



Eileen Donoghue  
City Manager

Alex Magee  
Assistant to the City Manager

Memorandum

To: Mayor William Samaras and Members of the City Council  
From: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*  
Date: June 7, 2019  
RE: C. Cirillo – “Req. The City Mgr. Provide The City Council With A Progress Update From  
The Homelessness Task Force”

As the problems surrounding homelessness worsened throughout 2018, it became apparent that a more concerted effort was needed to address the specific challenges that homelessness present. I directed members of my office to begin investigating solutions that had a real systemic impact on homelessness, as opposed to simply offering more of the same resources that were not adequately helping the homeless and their profound problems. After some research, I identified the City of Worcester as having utilized a successful model in addressing some of the same issues we face here in the City of Lowell. This model focused on Housing First, a shift in traditional thinking surrounding homelessness and housing stability, whereby resources are initially devoted to ensuring all people are housed, and *then* giving them the wraparound services they need to sustain their housing. Worcester utilized the expert services of Barbara Poppe, who is a renowned national expert in the field of shelters and homelessness, to make major strides in solving their issues. Through a partnership with Community Teamwork Inc., the Lowell Plan/Lowell Development Financial Corporation, and the Greater Lowell Community Foundation, we were able bring Barbara Poppe on-board to analyze our problems and custom-fit some similar solutions for the City of Lowell.

A core leadership team was created to help make important decisions and move this process along. This team is charged with the overall direction of the Task Force, making big-picture decisions with the advice of Ms. Poppe, and meets regularly to follow up on the work of the Task Force, the two standing Committees, and any additional related issues that need to be addressed. Members of this team include Jim Cook and Allison Lamey of the Lowell Plan and LDFC, Karen Frederick of Community Teamwork Inc., Jay Linnehan of the Greater Lowell Community Foundation, Jim Cuddy of Southern Middlesex Opportunities Council (the organization who runs the Lowell Transitional Living Center), Susan Beaton

of the Fireman Foundation, Craig Thomas of the City's DPD, Assistant to the City Manager Alex Magee, and myself. This group meets two or three times per month as necessary to keep the business of the Task Force moving forward.

The City Manager's Task Force on Homelessness and Housing Sustainability is comprised of a cross-cut of leaders within the community whose organizations all in some way are directly or indirectly involved with homelessness and housing instability in the City of Lowell (see attached roster). The Task Force has the following objective: **“To develop and recommend a plan based on the evidenced-based “Housing First” strategy, which includes engaging the appropriate community infrastructure necessary to support and sustain a long-term system of permanent supportive housing within the City of Lowell as well as improve the crisis response system (street outreach, emergency shelter, and rapid connection to resources to prevent homelessness).”** The aim of the Task Force is to get the entire community moving in a single unified direction with regards to how we collectively respond to and support homeless individuals and provide sustainable housing.

The Task Force created two committees to focus on specific issues – (1) Housing and (2) Crisis Response. The Housing Committee membership has specific interest or knowledge related to housing within the City of Lowell (see attached roster). It is chaired by Craig Thomas and has focused specifically on housing related issues, including the inventory of housing (or future developments) which may be appropriate to help alleviate some of these problems, how the City's Continuum of Care resources are allocated, and partnerships which may help lead to more sustainable housing for this vulnerable population. The Crisis Response Committee membership has specific interest or knowledge of outreach and/or crisis response means and methods within the City (see attached roster). It is co-chaired by Karen Frederick and Susan Beaton and focuses on outreach efforts and crisis response capabilities and methods within the city to people experiencing (or on the edge of) homelessness, including the LTLC shelter and many of the organizations that operate in this space within Lowell.

Conceptually, the overall work flow for the groups works as follows: the Leadership Group meets to set an aggressive agenda for the month in coordination with Barbara Poppe. The Task Force together with the Leadership Group then meets as a large group to cover ground, and then give out assignments for the committees to focus on. Over the next few weeks, the housing and crisis response committees meet to cover the assignments. The committee chairs then bring back their reports to the next larger task force meeting, which will have had a new agenda set by the Leadership committee, and will hand out new committee assignments for the next follow up meetings. This cyclical workflow has proven to be both efficient and lean, and allows a large group to move together quickly on strategizing and aligning resources. One of the biggest benefits of this entire initiative has been getting all of the leaders of these

organizations in one space together to discuss communal strategy and to align their goals with those of the city.

