# *Land Access and Opportunity Board:* Shelter for All

# October 10, 2025, 2:00PM-3:00PM

Meeting Facilitator: Ornella

Notetaker: Jean

Board Attendance: Mark Hughes, Sonali Samarasinghe, Brian Cina, Jaada Longmore

Staff Attendance: Tay Margison, Ornella Matta-Figueroa, Jean Hamilton

Guests: Carol

**Agenda:**

**Public Comment**

**Brian Update on Shelter Proposal**

**Minutes:**

**Public Comment**

- Carol: do something to help us. Stop talking about it. People have been talking for decades, and we're still not helped.
- Jaada; Thank you Carol, what can we do?
- Carol: make buildings available for us. We can fix them up. it wont hurt the city to donate these buildings. LISTEN TO RECORDING.
- Brian: we have designed these ideas into this proposal
- Carol: Stop taking buildings away. They took Pathways away. Harm reduction sites are being taken away. Needle exchange. When something is doing good, they take it away.
- Mark: want to acknowledge what Carol is saying. Richard Kemp Center is open and welcomes you to come inside and lets do our best to try do what we can. This is messy. I hear you loud and clear.

**Discussion of Shelter Proposal**

- Brian has shared the proposal around.
- walked through proposal. https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jru0vOwGaeSNY8PZBSQG9RvNS7a1Hr6T

- Discussion of opportunity for shelter residents and neighbors working together on building new housing.
- We've been talking about what can we do? we started by giving out tents. We've also been thinking about how do we create a path for people to transition from unsheltered to sheltered to in homes.
- Folks need advocacy and support in transitional housing. Especially as civil rights erode.
- In the housing industrial complex, we see that there has been the wrong plan a long time ago. People still aren't listening. LAOB is a very small piece of a big monster.
- ACTION: add "education", "school" and "job training opportunities" to the list to general need
- ACTION: add "youth services" to general needs
- ACTION: add "racism, homophobia, ableism" to Challenges and Barriers for unhoused people
- ACTION: under potential solutions for unsheltered homeless: Support accessing services and peer support
- How many people know what exactly they need to move out of homelessness.
- WHAT ARE THE HIGH LEVEAGE ACTIONS we take that turns the tide. Be ready to do something that has never been done before.
- ACTION: Add a section: What barriers do we face in enacting these values and priorities? Where can we be flexible? What is good enough?
    - Misallocation of resources
    - Lack of coordination – everyone operating in siloes, constrained without enough capacity
    - Paternalism
    - Lack of trust in figuring it out together, reliance on 'heroism'
- ACTION: where is there movement already

Community feedback:

- Pods feel like prison. They check your rooms, etc.
- You can't cook at the pods.
- Recovery principles are common sense.
- Shelter also needs to be open to drug use. We use drugs. We need to use drugs to survive on the street. People get kicked out of shelters even if they don't use drugs in the shelter. Just for failing drug tests.
- Everybody is always in our business. They think they know everything. We need privacy and dignity.
- I went into the pods and then got kicked out because I got a voucher and moved into an apartment. Landlord kicked me out after 6 months.
- Burlington has created a scenario where there is no safe space for us to go.
- I have ideas about how to create safe spaces but they don't care.
- I live on the street so I can't be too disappointed because it cant get worst than that.

- Sears Lane? They should have left it because people were taking care of that.
- Tools for safe recovery, safe use sites, harm reduction, etc.

ACTION STEP: **Let's create a feedback structure and plan. Community, Board, etc.**

- ACTION STEPS
    - Create a google form for feedback.
    - Add QR code to draft for form.
- CCHA meeting
- Community engagement
    - Ample notification
    - Broad outreach
    - Relaxed rules for engagement
    - Table top exercises
    - Faith leaders, Regional planning, city of Burlington, shelter providers, neighbors, HomeshareVT,
- ACTION STEP: What does it look like to make things happen?
    - Spread the word, open the conversation
    - Socialize these ideas – look for micro adjustments in the current ecosystem; soften peoples' perspectives
    - Identify big project opportunities – try everything

**Submitted by: Arealles Ortiz**