**Othello Village Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Minutes**

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| CAC Name: | Othello Village |
| Date: | 10-24-2019 |
| Meeting Location: | Le’s Deli and Bakery |
| CAC members present: | Dick Burkhart, Eliana Scott-Thoennes, Jesiah Wurtz |
| OV residents present: | Allen Martin, Ashley Roberts, Bruce Gogel, Earlie Spruell, Sean Smith |
| Nickelsville staff present: | Marvin Futrell, Alycia Roberts |
| LIHI staff present: | Josh Castle, Chris Brand, Jose Ruiz |
| City of Seattle staff in attendance: | Shawn Neal |
| Members of the public in attendance: | none |
| Note taker: | Eliana Scott-Thoennes |

1. Introductions, community norms;
2. **Public Comment**: None
3. **Updates from Othello Village Residents**:
   1. Some Othello village residents have been meeting with City Council members, most recently with CM Sawant and CM Pacheco. Their support for the community is greatly appreciated.
   2. In those meetings and in testimony before the Council many residents have been asking for Council support for getting a piece of city land they could move to with a religious sponsor, sharing their support for expanding the tiny house village program and their opposition to any funding going to shut down 2 tiny house villages.
   3. Concern was expressed about privacy and right of assembly for residents. It was reported that on 10/1 a gathering hosted by a resident was disrupted by LIHI staff. The visitors and residents were told that all future “meetings with outsiders” would be audio and video recorded, by the direction of Sharon Lee.   
      And that since then, there have been many meetings involving visitors including birthday parties and a video watching gathering that were not disrupted and were not audio or video recorded. But a gathering of 5 residents with 5 visitors was interrupted and they were told this was an “unauthorized” gathering. Confidential matters were being discussed, and participants decided to postpone the discussion after their objections to being recorded were not respected.  
      A resident said: HSD has said that since tiny house villages are “shelters” residents have no right of assembly.  
      Another resident “meetings with others are a basic part of life” and “you can’t record people without their consent… it is a matter of respect.”
   4. It was reported that intakes are happening again, but there is some confusion and concern. There were no intakes from April-September. One of the new tiny houses has been assigned to a paid LIHI security staff member and other new residents appear to be formerly associated with other villages such as Camp Second Chance [see Q1 below]. There is uncertainty about what the intake process is now and whether new residents are being given intake paperwork. A resident said “this is not self-management” to have no community involvement in the intake process. Another said that the Nav Team referrals have not been well matched to village’s standards and there are strong concerns that Othello Village is moving, effectively, towards being a low barrier community. One recent arrival was cited soon after arrival and had a “tragic meltdown”.  
      It was expressed that some people feel “there is no rhyme or reason” to how houses are assigned “it seems as if: you work with us and we work with you”
   5. There is a great deal of distress that a former case manager, about whom there were many complaints and several grievances filed (it was noted that there has been no response still to some of those grievances) now works for the Parks Department and has been on site at the village several times. One resident expressed that this feels like a betrayal given the promises LIHI had made that she would not be allowed back on site again.
   6. A concern was raised about how several troubling incidents have been addressed (it was noted that residents don’t blame the site manager as they know he is following his instructions from his supervisors).   
      One incident involved children throwing rocks at a kitten (the kitten was leashed and tethered). The resident whose kitten it was felt there was not adequate accountability.  
      Another involves people smoking pot at the village and others being drunk at a camp meeting. It was expressed that saying ‘stop it’ at camp meetings is not enough. “if you [LIHI] tie the site manager’s hands this will become a low barrier encampment. Is it really worth it to prove you don’t bar people”  
      Another incident involved a LIHI security staff person being verbally abusive to others. “This should be stopped. We should respect each other even if we don’t agree.” [see Q2 below]
   7. It was reported that two residents who have been critical of LIHI were skipped over when garden boxes were attached to the tiny houses.
   8. One resident has heard from some others that there has been a “board” formed that will take the place of the “triad” (the elected leadership the camp has had). He said there has been nothing publicized and the camp did not vote on this “it reminds me of a good old boys club, only with one girl”. It is unclear what the role will be, but “it doesn’t seem too democratically correct”
   9. “At the September CAC meeting HSD staff was alerted to several inaccuracies in their report. There has been no response or investigation” This includes that there have been several grievances filed, but LIHI has only reported one to HSD.
   10. Bruce Gogel said: “This is my last CAC meeting as a Othello Village resident. Regardless of which side of the table you sit on I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent my community. I will always consider Othello Village my place of origin. I was reborn at Othello village and given the tools to undo the mistakes from my past. This experience has forged the path that I am to follow. With that said it would be irresponsible on my part to waste time speaking truth to the deaf ears of hypocrisy. The saying action speaks louder than words is meant for those whose confidence is their ignorance in disguise. We have forgotten what CAC stands for. It’s about your community understanding our community and by working together becoming one. This is no place for privileged egos to flex their expertise. By choosing the correct path this CAC will learn from its mistakes and our community will succeed.”

**Clarifying questions** [condensed from some lengthy discussion] :  
Q1: Chris Brand addressed the perception that new residents are being transferred from other villages. He explained that 2 new residents were barred from Camp Second Chance for not doing their securities and were relocated to OV. And, yes, one new resident is paid LIHI staff.  
A1: A resident asked if Chris believed not doing securities was a reasonable cause to bar someone and Chris said ‘yes, if it is habitual’. Another resident expressed concern about how the community can feel confident that someone barred in one place wouldn’t repeat their behavior at Othello Village. Chris responded that the bar reason wasn’t for anything concerning.  
Q2: Chris said he had spoken to one person (not LIHI staff, a resident volunteer) about verbal abusive behavior, and would speak to him again. Wanted to be sure this individual (not named to the CAC) was the one involved.  
A2: A resident shared privately the name of the person involved, and it was a different individual.  
  
