

# Santa Cruz City Council Meeting

February 25, 2020

## Agenda Item Number 15: Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH) Second Status Report and Mid-Term Recommendations to the City Council

### **CACH RECOMMENDATION**

Receive Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH) Co-chair and city staff presentation and motion to:

1. Accept the CACH Second Status Report
2. Direct the city manager to implement Council-accepted CACH mid-term policy recommendations as identified during Council deliberations

### **BACKGROUND**

The City Council established the Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness (CACH) on April 9, 2019, with a nine-month work plan. The CACH was created in order to provide a platform for the community to identify and explore causes and possible solutions to homelessness. CACH has been meeting since July 30, 2019. The Committee presented their Initial Status and Recommendations to the City Council. Since then CACH has continued its work as well as considering Council directed items, such as a review of the ordinance amending Chapter 6.36 of the Camping of the City of Santa Cruz Municipal Code (Camping ordinance). The CACH is returning to the City Council to present its Second Status Report and Mid-Term Recommendations.

### **DISCUSSION**

CACH has continued to meet every two weeks and the sub-committees have been meeting at least weekly. Several actions have been taken, including public engagement sessions on health and hygiene and safe sleeping, where community feedback has been solicited. The CACH has also received presentations from organizations such as the Regional Coordinator for US Interagency Council on Homelessness, the City Attorney's office, staff presentations on the Governor's Executive Orders and much more.

The CACH presented 17 policy recommendations in their Mid-Term Policy Recommendations. The recommendations focus on shelter and safe sleeping sites, personal property management, increased access to health and hygiene facilities, public engagement and amending the camping ordinance. The fiscal impact was noted to be up to \$22,500.

### **COUNCIL ACTION**

Motion presented by Vice Mayor Donna Meyers **carried** to accept the Second Status Report of the CACH with appreciation for the hard work of the group's members and,

#### *Health and Hygiene Facilities*

1. Direct the City Manager to prepare an administrative budget adjustment, if necessary, in an amount not to exceed \$12,500, to support Council-adopted policy including increased access to health and hygiene facilities inclusive of the following CACH Mid-term policy recommendations:

- a. That the City Council implement a pilot, three-month, staffed shower/laundry program with case management (not to exceed \$10,000)
- b. That the City Council fund laundry/towel services through the Association of Faith Communities (AFC) to support the pilot staffed shower/laundry program (not to exceed \$2,500).
- c. That the City Council monitor, and make public, the use rates, effectiveness and impacts of new hygiene services on immediate surroundings to inform long term facility solutions.
- d. Provide clarity to City staff, minimize the negative consequences of discarding survival belongings and minimize the community impacts of unattended personal property.

#### *Personal Property Management*

2. Direct the City Manager to draft new comprehensive “Personal Property Management” guidelines with analysis of best practices, resource considerations and implementation considerations to return for Council discussion and possible action no later than May 2020.

#### *Shelter and Safe Sleeping Models*

3. Adopt the following CACH Mid-Term Policy Recommendation: That the City Council support shelter and safe sleeping models that include organization/staffing to supervise the site and take responsibility for addressing issues that arise but also include substantive management, operational, and governance roles for participants.

#### *Amending Chapter 6.36 Camping Ordinance*

Motion **carried** to direct the City Attorney to return to Council no later than the second meeting in March with a first reading of an ordinance amending Chapter 6.36.

#### *Directions for the continued final work of the CACH*

Direct the CACH to conduct up to three additional meetings to prepare their final report in order to sunset. The focus of the CACH during these final meetings should continue to be focused on policy considerations around safe sleeping siting and program models that can be embedded in the Santa Cruz County Focus Strategies Plan, are regionally focused, and leverage all available county and state funding opportunities on the horizon. A Community Listening Forum should be included.

Direct the members of the 2X2 City-County working group to agendaize an item related to safe sleeping siting and program models at their next meeting, for a recommendation on the appropriate body to lead the siting, oversight, programmatic analysis, and public outreach.

**COUNCIL VOTE** (All councilmember present voted unanimously to support the motion 6-0, with Council member Glover absent)

#### **CHAMBER’S POSITION:**

The Chamber has long advocated for a more aggressively effort by the city council in coordination with the County and the stakeholders working within the framework directed by the City Council — and establishing time lines, actionable items with accountability. We know that Santa Cruz County, despite the drop in last year’s point-in-time homeless count, the issue of homelessness is complex and difficult for our community to find common

ground. There is a theme here, as well as across the state, that mental health, addiction to drugs and alcohol, policy changes to address mental health issues dating back to the 1950s and 1960s, and the lack of accessible and affordable housing options only compounds the problem. The city and county are working in a collaborative effort to find options, short time and long terms solutions. We know that homelessness that has taken decades to create and cannot be solved overnight, in a month or even a year — but now with the siren bell of urgency coming from our Governor who wants to deliver new ideas with monies attached and is asking for all of us to be accountable to the crisis.

This is not a point your fingers blame game — it is time to build the navigation center, increase the number of sleeping spaces inside, address safe sleeping spaces in appropriately defined locations away from parks and schools for public safety, move the mental health and addicted homeless population into facilities and stop the vicious cycle from street to jail to court and back to the street, look at policy options that are working in other cities and counties in our state and try something bold. A model to improve community outreach should work in tandem with current outreach efforts such as the Santa Cruz Police Department's HERO team and Santa Cruz County HOPES team. The recent addition of these two programs working in collaboration is a giant step forward.