To date, the Task Force has met in March, April, May, and will continue to meet monthly. The Committees have met following each full Task Force meeting. The Leadership group has met 3 or 4 times per month starting in March. This initiative has maintained a fast pace, and is on track to meet the aggressive goal of a July delivery of an Action Plan to continue towards the goal of a unified move towards a Housing First model of ending homelessness in Lowell.

I want to acknowledge and thank all of the members of the Task Force and Committees for their incredible commitment of their time and expertise to this very important issue in our city.

I will update the Council once more ahead of the final July Action Plan. Please do not hesitate with any questions you may have.



**City Manager’s Task Force on Homelessness and Sustainable Housing  
Task Force Roster**

	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Organizations</u></b>
1	Eileen Donoghue	City of Lowell – City Manager
2	Kara Keefe Mullin	City of Lowell – City Manager’s Office
3	Alex Magee	City of Lowell – City Manager’s Office
4	Craig Thomas	City of Lowell – City of Lowell DPD
5	Kerran Vigroux	City of Lowell – City of Lowell HHS
6	Jim Cook	Lowell Development and Financial Corp.
7	Allison Lamey	Lowell Plan
8	Jay Linnehan	Greater Lowell Community Foundation
9	Karen Frederick	Community Teamwork Inc.
10	Jim Cuddy	Southern Middlesex Opportunities Council
11	Sue Levine	Lowell Community Health Center
12	Jeannine Durkin	Lowell Public School District
13	Kelly Richardson	Lowell Police Department
14	Gary Wallace	Lowell Housing Authority
15	Deborah Chausse	House of Hope
16	Joseph (Jody) White	Circle Health
17	Danielle McFadden	Chamber of Commerce
19	Gregg Croteau	United Teen Equality Center
20	Adam Baacke	UMass Lowell
21	Susanne Beaton	Paul & Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation
22	Joe Finn	Massachusetts Housing Shelter Alliance
23	Daniel Nakamoto	Vinfen
24	Yun-Ju Choi	Coalition for a Better Acre
25	Jeff Winward	Lowell Fire Department
26	Phillip Sisson	Middlesex Community College
27	Dan O’Connor	Hunger Homeless Commission
28	Kathleen Garland	Wellforce ACO
29	Emily Young	Lowell General Hospital



**City Manager’s Task Force on Homelessness and Sustainable Housing  
Crisis Response Committee Roster**

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
1	Karen Frederick*	Community Teamwork Inc
2	Sue Beaton*	Paul & Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation
3	Kelly Richardson	Lowell Police Dept.
4	Jeff Winward	Lowell Fire Dept.
5	Kerran Vigroux	Lowell Health Dept.
6	Deb Chausse	House of Hope
7	Lisa Taylor-Montminy	Lowell General Hospital
8	Susan Gentili	SMOC
9	Kristen Ross Sitcawich	CTI
10	Michael Collins	CTI
11	Dianne Waddell	Living Waters
12	Bill Garr	Lowell House
13	Kim Yeasir	Thrive MA
14	Dan Nakamoto	Mental Health Association of Lowell
15	Yun-Ju Choi	Coalition for a Better Acre
16	Joe Finn	MHSA
17	Danielle McFadden	Chamber of Commerce
18	Troix Bettencourt	Project HEAL/IHR
19	Sako Long	Coalition for a Better Acre
20	Catie Tager	Lowell Community Health Center
21	Adam Garvey	Lowell Housing Authority



**City Manager's Task Force on Homelessness and Sustainable Housing  
Housing Committee Roster**

	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Organization</u></b>
1	Craig Thomas*	City of Lowell - Planning and Development
2	Joe Finn	MHSA
3	Jim Cook	Lowell Development and Financial Corp.
4	Allison Lamey	Lowell Plan
5	Adam Baacke	Umass Lowell
6	Gary Wallace	Lowell Housing Authority
7	Daniel Nakamoto	Vinfen
8	Yun-Ju Choi	Coalition for a Better Acre
10	Carl Howell	Community Teamwork Inc.
11	Marc Horne	Coalition for a Better Acre
12	Carmen Bedard	Lowell Community Health Center
13	Emily Young	Circle Health