

Manchester Initiative for Supportive Housing

Minutes of December 6, 2007

Attendees: David Blackwell, Tim Woods, Jody Wynn Rodiger, Vyrjil Buss, Cindy Hall, Anne Carr, John Gibbs, Mary Voiland, Aaliyah Mahasin-Blade, Kathleen Grover, Martha DiGiovanni, Peg DeForge, Edith Gerber, Boris Gerber, Dick Thompson, Gina Major, Job Eulizier, Tiffany Woodson, Jay Stoppelman, Rob DeSesa, Ken Harley, Sarah Edwards, Gregg Blackstone, Kelsey Blackstone, Johna Blackstone, Lynn Blackstone, Ta Jange, Dianne McPherson, Frank Lotto, Foniqua Lewis, Rev. Karen Fedorchak, Sandra Rimetz.

Manchester Community College hosted our meeting. Gina and Job began by reading a story called *The Lady in the Box* about a homeless woman.

Upon motion duly made and second, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the MISH meeting of November 15, 2007.

Professor Tim Woods and Sarah Edwards talked about their collaboration project between Sarah's students at Nathan Hale and Tim's class at MCC. The focus was on being good stewards and how to care for the people in our community. They read books, made baby and adult blankets for the homeless and made coloring pages for children who are homeless. The MCC students presented plaques to Sarah and some of her students.

Professor Sandra Rimetz and her students showed us the work they have been doing on the MISH website. The e-mail address will be mishct.org. We were able to get free server space from PortOne. The students are still working on the site and will let us know when it is up and running.

David mentioned that there is an appointment on the Manchester Housing Commission, which is an advisory commission. There are nine members appointed: 3 Republicans, 3 Democrats and 3 non-profit housing representatives. If anyone is interested in serving, let David know.

David then discussed a housing dilemma that Martha DiGiovanni brought to his attention. A woman Martha knows with three children had lost her apartment. She is working but not making enough to cover all her expenses. They have been living with Martha. She found another apartment but needs a co-signer because of credit issues. She has applied for Section 8. Some suggestions included checking with Genesis and talking with landlord about a shorter lease period.

There will be a Forum Redux with Hartbeat Ensemble on Thursday, March 13. The Hartbeat Ensemble is a non-profit social action theatre group. This summer they did a show on homelessness in Hartford called "Life Without an Address." It is an opportunity for MISH to let our community know what we've been doing over the past year.

This led to a discussion about continuing our community awareness campaign. We need to reach out to our congregations, update them on what we have been doing, and ask for their support by going on our website and adding their name.

We need help getting this March 13 Forum organized. We're looking for a lead person.

It was suggested that we make a list of ways people can help:

- Put together a brief presentation that people could make to their congregations - John volunteered to put some talking points together
- Train to be a presenter
- Have a coffee evening at your house - invite five people from your neighborhood
- If a site is chosen, get people to come help clean it up - have a work day
- Homeless visitations
- Bring a canned good to the Forum for MACC shelter
- Get flyers printed for the Forum and place in library, churches and other places around town
- Have MISH bumper stickers made
- Have a competition - which church will have the most supporters on MISH website
- Make sure we have a calendar of events on our website

David listed MISH Goals and Objectives for 2008:

- I. Identify at least three potential sites for either single sited or scattered site supportive housing projects by January 1, 2008
- II. Assemble a preliminary development team by April 1, 2008
- III. Develop a preliminary plan for one or more supportive housing projects by April 1, 2008
- IV. Secure pre-development financing for sited project(s) by July 1, 2008
- V. Coordinate project activities with Town officials and CSH (Ongoing)
- VI. Coordinate pre-development activities of development team (Ongoing)

Our next MISH meeting will be at St. Bridget's Church on Wednesday, January 9 at 7:00 pm.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To adjourn.

Submitted,

Dianne McPherson
Secretary