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3 The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the **City of Las Cruces – Housing**  
4 **Policy Review Committee** on June 15, 2022. The meeting was held via Zoom and in  
5 Room 2007A at City Hall, 700 N. Main Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

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7 **Members Present:**

- 8 Kasandra Gandara, City Council
- 9 Johana Bencomo, City Council
- 10 Yvonne Flores, City Council
- 11 Benjamin Beard, Las Cruces Home Builders Association

12  
13 **Members Absent:**

- 14 Sonja Unrau, NM Mortgage Finance Authority
- 15 Juan Olvera, Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority

16  
17 **Others Present:**

- 18 Natalie Green, Housing Neighborhood Service Manager
- 19 Jan Lauterbach, Housing Development Coordinator
- 20 Kevin Wilson, Housing Development Coordinator
- 21 Sergio Ruiz, Policy Analyst
- 22 Jennica Bustamante, FYI
- 23 Christine Rivera, City Clerk
- 24 Greg Shervanick
- 25 Becky Baum, RC Creations, Transcription

- 26  
27 **1. Call to Order:** Councilor Bencomo called the meeting to order at 2:05.
- 28  
29 **2. Conflict of Interest:** No conflict of interest was proclaimed.
- 30  
31 **3. Acceptance of the Agenda:** Motion to accept the agenda by Councilor Flores,  
32 seconded by Councilor Bencomo. Motion passes.
- 33  
34 **4. Minutes for Approval:**
- 35 **a. Housing PRC Meeting of May 18, 2022:** Motion to accept the Minutes by  
36 Councilor Flores, seconded by Councilor Bencomo. Motion passes.
- 37  
38 **5. Action Items:** None.
- 39  
40 **6. Agency Spotlights:**
- 41 **a. FYI+ Housing Programs:** Jenica Bustamante gave the presentation.  
42 They recently went through a rebranding; the housing program within FYI+  
43 will now be referred to as The Neighborhood. Within The Neighborhood  
44 there are four housing programs: My Friend’s Place at FYI, The Valley,  
45 Crimson Heights, and 12th Avenue.

1  
2 My Friend's Place is an emergency youth shelter. They operate 24 hours  
3 a day 365 days a year; welcome all genders; practice under a trauma  
4 informed care; able to offer housing services to youth aged 12 to 17.  
5 Intensive case management is offered while the youth are there for support  
6 in behavioral health, mental health, education supports, and etcetera.  
7 Ideally the length of stay should not exceed 90 days. The target population  
8 besides age include they have to be experiencing homelessness in some  
9 capacity; could be involved in juvenile injustice, foster care, run away from  
10 home, family eviction, and etcetera. In 2021 they provided just over 2,000  
11 bed nights: average 170 to 200 bed nights per month. Generally the  
12 operating cost is near \$700,000 per year; most of the time it's less. Roughly  
13 eight out of every 10 youth served is a high needs of mental and behavioral  
14 health support. Pictures of the inside of the homes were shown.  
15

16 The Valley is a multi-service community home. However it is not yet  
17 operational, still in the licensure process. The target population is similar to  
18 My Friend's Place. It will be open and operational 24 hours a day but it's  
19 specific for youth involved in foster care who are left without a permanent  
20 stable home. All genders are welcome; the age range is from 10 to 17;  
21 same offer of trauma care and intensive case management. The length in  
22 this home should not exceed 60 days. The overall goal of the home is a  
23 cooperative effort between CYFD and FYI to safely assess, stabilize, and  
24 mobilize the safest and permanent placement option for children who are in  
25 protective services custody and under their care within that 60 day window.  
26 Pictures of the home was shown. The home is located on Valley.  
27

28 Crimson Heights is a transitional living program for young adults. The goal  
29 is to provide transitional independent living and supportive services for  
30 young people transitioning to adulthood. At the completion of the  
31 participation in the program it's hoped that they have made steps towards  
32 being able sustain independently living on their own. Target population is  
33 adolescents and young adults between the ages of 16.5 and 23 who have  
34 been involved with child welfare system, juvenile justice, travel services, or  
35 who are at risk of system involvement. Pictures of one of the homes was  
36 shown. They are working on expanding.  
37

38 12th Avenue is the permanent supportive housing site; prior known as El  
39 Crucero. FYI hopes the new name transition sticks. The target population  
40 is families experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness who are  
41 low income, suffer from serious mental health issues, or substance use  
42 diagnosis. There are 12 total units; two are three bedroom and two  
43 bathroom with 10 units that are two bedroom and two bathroom. Currently  
44 they are serving 11 families: 13 adults and 23 children. They are always  
45 seeking donations; in kind donations, shelf staple food, snack, drinks,  
46 laundry detergent specifically HE, new underwear and socks, hair products  
47 for both men and women, art supplies, disposable paper products, and

1 etcetera. During the holidays they tend to get people donating meals.  
2 Birthday celebration donations are also accepted.  
3

