

EDGAR COUNTY ROSC MEETING MINUTES

February 27, 2024

5:15 PM

Paris Hospital Conference Room A and Zoom

Attendees: Jack Hoffman, Susan Essenger, Betty Redden, Judy Benton, Jonathan Burns, Mary Alice Parks, Jerica Robinson, Rick Cook, Debbie Cook, Amanda Thompson, Cindy Spencer, Lisa Foster, Doug Cochran, Nate Alexander, Michelle Creech, Norm Wilson, Keith Myers, Bethany Wagoner, John Youngblood, Sue Sheeran, Vicky Dick, Lisa Ellis, Janice Watson, Cory Hanks, Zachary George, Hwa Sung Ryu, Samantha Hicks, Dr. Marilyn Frey, Linda Kerekygarto, Katy H, Michelle Hibbard, Samantha McCarty, Liesl Wingert, Kyra Graham, April Burns, Camille Gordon, Connor Dotson, Lexanna Kocher, Kristina Drum, Melissa Monte, Karen Cook, Dana Tell, Amber Clark, Leanna Morgan, Jenna Hays, Ambrosia Branson, and Nicki Hanks

Background “How did we get here” (Kenton St Property):

Council member and Executive Director of HRC Jonathan Burns facilitated the evening meeting. He started the discussion with a personal story and related it to today's meeting. He explains that after seeing the Kenton St property, he feels that maybe this is not the best fit for what the needs are in the community. He explained that he came to the meeting today to discuss what we see in the community and what we can do about it.

Define the Problem:

Jonathan says that his vision is that we would have some type of shelter in the community to meet the needs of the people in the community. Jonathan opens it up to the council and asks everyone to speak up about what they see in the community first and then brainstorm ways to tackle the problem. He emphasizes everyone to share their thoughts on the shelter situation. Sue Sheeran reflects on her experience working with a family that had a parent in active addiction, and the grandparent was raising the grandchild. She explains in the situation that there was this generational cycle of addiction in the family and how substance use disorder affected a child. She said she was here tonight at the meeting to find out what we can do about the generational cycle. Sue mentioned wanting to do more and understand the resources but couldn't pull a community together alone. She mentioned that during her time at Choices, the women suffered from many mental health challenges, substance use issues, and other problems, and she always wondered what we could do for the next generation.

Michelle Creech spoke next and stated that she sees the HRC perspective. She said they see people who want to get clean, and they can get these individuals to a rehab facility, but when they come back, they don't have anywhere to go to have support and a safe place to live with the resources they need. So that led them to go back out on the street and couch surf with the same individuals they were hanging out with before they went to rehab. Michelle explains that a significant part of recovery is changing the whole aspect of the people you hang around. When

we don't have a place to go when we get out of rehab, it is hard for these people to get out of their situation. Having a sober living facility would show our community that we care and are here to help. It will not stop the drug problem but be the first step to show our community that we care. No one grows up and says that they want to be a drug addict. These people that are actively using have nowhere to go after they get help.

Mary Alice states that as part of Probation, she sees people every day who are fighting this challenge. They are couch surfing and used to have a place to shower and sleep. They say they have no other option but to use their dealers if they need somewhere else.

Doug states that couch-surfing individuals are the ones being groomed for human trafficking. These people have nowhere to go; they find a dealer to take them in and groom them. Mary Alice states that they have trauma in their life, and Doug seconds this.

Jonathan states that he worries as HRC sees a disproportionate number of males, and he worries that part of the problem is that females are not being seen, and he worries about them and their kids.

Keith mentioned that he works with many sober living homes in Terre Haute, and one of the most significant assets/resources they have is peers, which shows that recovery is possible. He says that having a faith community is also important. He also mentioned that we had a great turnout this evening, which is largely partly due to the Safety Act. People are realizing that the addiction problem in the community is not the problem of law enforcement but the community.

April mentions that many of the resources that are available in our community are faith-based and that is not a fit for everyone. She runs into people that ask her for resources that are independent of a faith-based community and want someone other than that. She feels that, in her experience, we would need, as an entire community, something that is independent of a specific faith.

