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

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| CAC Name: | Othello Village |
| Date: | 04-11-2019 |
| Meeting Location: | Le’s Deli and Bakery |
| CAC members present: | Dick Burkhart, Mary Hackney, Eliana Scott-Thoennes, Jesiah Wurtz |
| OV residents present: | Sean Smith, Faith Ivey, Dylon McDaniel, Keith Johnson, Allen Martin, Earlie Spruell, Alexis Lecates, Ashley Robert |
| Nickelsville staff present: | Peggy Hoates, Marvin Futrell |
| LIHI staff present: | Cierra Brown, Billie Jean, Sharon Lee, Josh Castle, Lynn Behar, Luke Reynolds, Brad Gerber, Seth McMahill, Eric Garner, +others |
| City of Seattle staff in attendance: | Jackie StLouis, Will Lemke, Tom VanBronkorst |
| Members of the public in attendance:  | Dan Tenenbaum, Hiroko Spees, William Flaherty, Katie Wilson, Cynda Rochester, Jessica Barrett-Lee, Susan, Sally Kinney, Lucia, Emily L, Jess Magle, Lynne Lin, Alyssa, Jean Darsie, Jennifer Durham, Steven Roberson, Tammy Morales. + others |
| Note taker: | Eliana Scott-Thoennes |

1. **Opening and Introductions:**  We had a very large crowd, including many members of the public and a large number of LIHI staff. Additional members of the public came in during the meeting time and the sign-up sheet did not make it to everyone, so not all attendees have been listed.
2. **Public Comment:**

Sally: Called for mediation and collaboration during introductions.

 “I am worried because we are at the worst point in this crisis in our city with homelessness increasing and not enough resourced devoted to housing which would solve homelessness, services don’t, housing does. I am appalled at how the City is behaving and how LIHI is behaving.

I recall the report done two years ago where the City reviewed how encampments help homeless people and it said that they are very effective in helping people move out of homelessness, especially the self management part, of Nickelsville and SHARE/WHEEL. I think we’re at a very dangerous point now having such a division between an organization that I have respected, LIHI, taking over management of the NV encampments and having the city of Seattle, HSD, simply not managing how things are going in those encampments and ignoring the wishes of those actually living in the encampments. I blame mostly the City. The City is the one with the money and power they should look at what is going on on the ground and do a lot better than they are doing.”

Katie: “I also would like to make a plea for mediation. I worked with Nickelsville for a number of years now in my work with the Transit Riders Union and I have a tremendous amount of respect for the dedication and hard work that Nickelodeans put in making the villages run and that Nickelsville staff leadership have put in over the years. They are doing some of the hardest work around trying to keep people coming together to keep themselves safe and to build community and to practice democracy as people experiencing homelessness. That is really hard work and I have so much respect for the work they are doing.

I have also worked with LIHI several times over the years on campaigns to increase funding for affordable housing. Watching this conflict unfold has been very, very sad to me and dismaying and I just really believe and really want to see parties come together and I think probably having a professional mediator make that happen. My understanding is that some progress was being made on an MOU and I would hope that that work can continue so that some resolution can be found that respects the integrity of Nickelsville and their self management model and that is acceptable to LIHI and the city. I entreat all parties, including LIHI and HSD and the city to do what it takes to make that happen.”

Hiroko: “I am very disappointed in what the city has done.” “What we see the city is doing with homeless people using police power to clean back the camps.” “You cannot make all homeless people have homes now, I know it takes time. I worked at a homeless center before; I’m a retired social worker.” [But] “currently people are living in tents, cleaning up the tents[ie sweeps] doesn’t help homeless people. Whatever little they have, they lose more.” “What bother me even when I walk in down town, hard to find restroom. Why not have public toilet, why not have bins so people can throw trash away there. You need to do something.”

“LIHI. I respect what you are doing, but as a social worker, case managing sometimes isn’t the answer. The people who are homeless, they know best what they need. Period they need support. You don’t know better than them. Please respect them and work together. So discouraging having this conflict, so disturbing. I hope that the city comes through This is difficult to solve, has to be little bit by little bit. Supporting the community is important. Please help us.”

Jen: “I don’t know if the answer is mediation, but something needs to be done between the 2 groups, because I am tired of dropping off donations and hearing they never make it to the residents. Dropping off hot meals and hearing they never make it to the residents and never make it to the women and kids. Three different villages I’ve been doing this for in the past 3 months/ So obviously there is something wrong. I don’t want to try diagnosing what it is, but obviously there needs to be either mediation or diagnosing or something about what is going on. I want to be supportive, but that makes me angry about what I’m doing. So I’ve been singling people out and giving directly instead.”

Lucia: “I’m still trying to figure out what is going on, but regardless of who is at fault, I just feel like it is really hurting people here and that is what I’m concerned about I’ve heard things about donations not making it in and that’s not okay and I want to figure out how to best help the residents. It makes me sad to see things happening in such a way.”

