



# GREENVILLE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes

## Committee of the Whole

July 17, 2018

5:04 p.m.

County Square – Council Chambers

### **Council Members**

Mr. Butch Kirven, Chairman

Mr. Willis Meadows, Vice Chairman

Mrs. Xanthene Norris, Chairman Pro Tem

Mr. Joe Dill

Mr. Mike Barnes

Mr. Sid Cates

Mr. Rick Roberts

Mr. Bob Taylor

Mrs. Liz Seman

Mr. Ennis Fant, Sr.

Mr. Lynn Ballard

Mr. Fred Payne

---

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting date, time, place and agenda was posted on the bulletin board at the County Square and made available to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned Citizens.

### **Council Members Absent**

Xanthene Norris, District 23

### **Staff Present**

Joe Kernell, County Administrator

Mark Tollison, County Attorney

John Hansley, Deputy County Administrator

Regina McCaskill, Clerk to Council

Paula Gucker, Assistant County Administrator, Public Works

Teresa Barber, Fire Code Official/Code Enforcement Supervisor

Bob Mihalic, Governmental Relations Officer

Jessica Jordan, Code Enforcement Supervisor

### **Others Present**

Ryan Duerk, VP of Adult Ministries, Miracle Hill Ministries

Lauren Stephens, Social Ministries Director, Salvation Army

Ginny Stroud, Community Development Administrator, City of Greenville

Brad Rice, Code Supervisor, City of Greenville

Susan McLarty, Greenville Homeless Alliance

Eleanor Dunlap, The Graham Foundation

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Kirven

### **Invocation**

Councilor Willis Meadows

**Item (3) Approval of Minutes**

**ACTION:** Councilor Seman moved to approve the minutes of the June 19, 2018, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Motion carried unanimously by Council Members present.

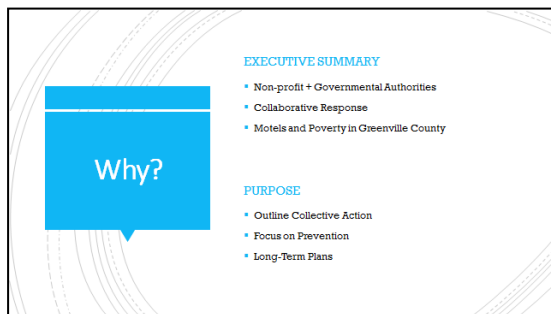
**Item (4) Motel Displacement Response Plan**

Presented by: Paula Gucker  
Assistant County Administrator, Public Works



Ms. Gucker stated a number of local agencies and individuals had recently worked on a plan to address motel displacements in response to the incident which occurred at the Economy Inn on January 17, 2018. Due to life and safety issues, Greenville County Code Enforcement condemned the motel and the residents were evacuated. Some relocated to other area motels or were able to find shelter with relatives and others. Ms. Gucker stated it was presumed that some of the residents either left the area or were currently homeless. By the time all the local service agencies were contacted, there remained 30 individuals still living in the motel with nowhere to go. Ms. Gucker stated if it wasn't for all the service agencies coming together, the situation would not have been dealt with as well as it was.

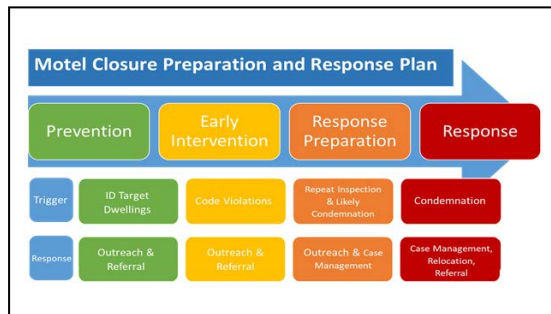
The Greenville Homeless Alliance, along with non-profit organizations, citizens and local congregations, determined the response could have been better coordinated. As a result, a number of local partners developed a response plan of action to handle displacements that resulted from abrupt motel closures as well as recommendations and guidance for preventing such closures.



The response plan was a collaborative effort comprised of representatives from a number of local agencies. A survey was sent out and there were 38 participants. The results of the survey helped gauge the best way to respond appropriately to future displacements.

Ms. Gucker stated Susan McLarty was named the Response Team Coordinator and was considered the best contact for city, county and other non-profits when dealing with situations involving displacements.

