



Rochesterians Engaging in Action for the Chronically Homeless

PO Box 10845, Rochester, NY, 14610

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Minutes August 20, 2018

We welcomed a new participant, Marcia Reaver who brings a strong interest in a Tiny Home Village for her own neighborhood and wide work experiences including Life Span and Medicare support.

We approved the Minutes from July 30 and the agenda for today, August 20.

Thank you, Michael Van Alst for an amazing personal story for our reflection today. I will attach what Michael wrote.

- Next meeting Reflection: Lulu

Financial Report, David was not present, but we have not had any more bills since the last meeting and at that time our balance in the FLACE account was, \$12,300.

Board Creation and Development

- Jeanette reported on the meeting with Causewave held on August 14 attended by Jeanette, Heide, Peter and Dan
 - Causewave has a 68-year history beginning as the Ad Council of Rochester. They have a staff of 12 along with 70 volunteers working with 200 nonprofit organizations. Jeanette was very impressed with the amount of experience and resources the organization can provide for REACH. Causewave cited several important areas we need to work on or refine. When a person reads our vision statement, they should be able to understand what we do. Our mission should be a statement of who we are and what we plan to do. The plan previously emailed to the REACH Team lists the specific Causewave plan (attached). The first step is to help us finalize the wording of our vision and mission and then continue at other meetings helping us to develop an effective board. The first meeting would include all regular REACH Advocacy members and it will be a 3-4-hour meeting. At that meeting we will try to clarify where we want to go as an organization in the future. In other words, shelters, Tiny Home Villages or both. Kevin requested that we consider meeting on a weekend or evening if possible.
 - Causewave's services total cost is a maximum of \$3800, but we are being asked to pay a maximum of \$950.00
 - **A motion was made to approve paying Causewave \$950.00. The motion was passed.** Sarah will contact the treasurer to send a check to Causewave and she will ask about the scheduling of a meeting.
 - Peter shared that we may need to change our Articles of Incorporation to adjust the number of Board members to the 7 we already have elected. This will facilitate an opportunity to take our time in selecting additional board members. Ultimately, we will be able to file for incorporation sooner. The number of board members can be adjusted again when we make decisions on who else is needed.



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Additionally, we may need to change our purpose statement after meeting with Causewave.

- **Motion passed to reduce the number of Board members at this time to 7.**

St. Paul St. *REACH Tiny Home Village*, 1169 St. Paul Street

- Meeting with the City, John, Oscar, Sarah, Andy, Jeanette, Dan, Peter and Nana, from RIT Architecture attended a meeting with 12-15 city representatives from several different departments, zoning, Building and Housing Development, Environmental Services, Neighborhood Service Center, Law Department, Assessor. They spent about an hour and a half listening to us, answering questions and explaining the steps we need to take to develop a Tiny Home Village. Generally, the tone was positive with some expressing enthusiasm for our plans, but some were guarded and realistic about the rules and regulations we need to consider. Following is John's detailed report given orally at the meeting:

Summary by John Curran of 8/13/18 Meeting at City Hall

Involving REACH and City Department Representatives

Topic: *Developing a Tiny Home Village at 1169 St.Paul Street Land Parcel*

The meeting at City Hall began with individual introductions of City and REACH members. Peter Peters thanked those assembled for their participation. He provided background information regarding REACH's prior efforts to develop low-barrier emergency winter shelter since 2015. He gave an overview of REACH's Tiny Home Village concept and described the components of the land parcel at 1169 St. Paul Street. He made it clear that the village would include persons from mixed backgrounds. When asked, Peter "guessed" that the percentage of homeless persons for the village would be about 65%. Peter mentioned the need to include persons serving as mentors and the willingness among residents to develop cooperative relationships. Deacon Dan Callan mentioned that REACH's research would include professional disciplines to help with Engineering-type issues for the construction of the tiny home village.

REACH used the description of "condominiums" within a "land trust" setting for the tiny home village concept. The resident would rent or rent-to-own the tiny homes built within the land trust parcel. This builds equity towards eventual home ownership. Home ownership is REACH's goal. Each resident is expected to pay rent which helps cover operational expenses linked to the communal land in the village.

The 1169 St. Paul Street site under consideration is located across the street from RCSD #8 Roberto Clemente School. This raised City concern about the backgrounds of persons eventually living there. REACH acknowledged that its previous "low barrier" policy for emergency shelter would need enhanced background checks for this location. There is a need for the village to state clearly its behavioral policies and standards to maintain a positive quality of life for the neighborhood. REACH mentioned the importance of ongoing case management services. REACH proposes having a residential manager on-site for timely and responsive care.

A member from the Zoning Department expressed possible support for the concept while pushing for a "24 / 7" management by a resident or property owner. The tiny home village concept does NOT currently fit into



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the City's Zoning Code. This would require an amendment approved by the City Council. An Instrument Survey map is needed for the 1169 St. Paul Street parcel of land including Riverbank Place and Avenue A (the combined land trust site). The land parcel includes two City-owned lots combined with a residential-style worship space with ministry site for a church congregation. REACH would need to go to the Zoning Board and probably the Planning Commission to submit an application if it planned to acquire one or both of the City-owned plots at #1179 and #1159 St. Paul Street. This could be denied.