4 At the end of a young person's stay they are given a survey; some of these  
5 were shown. These survey's talk about their experience and the case  
6 manager also takes a survey on their experience with the youth. Pictures  
7 of staff and youth were shown. The family unit that's available is due to  
8 usual tenant turnover.  
9

## 10 7. General Discussion:

11 a. **Video: A way Home Plenary Speaker:** Jan Lauterbach gave an overview  
12 of the video; was seen in a webinar. The speaker represents a national  
13 organization; speaks about the cause of the housing crisis. It is the Human  
14 Services Department of New Mexico. Staff will share the video with  
15 everyone. Councilor Bencomo believes the approach of demand supply  
16 prevention can be applicable to the local level. Mr. Wilson stated that one  
17 of the most important things he's heard is that the disparity between what it  
18 would cost to assist people before they need transitional assistance  
19 compared to how much it costs in shelters and jail. This needs to be kept  
20 in mind as Las Cruces makes decisions to make investments.  
21

22 b. **10-Year Plan to End Homelessness Action Plan Review:** Natalie Green  
23 gave the presentation. They are utilizing the interns over the next couple  
24 weeks to help with an initial update of the 10-Year Plan to End  
25 Homelessness. They began by looking at the action steps originally in the  
26 plan to see if the goal was accomplished, need to be kept, if the best  
27 practice changed, and etcetera. The Action Plan was developed in 2007;  
28 unfunded mandate on how to work on homelessness. It was very  
29 aspirational.  
30

31 The first strategy was Community Education; two actions were to develop a  
32 speaker's bureau and schedule presentations and speaking engagements.  
33 This is an ongoing activity that may need to be restarted. There will be  
34 continued education for compassion, challenge some of the mess, etcetera.  
35 At Council they discussed separating crime and homelessness. More  
36 education will be needed for what programs are out there, what the City is  
37 doing, what the partners are doing, and etcetera. Not only will they work on  
38 an allocation plan for home funding to address homelessness but they  
39 should also be able to incorporate some action items into the allocation  
40 plan.  
41

42 Some items around prevention included developing discharge plans. There  
43 is now a new hospital and crisis center, different shelters have come in and  
44 left, so the discharge plans need to be updated. Next steps are updating  
45 the institutions, contact information, meet with them individually and as  
46 groups, work on a discharge plan network, and track the effectiveness of  
47 discharge planning. It would need to include the medical centers, justice  
48 system, crisis intervention center, and etcetera; some communicate with

1 Community of Hope. Strategy 1.3 was around having a prevention plan;  
2 potential rapid rehousing or have places to either shorten or eliminate the  
3 window where people are becoming homeless. There is a toolkit that was  
4 done around Desert Hope.  
5

6 There is now almost quadruple the amount of assistance now versus when  
7 this document was first done. There needs to be a transition plan created;  
8 it was discussed on a state level. Many counties received emergency rental  
9 assistance as part of COVID; they will have it for a couple years but there  
10 needs to be a plan on what to do when it is phased out. It is much harder  
11 to get someone rehoused than it is to cover the short amount of instability.  
12 There are a lot of rapid rehousing programs although it is still a challenge  
13 on the supply side.  
14

15 The goal for increasing emergency shelter, while it's an essential piece in  
16 the chain it's not always the best practice. Ms. Green doesn't believe they  
17 necessarily need to build a new shelter but rather assess where existing  
18 shelter capacity is. There are other faith based shelters that have already  
19 popped up. Transitional housing doesn't really exist today; it's being  
20 rebranded. Therefore the goal or action needs to change. The state is now  
21 putting out a lot of funding for this activity which staff can apply for. Staff is  
22 also working on permanent supportive housing; constructed some  
23 permanent supportive housing but need supply.  
24

25 Action 1.6 was around detox, GED, workforce training, and etcetera. There  
26 is still the detox crisis. Staff needs to explore those services; Amador Health  
27 is doing some detox services. The first of the opioid settlement monies have  
28 begun to trickle down. The goal at that time was to have six detox beds;  
29 this needs to be researched. Ms. Green is going to talk with the rest of the  
30 Economic Development staff regarding workforce training; what services  
31 are available. There is discussion on making tenant support billable to  
32 Medicaid to increase the service; nonprofits could get funding. Staff did fair  
33 housing training yesterday. As new housing developments are built they  
34 need to discuss how they offer complement services.  
35

36 Most of the work for access to quality health and dental care is being done  
37 through Amador Health. More is needed but this is a goal that was  
38 accomplished within the context of this plan. They may be building a dental  
39 clinic as well. There are increased access to quality mental health services  
40 but it is still an ongoing piece. The local collaborative is still being worked  
41 on. The original plan also noted increased transportation opportunities;  
42 Council is working on the free transit piece. Within the next couple months  
43 the interns will fill in what has and hasn't been accomplished with the  
44 original plan and then the Board can update the Action Plan. The  
45 consultants will come on board for the allocation plan as well to do a needs  
46 assessment. This will take most of the summer. Many of the goals are still  
47 valid.  
48

1 Councilor Gandara asked them to not forget the local behavioral health  
2 collaborative. They do a lot with workforce, counseling, psychiatry,  
3 substance abuse, housing component, and etcetera. There are also other  
4 federally qualified centers, not just Amador Health. Department of Health  
5 is also doing a lot around harm reduction, substance abuse, programing,  
6 and etcetera. Athena Huckabee's program that works more specifically with  
7 opioid and fentanyl which has been very successful. They have a three or  
8 four prong approach on how to handle what's happening. Councilor  
9 Gandara recommended inviting them to do a presentation.