Michelle mentions that we can have individuals in the faith-based community help in the process, so it is an option for everyone if they want that pathway. Michelle agrees that it is not everyone, but we can show individuals that we love them as a person. She people churches can show this. Jonathan mentioned he is a big believer in having many paths to recovery.

Sue also wanted to mention that Choices did allow women to stay there in times of need. She said that they knew if they came to the door, she would give them help.

Linda speaks up and says that our biggest problem is finding a place. She asks about the old HRC building or what is being done to the old abandoned houses in the community.

Jonathan mentions that the property options will be narrowed down when we decide on a program model. We will be following some type of licensure structure or program model. Jonathan says this will be an ongoing discussion.

Lisa mentions her experience and how important it is to have peers helping these people in their recovery journey. She says what Keith says is so true!

Jonathan states that we have a problem, and after more research, he found data to support this. In the last month, the Hour House had 13 people from Edgar County, seven from Clark, and two from Vermillion in their recovery homes. That is just one organization in Charleston; it doesn't account for other organizations.

Types of Homes:

Jonathan states that he has also researched the types of homes we are looking at. The first is a recovery home. They are owned by places like HRC. They are residential and a significant undertaking, approximately \$750,000 per year. That would be the 24-bed location on Kenton St, which brought us here today. Mike Wilhoit, the owner of that building, spoke with Jonathan about purchasing the building. That conversation is what Jonathan said lit a fire under him to do a lot of research and see what we could do. Jonathan states that he doesn't believe Kenton St is the right property for what we need in Paris and not the model we need. Jonathan said we need men's, women's, and children's facilities.

The second model he looked into is a detox or stabilization unit. He said this would require a level 3 licensure and would require the medical side of detox- doctors, nurses, etc. Jonathan noted that HRC is able to provide level 1 and 2 services, but a level 3 is a stretch for what they have now. He said this is something they would love to do one day in the future. He stated that the transition and stabilization unit is what the Hour House has now.

The next model he researched is a sober house. He said this is a little bit of a Wild West, with no firm regulations and little structure. He said that bringing people who already do not have a lot of structure into a home with little to no structure can be concerning.

This is what piqued his interest in Oxford Houses. There are 100 in Illinois, and they are a recovery-run operation. Much like NA or AA-style organizations, they are members. Jonathan mentioned Zach and how he asked him to come as he knows much about Oxford Houses and works for the state with Oxford Houses. Jonathan said with this model, HRC could step in and do a case management piece and provide recovery supports. Jonathan mentions that we need to continue to increase our recovery support in the community to support this vision to support people in the home. Another big thing we must tackle is transportation to help these people within the home. He believes HRC may be able to assist with this with Rides Mass Transit.

Zach introduces himself and states that he works for Oxford House. After residential treatment, he was fortunate to move into an Oxford House. Because of that, he has maintained his recovery and has been helping open Oxford Houses in Illinois since 2021. They have opened just over 100 houses in Illinois in the last two and a half years, with most houses not in Cook County. Zach states that SUPR wants to target under-resourced communities. Zach goes into detail about how Oxford Houses were started.

They now have over 4000 Oxford houses nationally, all of which are run on a peer-based, self-supporting model. Everything in the house comes down to a vote by the people living there. He

believes that the people closest to the situation are the ones best able to manage it. He does state, though, that the people affiliated with Oxford House are able to provide technical assistance, training, and support to the network of Oxford houses. He said personally, in his Oxford Houses, they ran themselves.

Zach states that living in an Oxford House requires everyone to pay their shares, not be disruptive, and not drink or use. He said that the Oxford House Charter is in place of licensure and that they are thankful SUPR recognizes that. He says the Oxford Model is evidence-based, and there is no red tape in what they do. This means that if they were to go into a community tomorrow and find a house, they could open it up. He says they can help people in real-time. There is no outside funding, so there are no outside requirements, and they can just help people recover. They open nice homes in nice neighborhoods and train them in this model, which saves his life. The goal is to go into communities and open a network of Oxford Houses because the opposite of addiction is connection. Zach says that before coming to Paris, he opened his phone and found three houses in Paris that he says would be perfect for an Oxford House. He also states that Oxford Houses can come in and provide the home needed in the community, while ROSC and stakeholders can give the rest of the wrap-around services.