Discussion included the church building on the land parcel which lacks a formal sanctuary space. The church would like to develop sanctuary space for 200 persons. A new sanctuary would solve the Zoning problem. There are additional financial concerns for the property. The City would like to "work with" the church in these matters. The property adjoins land owned by RG&E. The west border is a sheer cliff drop-off to the Genesee River near the RG&E substation. Consultation with RG&E is needed.

Diligence towards environmental health and safety issues will require a Phase One investigation. REACH needs input from on its its supporters with Engineering backgrounds. The land needs to be studied for potential prior chemical spills or environmental issues. City permits are needed before development takes place.

REACH prefers to seek donations for the creation of the proposed tiny home village. It wants to avoid the time-consuming State and Federal bureaucratic processes linked to grant-writing plus the add-on consulting costs. There is a "buyer beware" concern for acquiring properties for the tiny home village at St. Paul. Buildings codes enforcements must be followed. If you buy a problem property, you bear the burden of remediation and upkeep.

The City raised questions about the minimum size for a REACH tiny home. This would depend on the individual style of the building (single-person, single parent with small children, college graduate ... etc.). The REACH tiny home models would feature full utilities based on Rochester's climate. Energy codes must be observed and following Chapter 90 considerations is essential. We need to get early Engineering input for utilities and consult with Monroe County Pure Waters and Rochester Gas & Electric.

REACH described some examples of tiny home villages in Ithaca, NY and Austin, Texas. REACH wants the development site to resemble a village. Each home would be self-sufficient (e.g. not using a communal kitchen). REACH wants to use volunteer labor or workers-in-training to build the homes that would have a variety of architectural features. The village would enhance the larger neighborhood, develop supportive relationships among residents and emphasize dignity and respect. The City expects proper management to maintain the properties.

There was some confusion between REACH's new tiny village proposal and an effort getting underway at Broadway and Meigs Street. These are two separate endeavors. The input from the Architectural team assisting REACH will help shape future discussion with the City for the proposed 1169 St. Paul Street tiny home village. There are Tax Assessor concerns for REACH to explore. Maintenance will be an on-going expense. REACH will hire property management.



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REACH explained that its timeline looks at Calendar Year 2019 as a year for planning and fund-raising. Actual building of the tiny homes is not expected until 2020. REACH will need to get a City Property License Agreement (Paul Scuder's office).

Dana Miller articulated four concerns: 1) the location must be environmentally sound; 2) there must be on-going property management; 3) the design and engineering must meet Codes; and 4) the neighboring community needs to be involved in the early and ongoing communications processes. REACH explained its current communications with neighbors, the church congregation and neighborhood groups. REACH will communicate with George Moses of Group 14621. REACH asked the City to forward any neighborhood concerns brought to its attention.

REACH described its upcoming community service events slated for the church-owned 1169 St. Paul Street property with a depth of 160 feet abutting the steep river bank. The rear portion has extensive debris from toppled trees, discarded junk and broken-up sidewalk slabs left over from prior demolitions. Assistant to the Mayor, Alex Yudelson, and other City departments have been informed of the two collegiate community service days slated for August 25 and 27th and REACH's request for practical assistance and 2 roll-off dumpsters.

- Peter, Dan, John and Sarah met with Pastor Santos, his wife and a member of the church, City of Refuge Mission, who own the house in the middle of the St. Paul Street property. They are receptive to REACH creating a Tiny Home Village around them, but rightfully have questions. Their goal is to build a sanctuary behind the building. When we met with the city representatives we learned that The City of Refuge is not in compliance with zoning because they are not allowed to have a church in the building they own. They would mostly solve their problems if they build a sanctuary on the property. Peter has spoken with Pastor Santos urging him to talk to the city. It isn't our desire to cause problems for the group by bringing attention to the property. The church appears to have issues financing a new church building.
- Architectural work timetable
 - Nana, the architecture professor from RIT, attended the city meeting with us and asked some good questions. He has developed a class syllabus/timeline for the preliminary designs for REACH Tiny Home Village. We should have some design plans from his students in December. See the attachment.
 - Discussed collaborating with Habitat for Humanity, Youth Build and OACES
 - Hope to finance through private donations and private grants rather than state or federal funds
 - It was suggested that we should read "Yes Magazine," from last month. There are informative articles about housing and the homeless.
<https://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/affordable-housing>
- Land clearing: John reported that the city has cleared away some concrete blocks and debris from the back of the St. Paul Street property. Students from RIT/Brockport will be working this Saturday, August 25 and Monday, August 27 to clear up brush and other debris.



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REACH Home 2018

- Ashlee will be meeting with Laurie in the next few weeks to determine if we will be able to use REACH Home this winter. The decision is dependent on news about the Dimitri House grant.

REACH Phase III, John continues to investigate the future use of the Bull's Head/West Main/Nick Tahoo area for a site for constructing Tiny Homes.

Announcements

- Peter has several ideas for September Newsletter, but due to his surgery, he will not be working on it for a few weeks possibly. Some of the content will be Mike's reflection, a report on the Tiny Home Village and any new updates on a new transitional shelter for this winter

Next Meeting: September 10 **tentatively**, 2-5 pm at Causewave. Investigating a weekend or late afternoon/ evening meeting instead.