10  
11 Jo Galvan Nash stated that it would have been difficult for her to follow the  
12 path of completion on items. Perhaps a strategy plan would have a timeline  
13 on each strategy in order to better be able to see how they are moving  
14 forward; less is more with strategy. The original Action Plan was done by a  
15 group of providers with the City as the overseer. It has not been  
16 implemented which is why staff is updating the plan to implement now.  
17 Councilor Bencomo will meet with Ms. Green prior to the next meeting to  
18 discuss a timeline with short term goals and who needs to be involved;  
19 possibly change the name. Create a comprehensive way to address  
20 homelessness rather than end it. There is a lot of funding at the state level  
21 that they can take advantage of to use toward this investment.

22  
23 Item 2.1 is about community and political will; could be on the cusp of  
24 involving faith based community, hosting events, and etcetera. Councilor  
25 Gandara recommended pulling the policy piece at a local and state level  
26 aside and really look at where they start advocating; legislative session is  
27 coming up and there's movement around the housing piece. Councilor  
28 Bencomo will create an agenda item on potential statewide policy regarding  
29 housing that they can support. It's on the future items as an action item.

- 30  
31 **c. General Update on Source of Income and Faith Based Meeting:** Natalie  
32 Green gave the update. Albuquerque's ordinance passed. Staff will now  
33 work on theirs and Santa Fe is working on theirs. They will need to meet  
34 with Racheal; the advocacy group that led it in Albuquerque. Councilor  
35 Bencomo stated that she and Councilor Gandara brought a group of clergy  
36 and faith leaders together last month; very well attended meeting. There  
37 was incredible discussion on homelessness and how to alleviate it. There  
38 will be a second meeting June 30th at 2:30 pm on the second floor. The  
39 first meeting discussed values; many of the groups don't have a lot of  
40 information but are very committed to help. There is a lot of interest  
41 amongst the clergy to have a role in this; perhaps create a multi-faith group  
42 to collectively act on homelessness and violence.

43  
44 Councilor Gandara especially thanked Reverend Caroline. The groups are  
45 doing a lot but don't seem to know who they can partner with. City partners  
46 are going to give presentations and the clergy will be encouraged to  
47 participate in the Share New Mexico program; a statewide referral source.  
48 There is a lot of training that's needed as well. Councilor Gandara asked



1 them to help form a street unit to help those homeless people get off the  
2 streets. Community of Hope was at the meeting as well. The next meeting  
3 will have a panel discussion with those on the frontline and what's already  
4 happening; don't duplicate efforts.

5  
6 The point in time data came out; communities count how many people are  
7 experiencing homelessness over the course of a week. The Community of  
8 Hope has a person who does it here and they asked people questions about  
9 where they've stayed, where they're from, if it's their first time being  
10 homeless, if they children, and etcetera. The count for unsheltered  
11 population was 154,000 for the county; increase of 30%. The 2021 data  
12 had transposed Otero County and Doña Ana County data so it looked crazy;  
13 the data will be sent to staff. There was a significant amount of people who  
14 were stably housed less than a year ago. Based on the conversation with  
15 the person who did the survey it seems these were people who had  
16 vouchers, were housed, and then were either evicted or the unit was re-  
17 rented to someone else and they can't rent a new unit. Once they receive  
18 the data staff will present it to the Board.

19  
20 The statewide housing summit is in September. Staff will attend that so  
21 they may ask to cancel that meeting. The statewide Housing Strategy Plan  
22 will be unveiled then; it will be presented to this Board after the launch event.  
23 This includes realtors, developers, nonprofit partners, and etcetera. It will  
24 be a statewide plan to address housing. The housing summit is open to  
25 anyone who wants to register; it's three days and does cost a fee. Ms.  
26 Green will send the link to the Board.

27  
28 **8. Future Items for Review:** Sergio would like to present the resolution Councilor  
29 Flores asked for. The Master Plan and the Campus Expansion piece will also be  
30 reviewed and go over the action steps for homelessness. Councilor Bencomo  
31 would like to discuss other statewide policies for Sergio's presentation. They will  
32 contact LC3 for the spotlight discussion.

33  
34 **9. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:37 p.m.

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38  
39   
40 Chairperson

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43  
44 Approved: Aug. 17, 2022