The issue of poverty was studied and it was determined there were approximately 170,000 persons living in poverty, or teetering on the edge, in Greenville County; 1 in 3 could not meet their basic financial needs. Ms. Gucker added that many were living in motels or precarious housing and the situation was becoming worse as incomes were not keeping up with rising housing costs. Motels were being used more for long-term housing options for low-income families.



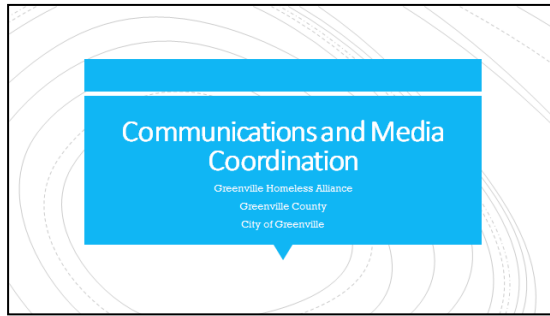
Ms. Gucker stated the purpose of the Motel Displacement Response Plan was a collective action that would be provided by local partners when a motel closure occurred and where there may be cases of temporary or extended homelessness.

The plan contained triggers, actions, contact information of key partners and other pertinent information helpful to those in anticipation of or responding to a motel closure. Ms. Gucker stated the focus was prevention. The City of Greenville's Community Development Department and the Code Enforcement Division of Greenville County were working on ways to identify ways to support motel owners and property owners in making repairs that would keep properties from being condemned. Ms. Gucker added that support could also include a period of time for making needed repairs before reassessment and assisting the owner in accessing available financial assistance.

Ms. Gucker stated Community Development and Code Enforcement would work closely with the Greenville Homeless Alliance in advance of any motel facing condemnation for code violations and life safety concerns. Once contacted, the Response Team would secure emergency shelter and food for the displaced residents and establish case management services, as needed.

Long term plans included working with local fire departments to establish a more consistent scale of annual inspections of area motels to verify that each room met code requirements. Ms. Gucker stated when problems were found, local code departments would attempt to work with motel owners to address the violations and ensure repairs were made in order for the residents to move back in as soon as possible. In some situations, the best prevention move was to help motel residents secure permanent housing as opposed to moving back into the motel. Ms. Gucker stated local non-profit organizations would use available resources to provide case management, support services and financial assistance to assist in moving residents out of temporary dwellings and into more sustainable housing.

Ms. Gucker stated the plan was designed for quick implementation and consisted of four steps: Prevention, Early Intervention, Response Preparation and Response. She added there would be situations requiring immediate evacuation of motel residents. A clause was added which stated, "I understand that this plan does not supersede or restrict the ability of local code officials, fire officials or law enforcement officials to order the removal of tenants, renters or guests in the event of a fire or natural disaster in which a building is rendered unsafe, damaged or uninhabitable to the extent immediate evacuation is needed in order to prevent harm to any of these residents."



**Primary Response Team and Next Steps**

*Primary Response Team: will coordinate a response to displacement of tenants who need relocation assistance*

Organization	Name	Title	Email	Phone
Primary Contact & Plan Coordinator Greenville Homeless Alliance	Susan McLarty	Coordinator	GHACoordinator@united-ministries.org	864-325-8100
System Change of the American Red Cross	Lisa Colby	Executive Director	lisa.colby@redcross.org	864-551-1832
City of Greenville	Brad Rice	Codes Supervisor	brice@greenville.gov	864-467-4592
City of Greenville Police	Lt. Billy Albert	Lieutenant	walbert@greenville.gov	864-444-2619
County of Greenville	Teresa Barber	Director Code Compliance Division	tbarber@greenvillecounty.org	864-965-2265
Greenville County Sheriff	Conrad Masell		cmasell@greenvillecounty.org	864-483-0830
Miracle Hill Ministries	Ryan Darrk	Vice President, Adult Ministries	rdarrk@miraclehill.org	864-341-3000
The Salvation Army	Lizares Stephens	Social Ministries Director	lizares.stephens@usa.salvationsarmy.org	864-225-4800 ext. 66118
Trouse Mercy Centre	Dob Richardson-Moore	Pastor/Director	dob@trousemc.org	864-233-3402
United Ministries	Taty McDiade	Executive Director	TMcDiade@united-ministries.org	864-907-8167

Paula Gucker thanked all the participants involved and stated she was confident the plan would serve the community very well in the future.

