



#150215C

Status of the Empowerment Center & Dignity Village

August 10, 2015

Joint City / County Commission Meeting

Empowerment Center & Dignity Village

- On May 21, the Gainesville City Commission authorized the City Manager to hire a non-profit organization to manage Dignity Village. The City Manager was authorized to enter into a contract up to \$ 50,000.
- The City created an Action Team, which includes members from the City Departments, Alachua County Community Support Services, County Health Department and GRU, to develop rules and regulations for Dignity Village.

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- The City submitted a request to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Technical Assistance to help improve and enhance services to the homeless, as well as look at best practices for providing services to the homeless in the Community.

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- Helping Hands Clinic withdrew from the negotiations to manage Dignity Village, however, its volunteers continue to work with residents and City Staff to improve conditions.
- On June 3, the Oversight Board heard Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry's (ACCHH's) budget presentation for FY 2016. The Board recommended that ACCHH be funded at \$780,793, with the condition that the expenditure rate be at the \$559,689 level for FY 2016.

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- The Oversight Board recommended that \$221,113 be placed in a contingency fund while the ACCHH and Board conduct a fundraising campaign.
- On July 15, HUD agreed to provide Technical Assistance to the City of Gainesville, Alachua County, and the ACCHH.
- The first phase of the Technical Assistance approval was to conduct an assessment report with the City, County, and ACCHH. The assessment of service needs was conducted on July 17.

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- On July 16, the Gainesville City Commission heard three recommendations from the Oversight Board:
 - (1) approve of the \$780,793 budget for FY 2016 with conditions;
 - (2) amend the Interlocal Agreement granting the Oversight Board authority to review services and programs at Dignity Village; and
 - (3) approve one Vendor/ACCHH for the management and coordination of services for Dignity Village.

Dignity Village Rules & Regulations

- The proposed rules for Dignity Village have been distributed to key stakeholders for comments and suggestions.
- The proposed rules will be distributed to Peer Leaders in Dignity Village for their distribution to the camping area residents.
- It is anticipated that the rules and regulations will start being enforced in mid-August.

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- FY 2016 Budget: The City and County equally share in the cost of the Empowerment Center (ACCHH /GRACE Marketplace), which makes the City's share of the requested budget \$390,396.75, and the County's share \$390,396.75. The Gainesville City Commission approved the recommended Budget for FY 2016 which includes the City's share.
- The City Commission authorized the City Manager to hire a Project Manager and enforce the proposed rules and regulations developed by the Action Team.

- Submetering of the Electrical Services for GRACE Marketplace has been completed.
- ADA Hearing Loop for the Chapel is scheduled to be installed next week.
- Kitchen equipment, roof repairs, and painting are scheduled to start soon; the project is expected to be completed in 12 weeks once begun.

- Recruitment of the Dignity Village Project Manager is underway, however, Betty Baker, Temporary Project Manager, has agreed to manage the project while the city completes its hiring process.
- Two workshops were held with residents of Dignity Village to review the Emergency Evacuation Plan.

Next Steps

- On September 21, 2015, the Oversight Board will hold a workshop to determine what services and programs are being provided at GRACE Marketplace and Dignity Village, and how homeless services can be coordinated between those groups and the Community.
- At the October 2015 Oversight Board meeting, City and County Staff will seek direction and recommendations from the City and County Commissions on a new contract or RFP for homeless management services in FY 2017.

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Questions?