

Homelessness

I was recently privileged to have the opportunity to help organize a two-part program on the issue of homelessness in Springfield. In researching and organizing this topic I was profoundly moved by the dedication of all involved in this critical issue. I learned much and here are a few of my take-away points.

The issue of homelessness in America touches the very essence of who we are as a people, as citizens, and as human beings. Our souls die a bit every time we drive past a veteran holding a sign asking for food, every time we avert our eyes from a mess under the bridge knowing that this is where we have relegated our fellow brothers and sisters to live, every time we watch an elderly woman pushing a grocery cart down the sidewalk loaded to overflowing with all her worldly possessions. Our sadness is coupled with frustration: How do we fix this problem that feels too complicated, touches too many different parts of government, conjures up unconscious prejudices against the mentally ill, the unemployed, the handicapped, the dirty and unwashed? What can we do to become better Good Samaritans?

To answer these questions, Springfield City Club invited four speakers across two sessions to discuss the current status of this problem and to offer some potential solutions. While the full depth and breadth of ideas presented are too expansive to be covered in a few sentences, there were a few notable take-away's.

Among the most important concept was the idea that "The Homelessness Problem" is basically a "Housing Problem." There is less than 1% vacancy rate for housing in Springfield which is a problem that is now moving beyond the most vulnerable and into the middle class. The current data show that 51% of all renters and 34% of home owners are cost-burdened (spending more than 30% of income.) Furthermore, while the homeless count has not increased in sheer numbers, family rates are increasing. Public understanding of and support for solving this issue has increased and perhaps reached a critical mass. The City of Springfield has created an Action Planⁱ that partners with local and regional groups to create a six part "Housing Strategy." Short-term, emergency shelters are helping to alleviate the worst of the pain for these fellow citizens. One successful project in Eugene promotes using tiny homes to develop communities that promote self-governed, transitional housing.ⁱⁱ

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MEETING CALENDAR

APRIL 3 – SPRINGFIELD MUNICIPAL COURT

Newly appointed Municipal Judge Susan Triem will discuss recent changes to the Springfield Municipal court

APRIL 26 – BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, SPRINGFIELD SEAT

Incumbent commissioner Sid Leiken and challenger Joe Berney will answers questions about their view for Lane County and the Board of Commissioners

MAY 3 – SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL SEATS

Candidates for open seats on the Springfield City Council will highlight their plans for the council

PUBLIC CALENDAR

All items are tentative and subject to change

SPRINGFIELD CITY COUNCIL

April 2, 2018

Work Session 6:30 p.m.

Affordable Housing Strategy

Regular Session 7:00 p.m.

ROW Annexation, Franklin Boulevard

ADU Development Fees

April 9, 2018

Work session 5:30 p.m.

Arts Program Update

Comcast Franchise Renewal

April 16, 2018

Regular meeting 7:00 p.m.

April 23, 2018

Work session 5:30 p.m.

CDBG Proposals

Wastewater Stormwater Rate Scenarios

April 30, 2018

No meeting, fifth Monday

LANE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

April 3, 2018 9:00 a.m.

April 10, 2018 9:00 a.m.

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There are solutions to this intractable problem and we need set aside our prejudices and work together to find it. We will be better people for the effort.

THE FOLLOWING IS AN OUTLINE OF THE APPROACH THAT WE TOOK:

PART 1 (February 15) The Challenges = Discussions of the current status of homelessness and housing issues, in general. Where are we now in terms of homeless populations and how does the City of Springfield, Lane County, and Oregon rank in terms of other city, county and state numbers? Are there relationships between homelessness and housing availability, land use laws, building codes, and public policy? What do these numbers mean? How are perceptions of the homeless populations affecting policy?



Speaker "A" = **Lise Stuart** – Data Analyst, Lane County Human Services. = Where are we now with the homelessness populations? Are there significant changes in the demographics that may affect policy decisions? Are there changes in the number

of recently displaced families and are those numbers being driven by policy changes at the federal, state, county, and city governments. What about special populations; veterans, children, teens, abused women, etc.?

Speaker "B" = **Jack Wilson**, Register Guard: What do these numbers mean? How do we compare with other communities: both in terms of perception of these populations and the difficulty in addressing this issue? How is "fixing" this issue related to public perceptions of these populations?

PART 2 (March 1) = Possible Solutions. What is the relationship between public policy and housing? What are the current and proposed plans for the city of Springfield to address these issues. Are there some solutions that might be implemented that involve collaborations between private and public entities?

Speaker "A" **Sandy Belson**, Comprehensive Planning Manager, City of Springfield. Issues of housing regulations and codes and how these codes affect housing costs and homelessness. What are current and future plans for Springfield with respect to housing and homelessness? What are the key findings that feed into Springfield's Affordable Housing Strategy? What are the projections for

demographic changes in Springfield and are these changes affecting public policy?

Speaker "B" **Dan Bryant** = Pastor-First Christian Church. Creator of Square One Villages = A self-managed, transitional housing community which is in Eugene. What is the overarching concept of Square One Villages? Are there any ideas that translate to other locations or is Eugene unique? Do the two villages, Opportunity and Emerald, address different populations or do the two villages offer different solutions for the same populations? What are the two or three lessons that can be learned from your experiences with these populations.



*Carolyn J. Miller
City Club Board Member*

Springfield-or.gov/dpw/HousingPrograms.htm
i info@squareonevillages.org

CITY CLUB MEETINGS

MARCH 1 -- HOMELESSNESS: FINDING NEW SOLUTIONS

Sandy Belson, Community Development Manager for the City of Springfield and Rev. Dan Bryant, pastor of the First Methodist Church, led the second session of our session on homelessness – a session designed to look for solutions.