Councilor Ballard stated the study revealed that although each of the 30 fire districts completed fire inspections, there was no standard inspection plan in place. To address this issue, fire personnel was working with Code Enforcement to create uniform guidelines for the fire districts.

Vice-Chairman Meadows commended all the participants and stated the plan was probably one of the most effective things the community had developed, as well as the most comprehensive. He stated some area apartments were worse than motels and asked if the plan applied to apartments.

Paula Gucker stated she would look into the issue and added it would not be much of a stretch to include apartments.

Teresa Barber stated the plan was a working document and would be reviewed periodically.

Chairman Kirven suggested testing the plan by conducting exercises with scenarios.

Councilor Cates stated some residents were afraid they would be evicted by the owners if they complained about the conditions. He asked how often residents complained about motel conditions to officials.

Teresa Barber stated the program was complaint-driven.

Councilor Cates asked if it was legal to check on hotels periodically to ensure there were no safety issues.

Paula Gucker stated it was legal to do so and would be done. She added the Code Enforcement Division was aware of "problem areas." Ms. Gucker stated the plan looked at preventive measures as well as emergency measures.

Councilor Cates asked if there was recourse for a resident if an owner/manager became vindictive.

Chairman Kirven stated with the fire departments becoming the "eyes and ears" for the plan, it took some responsibility off the residents. If problems could be identified early enough, it would save the property owners money and trouble.

Councilor Taylor stated it appeared there were two elements involved: the residents and the facilities. The plan seemed to primarily address the facilities.

Paula Gucker stated the plan addressed both the residents and the facility. If the building did not meet code requirements, the City and/or County would work with the property owner to ensure the building met the requirements. If the residents needed temporary or more permanent housing, there were agencies involved that would assist.

Councilor Taylor stated if the residents could receive essential services to alleviate the need to live in a motel, it could also alleviate the need for emergency displacements.

Paula Gucker stated the plan contained provisions to teach people life skills necessary to obtain a sustainable way of life.

Chairman Kirven stated the goal was to ensure that all people, regardless of their financial level, had a safe, sound and sanitary place to live. Mr. Kirven asked Joe Kernell if the plan presented would be implemented through County staff.

Mr. Kernell confirmed the plan would be implemented through staff.

Councilor Dill stated he was Chairman of the Regional Aging Advisory Committee, which consisted of representatives from six (6) counties. He stated they received a lot of complaints about senior citizens living in apartments with mold and mildew. Mr. Dill added there was no recourse if the owner of the property refused to correct the problems. He asked how those situations could be remedied in Greenville County; it was his understanding similar situations were being handled appropriately in Oconee County. Mr. Dill stated many of the seniors were afraid they would be evicted if they complained.

Paula Gucker stated there was a process to handle situations of this type and assured Mr. Dill she would obtain the correct information for him.

Vice-Chairman Meadows asked if the County had any control over HUD housing in regards to substandard living conditions.

Paula Gucker stated the County could not enter Section 8 housing.

Councilor Dill stated he approached DHEC about issues with Section 8 housing and was advised they could only observe the outside of the dwelling. If mold and mildew were being blown into the yard, DHEC had some control.

**ACTION:** Councilor Seman moved to endorse the Motel Displacement Response Plan.

Motion carried unanimously by Council Members present.

Chairman Kirven stated he was certain Councilor Norris would have voted in favor of the plan if she had been present. He commended all those involved in formulating the plan and added that although the problems still existed, the community had taken a giant step in moving forward.

Councilor Payne commended Paula Gucker for all of her hard work.

**Item (5)      Brookfield Special Tax District / 1 Vacancy**

**a.    Ryan Guite (D. 22)**

Councilor Taylor stated Mr. Dustin Hughes recently resigned from the Brookfield Special Tax District which left an unexpired term. Mr. Taylor stated this was an elected board and Greenville County Council had the duty to appoint members to fill unexpired terms. He stated the term would end in December of 2021.

**ACTION:**      Councilor Taylor moved to close nominations and elect by acclamation Ryan Guite to fill an unexpired term for the Brookfield Special Tax District.

Motion carried unanimously by Council Members present.

**Item (6)      Adjournment**

**ACTION:**      Councilor Dill moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried unanimously by Council Members present and the meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

---

Regina G. McCaskill, Clerk to Council