

Cape Cod Hoarding Task Force

Thursday, August 14, 2014

9:30 11:30 AM

Dennis Police Department

90 Bob Crowell Road, South Dennis, MA 02660

Minutes

Welcome, Introductions: Steering committee & members

Attendance: Erika Woods, BCDHE; Paul Wild, ESCC&I; Kevin Grunwald, Harwich COA; Debra Johnson, Brewster COA; Sherri McCullough, Brewster HD; Catriona Purdy, Falmouth Housing Authority; Maggi Flanagan, Homeless Prevention Council; Brenda Locke, Brewster COA; Kerry O'Connell, Orleans PD; Cassie Coffin, Disaster Specialists; Terri Guarino, Bourne BOH; Andrea, Lavenets, P-Town COA; Annie Dugan, Brewster BOH; Joan Piontek, Rock Harbor Village

Erika reviewed the application for the Lee A Mannillo grant that the CCHTF recently submitted. The task force is looking to apply for funding to expand the BIT workshop offerings to the upper and lower cape as well as the middle cape. The task force will look first to hold a basic introduction to professionals about the benefits of the BIT workshops and how they can be promoted as a part of a hoarding response. At this event, the task force will seek to identify individuals, or groups that would be interested and able to facilitate a workshop. The task force will then hold a more in-depth training for those that have been identified, and then the program will be rolled out in a community event. The task force is looking for funding for the events as well as books and supplies for the workshops. There has been a great response and likely the awards will not be announced until after September 5th.

Presentation by Maggi Flanagan from Homeless Prevention Council of Lower Cape Cod

Group serves individuals & families at risk of homeless, but will also assist in other areas of concern such as housing applications and fuel assistance as well as assisting individuals who cannot hold their own bank account. They will help people with finances, train them to manage their finances, and will act as their bill paying agent if necessary and will also help with pets if necessary.

There service area is Harwich to Provincetown, and there is no age limit. They have 2 full and 1 part time case manager, and Maggi estimates that she handles approximately 44 cases per month. This takes into account the cases that can be completed in very short order as well as those that take a greater amount of time. They are concerned as they are running into more and more hoarding issues.

Homeless prevention office may be available for BIT workshop

Other agencies that would be similar in other areas of the cape are:

- Housing Assistance Corporation-Mid-Cape

- Falmouth Human Services-upper cape
Orleans case- There was recently a case in a housing complex in Orleans where the individual had recently moved into the apartment and management became aware of the overwhelming amount of material in the unit. Management and The Homeless Prevention Council worked together and successfully took the “carrot and stick” approach. The individual was informed that she could lose her housing if this was not taken care and The Homeless Prevention Council assisted the individual with the relocation of the items to a storage locker. There is concern that the individual will begin bringing items back into the unit and management will monitor the situation.

Updates from CCHTF Sub-Committees

Erika brought up a question regarding a suggested press release from the National Fire Prevention Association that suggests fire departments conduct a campaign to notify the public of the dangers of hoarding with respect to Fire Department Personnel. Among the tips suggested are:

- Keep escape routes open
- Discard stacks of paper/ mail
- Consider storing collectables in outside shed or storage unit.
- Alert firefighters to homes you think have hoarders

Some comments were:

- Good idea but it is an oversimplification of the issue.
- Reporting on neighbor a concern-we are trying to make it comfortable for people to come forward-reduce the stigma attached but reporting on a neighbor may be counter-productive to this.
- We need to inform first responders of availability of resources in these situations and conduct outreach to police and fire services

Paul-next month he will be attending-North Shore Elder Services meeting

Discuss Active Hoarding Cases

Provincetown-Morgan is concerned about a case that she has issued a rental order on. She is concerned for her safety as upon entering the property there is a strong odor. It may not be a hoarding case but may be squalor as there is not a large amount of material. Some of the suggestions are:

- If there is any concern then anyone entering the unit should be wearing proper protective equipment. Without knowing the exact nature of the threat it is hard to say what is needed but properly fit mask is a good start. Possibly booties and outer covering. It was suggested to tell the individual ahead of time that the inspection will be conducted using this gear so it is not so uncomfortable at the beginning of the inspection.
- It was suggested that the momentum should be kept up and that documentation is the key.

- Likely the landlord can provide the “stick” for lease violations-does lease have “neat and tidy” clause; or interfering with the enjoyment of neighbors. This could be used as a more immediate way to push her in the direction of compliance.
- It was suggested that to spray clothes w/ ½ & ½ alcohol & water to repel bed bugs.
- She may have a disability and may need special accommodations

Announcements and Future Topics

Next meeting Oct. 9th, 9:30-11:30 AM Dennis Police Station