That effort is proceeding on two fronts. One the one hand cities like Springfield are seeking to modify their codes to allow for second houses "accessory dwelling units" to be constructed on already existing lots. This increases density, and makes more housing available in a way that is much different from constructing dense apartment facilities in neighborhoods that are, for the most part, filled with single-family homes.

The second approach, exemplified by the work Rev.



Bryant is leading, focuses on taking vacant land and using it to site either overnight "rest stop" facilities providing temporary shelter, or more longer-

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(Continued from page 2) term sites like the new Square One Villages which arrange for a relatively dense neighborhood of “tiny homes,” that provide longer term transitional housing.

The challenges in each approach are different, but there are common issues. Neither approach is consistent with long-standing national and state building codes, which presume a level of permanence of structure that would make accessory dwelling units, rest tops, or tiny homes infeasible. Efforts to create special building codes standards were not completely successful in the 2017 session of the legislature, although a task force was created to attempt to create a special building code type for “tiny homes.” Much more needs to be done, however, to make all the alternatives easy to create.

Planning issues also have an impact. Existing land use and planning requirements, like, building codes, are designed for a different concept in housing. Springfield, in particular, is working to develop standards for accessory dwelling units that will make them more feasible without unduly damaging neighborhood character.

MARCH 15 – CIVIL DISCOURSE: A TOOL FOR GETTING THE PEOPLE’S WORK DONE.



Retired Justice of the Oregon Court of Appeals David Brewer addressed a topic much on the minds of any one who is involved, even if only as a listener, in the political processes of the day. The rise of uncivil, and in some cases frankly intentionally insulting behavior, has affected anyone who reads or hears the news, much less tries to become involved in being a good citizen participant in our democracy. He cautioned against many of the efforts to legislate civil behavior, pointing specifically to the university setting where administrators try to enforce a definition of “civil” speech which is often decried as “political correctness” or, even worse, attacked as censorship. He observed that there is a marked difference between exercising one’s rights to speak freely on any issue, which our nation protects legally, through the First Amendment, and the ethical responsibility to speak respectfully, no matter how vigorously one might disagree, an obligation which is, and in fact, cannot, be legally enforced but is a social convention dating back eons as a fundamental hallmark of a stable society.

He reminded listeners that those who resort to public denigration, insults, and vile speech are seeking attention, and the best way to deal with them is, ultimately, to turn off their microphone and stop listening to them.

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April 17, 2018 9:00 a.m.
April 24, 2018 9:00 a.m.

LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT

April 18, 2018 – Board meeting 5:30 p.m.

SPRINGFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

The agenda for scheduled board meetings can be found at www.springfield.k12.or.us/boardmeetings the Thursday before the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

April 10, 2018 – Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.
April 17, 2018 – Spring Planning Meeting 4:00 p.m.

WILLAMALANE PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

April 11, 2018 – Board meeting 6:30 p.m.
Five Year Capital Improvement Plan

SPRINGFIELD UTILITY BOARD

April 11, 2018 – Board meeting 6:00 p.m.



Springfield City Club Board Meeting

LRAPA Board Room

February 6, 2018

In Attendance:

Joe Leahy, President	Bob Fondren	Terry Beyer
Steve Moe, Treasurer	Kristen Denmark	Carolyn Miller
Dan Egan, Secretary	Len Goodwin	Callie Eliot
	Merlyn Hough	

1. Call to order: The meeting began at 11:35.
2. Program Recap: 2nd Amendment meeting. The Board members were positive about the most recent City Club Program about gun control and the State of Oregon.
3. Future Programs:
 - a. Homelessness in our metro area: Carolyn Miller described this two-part presentation scheduled for February. Facilitator and First Questioner for each session were identified.
 - b. Civil Discourse: This Program is scheduled for March 15 with Judge Brewer as presenter. Merlyn Hough will facilitate; Len Goodwin will be First Questioner.
 - c. Gerrymandering: This Program will take place April 5. Presenter will be Patricia Southwell, Oregon Municipal Judge.
 - d. We will not be meeting at the Hilton Garden Inn on April 19. We may be hosting a candidate forum in conjunction with the League of Women Voters.
 - e. May 3 meeting is open.
 - f. May 17 Program: Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. Meredith Holley is the presenter. Dan Egan is working with Callie Eliot on this program. Callie will be the facilitation; Carolyn the First Questioner.
 - g. June 14 Program options: Jennifer MacLean on mental wellness. Tour of the new Hamlin Middle School.
 - h. June/July period: Need to make decisions about July meetings.....cancel the first meeting of the month is most likely.
4. Finance Report: Steve Moe handed out the financial reports. Joe Leahy took time to review renewing members, and members yet to be contacted. He also reviewed the forms used to enroll both individual members and corporate supporters.
5. Adjournment: The meeting ended at 12:40 p.m.

City Club Board of Directors

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President-Elect	Joe Leahy	jjl@emeraldclaw.com	(541) 746-9621
Past President	Mike Eyster	salsamike@comcast.net	
Treasurer	John Tamulonis	J13tam@aol.com	(541) 954-4819
Secretary	Dan Egan	danagan1950@gmail.com	
Director	Len Goodwin	localcitizenor@gmail.com	(541) 915-8956
Director	Merlyn Hough	merlyn@lrpa.org	(541) 736-1056
Director	Chris Kline	chris.kline@summitbankonline.com	(541) 684-7523
Director	Carolyn Miller	carolyn.jean.miller@gmail.com	
Director	Steve Moe	intercity@aol.com	(641) 954-0175
Director			