Jean: “I just want this to work out. I’m tired of the strong-arm tactics from LIHI. We need mediation now.”

Jennifer: “I want to echo the voices calling for mediation Something is not right and people need to come together to work this out. Mediation can make that happen. It is so clear mediation needs to happen, why are you [LIHI] fighting it?”

A member of the public asked to share the contents of some messages she has received from a current resident: “There’s a bunch of stuff about not having food for the past three weeks until LIHI showed up. They have been saying it was a unanimous vote, but it is not true, because not everyone voted and those who did felt they didn’t really have a choice anyway. I’ve been noticing that the same people trying to get LIHI out are the ones who keep spreading rumors and lies. I just witnessed it again today. A resident got arrested … LIHI told her not to call the police, or she would be arrested, but she did and was arrested… today on the phone Scott was saying that LIHI had called the cops and had her escorted out of here. But that isn’t true.”

A former village resident sent a written communication for public comment: “My name is Tatiyana, and my partner Julian and I are Nickelsville Alumni. We lived at Nickelsville for a total of 11 months. Nickelsville saved our lives twice, giving us a home when we had none. We are a living success story that proves Nickelsville works. The first time we were at Nickelsville, there were few tiny houses but the majority of us were in tents still. At that time, Sharon Lee and LIHI were different. They were actually trying to help. Sharon came to meetings and spoke FOR us. When we returned, despite having spent countless hours with my partner, she didn’t even recognize who he was. Now we’ve heard countless horror stories of families with children being told stories that vilify Nickelsville, making them afraid to come to our camps. But they also speak about how welcome Nickelsville made them, and that the stories they’d been told had been lies. LIHI is lying and has been lying with the help of HSD who would like to destroy the self-management model that gives the homeless and most marginalized amongst this city’s residents a voice and their dignity back. HSD would like to act like they’re not involved, and that it’s just a dispute between LIHI and Nickelsville. But LIHI would not be able to do the things they are if the city and HSD were following their own ordinance and holding them accountable to the law. The truth is that LIHI does not own the land that Nickelsville Othello is on, no matter how much they lie about it, those lies will not become truths. We stand with Nickelodeons and ask that HSD stop this horror story in its tracks and agree in writing to follow the self-management plan that was agreed upon when NV Othello opened. We ask that a third party mediator be brought to the table, but also that Nickelsville is included at the table when making decisions about their futures. The residents of these villages are human beings, and NV Othello has unanimously voted to STAY Nickelsville and make LIHI leave. LIHI is not authorized to be an encampment operator, and what they are currently doing is ILLEGAL according to the city’s own encampment ordinance. Please stop bulldozing the civil rights of the residents in these camps and treat them and their decisions with the respect they deserve”

1. **Othello Village Report:**
	1. 48 adults, 18 children, 9 families, 5 pets.
	2. Three 911 calls: 1 medical, 2 welfare check
	3. There were 3 bars: 2 tent, 1 permanent (the latter by LIHI not the camp)
	4. Residents shared a timeline of their perception of events since the last CAC meeting:
	3/20 Received letter from LIHI announcing that LIHI planned to replace Nickelsville as day-to-day operator. 3/22 The village held a camp meeting and voted unanimously to remain with Nickelsville.
	3/28 Residents heard LIHI was going to take over and locked the gates of the village.
	3/29 HSD reps came and spoke with residents who shared their desire to retain NV management
	4/3 HSD staff came to the village to meet with residents who shared their concerns about LIHI and negative personal experiences, particularly with case management
	4/8 10-15 LIHI staff pushed into the village through the back gate with pry bars, changed locks, set up paid LIHI staff to do tasks “we were doing for free”. Residents declared a strike.
	4/9 the single mother of a 3 year old was arrested at camp and barred “without a proper investigation or involvement of leadership and without the possibility of appeal which Nickelsville’s procedures include.” Her possessions were put out on the curb.
	5. A resident described her feelings of fear and the change in camp atmosphere since the “take over”. The new system doesn’t seem like self management to her.
2. **LIHI Case Manager Report:**
	1. 4 move outs to transitional housing and 1 to permanent housing
	2. 3 more are scheduled to move this week and 2 more by the end of the month.
	3. Billie Jean said that to her knowledge LIHI did not put the barred resident’s possessions on the curb. She also disputed the unanimity of the vote to remain with Nickelsville.
3. **Review and approve March Minutes:**  the minutes were approved
4. **Update on connecting with other CACs**: A Google group has been set up for the City-wide CAC network and a first meeting scheduled for 4/23.
5. **Wrap-up**: At the request of some attendees who were frustrated that the agenda did not include space for their perspectives, we agreed to hold a post-meeting discussion at which conflicting viewpoints could be shared. All 4 CAC members agreed to remain to hear this discussion and the chair agreed to facilitate.