/24/us-usa-chicago-homeless-idUSKBN0K11UY20141224>
- <http://www.foxcarolina.com/story/28339208/judge-could-decide-fate-of-downtown-homeless-camp-tomorrow>

Research Resources

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

Research Resources

- 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 GPD
- FL Administrative Code Chapter 64e-16
- Other related documents

Research Subjects/Sources

- Dignity Village in Portland, Oregon
- Pinellas Hope in Pinellas County, FL
- St Louis City Council Minutes

Summary of Initial Findings

- There are less than five government sponsored camps in the United states
- Cities and Counties throughout the United States are dealing with the issue of unsheltered homeless
- Over time homelessness was criminalized through ordinances and regulations that caused a backlash from the advocates
- One-half of the homeless population in the United States 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 Initial Findings

- The central themes that emerged from these discussions all focused on three areas: Safety (crime, drugs), Sanitation, and 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
- Camping guidelines are needed
- Residents are beginning to self govern

Pinellas Hope

- Pinellas Hope is a tent camp just north of the City of St. Petersburg on wooded land owned by the Catholic Diocese of St. Pete.
- Upon its establishment in 2007, it held 250 single-person tents set up in rows, and has expanded to about 270. It has remained filled to capacity since its opening.
- 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.

Pinellas Hope

- The city contributed \$250,000 in its initial year to the camp and city crews helped clear the land.
- Run by Catholic Charities, it costs approximately \$2.6 million a year to run the camp with about half coming from donations of food and other items. It receives over \$1 million in public funding annually, and is able to effectively regulate who passes through, which in turn helps keep out illegal activity and violence.
- The camp's residents range in age from 18 to mid-70s, and no families are allowed.

Nothing Lost Outreach

- Nothing Lost Outreach (NLO), in Escambia County, Florida, is a 501c3, non-profit outreach program founded that serves the homeless populations throughout the greater Pensacola area.
- Largely a ministry of the Pensacola Baptist Church community and some business funding partners
- NLO provides many services to the homeless population by transporting them from sites and camps all over the city to the NLO camp, which is hidden and not governed.

Nothing Lost Outreach

- Services provided every Sunday afternoon from 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM include:
 - Haircuts
 - Showers
 - Clothing
 - Hot meals
 - Tarps
 - Bug spray
 - Church service

- NLO is privately run by the Church.

Dignity Village-Portland, OR

- Dignity Village in Portland, Oregon, is a city-recognized, legal encampment of homeless people in Portland, Oregon, falling under the definition of “campground” as defined by Portland city code.
- Membership size varies and is limited to 60 by the physical size of the available space on city-owned land near Portland International Airport.
- Individual 10x12 foot cottages, which have no electric or heat, built from recycled lumber and other recycled materials with help from architects, designers, students and community volunteers.
- Since it’s establishment in 2001, a variety of buildings have been added including a plants “shop”, hot dog stand, etc.

Dignity Village-Portland, OR

- Dignity Village is incorporated in Oregon as a 501(c)(3) membership-based non-profit organization, and is governed by bylaws, elected community officials, or board of directors, an elected chairman and other corporate officers. It 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."

Dignity Village-Portland, OR

- 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, 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, OR

- Among the resident services offered by Dignity Village:
 - Showers
 - Sanitary facilities
 - Private and communal food and flower gardens
 - Communal cooking and refrigeration facilities
 - Emergency transportation
 - Access to education
 - Access to counseling

Tentative Timeline

Today – Staff update on research collected to date and preliminary findings

Within 30 days – Discuss preliminary report and findings with stakeholders, gather additional input and refine information

By April 30th – Finalize report and submit to the City Commission

Recommendations

- Receive an update on the Dignity Village review being conducted by Temp. Project Manager Betty Baker
- Provide input to staff on the direction and plan to vet findings and finalize the report