Someone asks a question about how people can get accepted into the house. Zach states that there is an Oxford House website that lists all of the homes and will be a phone number and contact listed for that specific home. He says to call that number and set up an interview. That person would then go through the interview process with the house members and answer some questions about how they could support you. The members then take a vote on whether or not to let you into the house. Someone also asked if they were government-funded. Zach stated that they have a contract with SUPR (Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery), which pays for the staff at Oxford House. The state has a revolving loan fund, allowing them to get all the home start-up costs.

Someone asked what would happen if someone were living in the house and they went out and did some not-so-good stuff. Would that allow them to get kicked out of the house? Zach said that maybe in that person's situation, the support in home life is the missing link for them, and they just need support and accountability. He then gives an example about another community and this individual living there had burned many bridges, even getting banned from their local Walmart. He said that since living in Oxford Home, he has been a manager at his job, has been living in Oxford House for eight and a half months, and can go into Walmart again. The local newspaper even wrote a story about him because many people had given up on him and thought he would never find recovery. He said the community had a landscape and population similar to Paris's.

Michelle then goes into detail about HRC's IPS program. Michelle's team can help people with substance use disorders or mental health disorders find employment. Having this Oxford House would allow HRC to build better relationships with employers and show that they are receiving services through the IPS program. She said, like Zach said that it is all about advocating for these people. Zach says it only takes one success story to change the narrative!

Cory details his time living in an Oxford House in New Jersey. He says he learned how to pay bills, balance his checkbook, and learn responsibility in his time there. He was taught these

things through his peers living there. Cory said it was so helpful, and he could depend on those guys in the house to hold him accountable. He also said that you do not have to be in active addiction to be in an Oxford House; you can be years clean and still be there.

Zach then explained the 4 ways they charter houses, for men, for women, for women with children, and men with children.

Jonathan said we will continue this discussion into the next ROSC council meeting!

Next Meeting: March 26, 2024, 5:15 PM at Paris Hospital Conference Room A and Zoom

Subcommittee Meeting 2.26.24

Lisa Foster, Kyra Graham, Connor Dotson, Nicki Hanks, Ambrosia Roberts, Bo Scott

- Recovery Housing
 - Ambrosia explained that this topic is tabled for the ROSC council meeting tomorrow
 - Ambrosia spoke about the need to reduce stigma related to homelessness, recovery housing, and recovery
 - Route we should take in terms of the homelessness awareness campaign
 - Lisa said that people do not realize how many homeless there are
 - Nicki said that we should do education in the community
 - Educational sessions on social media?
 - Kyra said that we should share them on social and have them recorded
 - Lisa asked Nicki if we had people who were recently homeless that are no longer homeless and see how they got help
 - Nicki said that she will reach out to them
 - Or what would help them even more or even quicker?
- Brainstorm of Events for the rest of FY 24
 - March- Laundry Day
 - April
 - Educational session, series, campaign
 - May
 - Recovery Window Painting
 - June
 - Employer Fair- reach out to Bethany with Prairie Press?
- Narcan Trainings and Display Sites
 - Ambrosia explained that her and Nicki need help finding more display sites in the community and want to do more Narcan Trainings.
 - Someone mentioned talking to Scott Barrett
 - Maybe he can point us into the right direction for trainings or where he has seen a problem with overdoses
 - Ambrosia reach out to Prospect Bank
 - Reach out to First Mid (Andrew Garvin)

- Bars
 - Lot 50
 - 139
 - Twisted Throttle
 - Brown Bag
 - VFW
 - Legion
 - Hardees
 - Gas stations
 - REC
- Education in the community
 - Harm Reduction education is needed
 - Maybe doing it in the newspaper, toolkits, and social media to hit more people
 - Lisa said to find a way to get our important stakeholders in the community involved
 - How do we draw them in?
 - Meet people where they are at
 - Enticing people in with something exciting in an event
- Terre Haute
 - Volunteers raise pledges for homeless vets to raise awareness and raise funds
 - Bo mentioned maybe this was something we could do
- Bo mentioned maybe doing a community cookout in the park with resources
 - She said we need to do events to entice people to come and get involved (FUN)
 - Glo BINGO
 - Bingo
 - Trivia Night