Q3: Did anyone get authorization for “outside meetings”?  
A3: Othello Village has been in operation for over 3 years and the meetings in question have been happening all that time. There have been no policy changes announced that would lead anyone to expect they needed any authorization to continue having them.  
It was shared that LIHI staff used to attend these meetings as well and were fully aware this was a regular practice but “all of a sudden [they] decided we don’t have the right to assemble”

1. LIHI Site Manager Report:
   1. Residents: 29 men, 16 women, 10 couples, 4 families, 13 children
   2. Move ins: 12 men, 6 women, 3 couples, 2 families, 3 children
   3. Move outs: 2 to permanent housing, 3 to shelter (the case manager shared an outcomes data sheet with the CAC)
   4. 0 police calls.
   5. 1 bar
   6. 2 empty houses (awaiting cleaning)
   7. The fencing is overall in good condition, but there is still a work order in to fix fence after expansion complete.
   8. Conditions of grounds: [update from inspection report]  
      No litter or cigarette butts are present in general (but depends on active clean up work), no pet waste present, trash is bagged, recycling is being separated, visible pets are leashed, site manager has not seen rats, there are traps are set. Condition of pathways = good, cleanliness of bathrooms= good, condition of kitchen= good, condition of laundry room= good, security, donation, and visitor logs are current & complete.
   9. “The issue with meetings being deemed “unauthorized” is over my head. You can contact Ralph Neis, or file a grievance” to have concerns addressed by LIHI.
   10. Villager intakes are confidential which is why information is not being shared about them.
   11. Chris explained he spoke with the cat’s owner and the children throwing rocks within 10 minutes of hearing about the incident. He later spoke with the parents of the children and was told they were being disciplined.
   12. Chris said he had not been aware anyone was skipped when garden boxes were installed. He commented that some houses even got two or three. He doesn’t know if there are still some left, but if there are, those left out should be able to get one.
   13. Chris said there has not been a “board” formed and there is no disciplinary team out there yet. He asked, rhetorically, if the internal and external arbitrators were working with him at this time.

**Clarifying questions:** [condensed from some lengthy discussion]

Q1: The kitten’s owner replied that he had not been informed about how people were held accountable for what had happened and how a recurrence would be prevented. He suggested that it would be a good process to make sure there were updates given to all parties after a conflict was investigated.

Q2: The person who had heard that a “board” had been formed explained that he had heard this from someone who said they were on this board.

1. **Update on Intake process and other issues raised at the last meeting** [Chris Brand]
2. Warming trays and covers have been acquired for Othello Village. “This is an unprecedented

upgrade. In all the years there have been tent cities and tiny house villages, Othello Village is the first one to get hot plates, warming trays and lids.” Chris says he needs to get a few more of the deeper hot trays as Operation Sack Lunch has been bringing a lot of food.

1. All intake is being done by referral only – no walk–ins! – from agencies such as Park and Rec, Urban League, REACH, and the Navigation Team.
2. LIHI staff and the site managers for the various villages met with the Navigation Team today to build relationships and make sure the Nav Team was aware of the program parameters for each village to improve they make appropriate referrals.

**Clarifying Questions:**

Q1: Is intake still first come, first served, or do some agencies have slots reserved?

A1: Still first come, first served.

Q2: There had been some rumors that the Nav Team would only be referring families to Othello Village, is this accurate?

A2: No. There have been three Navigation Team referrals so far, 1 family, 2 not.

Q3: Are there a certain number of the new houses reserved for families?

A3: No. No families will be placed in the new expansion.

Q4: Appreciation was expressed for the hot plates and other food safety measures “the safety of residents is worth setting a precedent for”. But the resident wondered if there is a way for LIHI to let Operation Sack Lunch know when meat that hasn’t been fully cooked is brought.

A4: Yes. Josh will email OSL asap. Josh asked anyone with specific dates this had happened to share those with him. Chris was aware of a few dates and shared those. Chris said anyone who notices a problem with the food should let him know and he will pass that on to Josh who will email OSL. Chris said filing an Incident Report would ensure the matter was reviewed by his supervisor as well.  
Q5: A resident said he got a call from someone who said they thought they had received a referral to the village. The resident wanted to know what documentation someone might get if they have received a referral.

A5: Chris explained that he gets a call from the referring agency letting him know there has been a referral and then the referring agency comes to the village with the person who has been referred.

Q6: In the meeting with the Navigation Team when referrals to Othello Village were discussed, did you [Josh] give them a written reference sheet of the guidelines.

A6: This was a preliminary meeting to give an overview of the different villages and their models. There is a written document being developed.

Q7: [to Shawn Neal] Food handling guidelines, such as the hot plates, haven’t been on the required list for villages before. Is there a document that shows what guidelines should be being used?

Another resident pointed out that there are several tiers of food safety guidelines possible here in Seattle, and it would be helpful to know which one Adrienne Easter was referring to at the previous meeting.

A7: Shawn with check with Adrienne and try to find a good reference document.

Q8: [to Josh Castle] You mentioned explaining to the Nav Team about the villages and their models, how did you describe Othello Village’s model?

A8: No drugs or alcohol.

1. Input on role of the CAC and function of CAC meetings

One comment: one role of the CAC is going to City Council to support residents and the village.  
Another: making connections with the surrounding community.

Another: “This CAC has done a great job: members ask questions and you bring the answers to the community”

Another: one role of the CAC is in the name – the village advises the CAC of what is happening and you share that with the larger community and help them see that we’re good neighbors.  
  
There was only a short amount of time remaining for this topic and everyone was encouraged to email the chair with any addition feedback or suggestions. The CAC plans to have an internal meeting to discuss this input and CAC members’ thoughts.