Neighbors in Need Alliance

Steering Committee Meeting

February 9, 2020, 2 PM

St Mark’s Episcopal Church

Minutes

Those in Attendance:

Mike Todt, Matt Dunham, Donna Rheault, Lucy McGuffey, Betsy Morriss, Ginny Brown, Paul Roithmayer, Dan Morgenstern, Caroline Kinser, Tim Huey was unable to attend.

Guests: Jenn Lopez, Nathan Hunt (phone), Rev. Debbie Shew, Tim Sargent, Chris Mitchell, Richard Dilworth, John Sumner

1. Caroline opened the meeting with a prayer and welcomed all in attendance.
2. There was discussion around creating a vision/purpose statement around a permanent camp.

a. to create a safe place to sleep

b. opening paths to exit homelessness – **we are still working on the wording**

**3. Jennifer Lopez** opened the meeting by getting a consensus on the advisability

of hiring a grant writer for the Colorado Health Foundation grant (Community Initiated Solutions) with regard to the unhoused. In other words, the grant would expect us to show that those experiencing the problem are part of the solution. Nathan Hunt was recommended and approved and joined the meeting at this point by phone. He is experienced in this type of grant writing and consulting. He was formally with Interfaith Alliance in Denver and had attended the NINA meeting last August.

Jennifer also said she has been in conversations with the City and County to be the person who will assist with the implementation of the Athena Plan which will include NINA.

**Jenn explained the grant as follows**:

4 main areas for the scope of work:

**Determine a site for a permanent camp** –by a group from NINA and the unhoused population

**Accountability** – who will support and manage the resources of the camp

**Who are we serving**? – Working **with** the unhoused rather than **for** the unhoused

through listening sessions and one on one conversations and hands on labor.

**Financial Need** – infrastructure and staff

**Education was determined to be the heart of these 4 main areas**.

We talked about good language:

Unhoused vs homeless

Policies vs rules

Unstably housed to catch the many off the grid that are not camping

Permanent camp vs managed camp

Community

We also want to support the Athena Plan for preventing homelessness for those at risk of losing their housing.

**About the grant**:

Approximately $75,000: it would include:

1. Nathan to be our consultant and work with us on best practices and budgets
2. Stipends for the unhoused working on this project
3. A facilitator for the listening sessions around the campsite, neighbors, community at large and businesses.
4. Money to provide for the landscaping involved to make the site suitable and attractive for a camp
5. Seed/matching dollars to run the camp the first year

Funds from the February 15 grant cycle should be available in May.

We hope to have the camp operational by **October 1, 2020**

We will create an optimistic plan but also think about a backup plan.

1. How will NINA be organized to do this work?

**Site and camp design** will be led by Donna Rheault: Dan Morgenstern, Jenn Lopez

Carolyn Hunter, Tim Sargent and Betsy Morris, Richard Dilworth and Matt Dunham are some who will work with her.

**Listening Sessions** will be led by Lucy McGuffey: Hire a professional facilitator, Mike Todt, John Sumner, Ginny Brown, and Chris Mitchell are some who will work with her.

**Community Education** will be led by Caroline Kinser: Marsh Bull, Richard Dilworth, Tim Huey, and John Sumner are some who will work with her.

**What will success look like for a permanent camp**?

Tim gave us some examples for the existing camp at the Cliffs:

3 campers have become housed, 4 people have qualified for food stamps, 3 people got ID’s, 2 people are living in ATU units, they have established 3 community tents where they share food and water, sharing of the wonderful donations being made by the community, donated straw that has helped with the mud, phone chargers, propane from the Vineyard church for warmth and a big tank for cooking. The transportation provided by the city makes a difference and the relationships with the police has vastly improved, Dumpster and toilet areas are being kept clean, several have gotten jobs.

We asked, **why has all this happened**? Tim replied that because of the security of a place to sleep every night without having to set up and take down tents daily, everyone is sleeping better and feel less stressed and are now stepping up and turning the site into a functional space.

1. Caroline and Jenn reported that Nichole Martinez, the director of Camp Hope in Las Cruses, New Mexico is coming to Durango to have meetings with this steering committee and to be the main speaker at our next general NINA meeting. Nicole’s stipend will be paid for with matching funds from the NINA account and Jennifer Lopez’s business account.
2. **Our next general NINA meeting will be on Monday, March 9**. The meeting will be held at the Fairgrounds at 6PM and Manna (hopefully) will cater a sandwich dinner for us (all to be determined by Caroline). We want to engage directly with our larger group encourage them to become a part of the process in the future.
3. A meeting for a selection of Pastors/outreach/mission chairmen will be arranged by Betsy, Lucy, Donna and Caroline before the March 9 meeting. The purpose is to bring them up to date on our project to establish a permanent camp site and solicit support for how their congregations might be involved in the future. We will also be looking for suggestions and ideas.
4. Betsy, Lucy, Donna and Caroline will also interview all the non-profits that currently work with the unhoused in an effort to find a way for them to support and hopefully manage the permanent camp going forward.
5. We were reminded about the city council meeting on February 18 at City Hall and the County Commissioner meeting on February 25 where they will decide what support they will give to implement the Athena Plan and a Permanent Camp. We are all encouraged to attend or at least send a letter or email of support. Mike Todt will send us talking points.
6. We agreed to support the Forum on Homelessness sponsored by Community Compassion Outreach on April 20 in the form of leading the break out groups. Topics will be determined later.
7. **Tim Huey** was not able to be here but sent in this report:

Tim Dionne officially handed me the keys to the NINA website.  Wooo! No parents!

Updates to the old site:

* New Logo
* Contact information
* PDF’s of the Athena Cover Memo and the Durango Strategic Plan

I’ve been working on a completely new look for the site. I’ve included a screen recording and a link (below) in this email of a Prototype Homepage that I put together.  I designed it to look more modern than the existing site, while still fitting (I think) with who we are as an organization – in mood, visually.

**We all agreed that we like the direction of the new look!**

I contacted my photographer friend (who happens to be Fort Lewis’s Photographer/Videographer) and he said he could probably help us out (for free).  Maybe even rent some drones from the college, he says, to shoot some above-town (or the river, the cliffs, Manna, or above wherever we want) shots.  I thought that sounded pretty radical.

His name's Ben, and I’ll be meeting with him soon.

1. Betsy Morriss was thanked for the great job on our Facebook page. She sent a link to the County Commissioners and City Councilors showing our trip visiting various sites for a permanent camp.
2. We are happy to have received confirmation that Tim Sargent, Chris Mitchell, Richard Dilworth and John Sumner will join the Steering Committee.
3. Sadly, Ginny Brown will have to resign from the committee. She has too many travel commitments and a possible move from Durango in her future. She will be involved with the Listening Group for as long as she can.

Respectfully submitted, Caroline Kinser