

# Othello Village Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Minutes

CAC Name:	Othello Village
Date:	02-14-2019
Meeting Location:	Le's Deli and Bakery
CAC members present:	Dick Burkhart, Mary Hackney, Eliana Scott-Thoennes, Jesiah Wurtz
OV residents present:	Sean Smith, Keith Johnson, Alexis LeCates
Nickelsville staff present:	Scott Morrow
LIHI staff present:	Billie Hendricks, Cierra Brown (case managers), Josh Castle
City of Seattle staff in attendance:	Shawn Neal (HSD)
Members of the public in attendance:	None
Note taker:	Eliana Scott-Thoennes

## 1. Introduction and discussion of January minutes.

The minutes of the January meeting were reviewed and approved

## 2. Othello Village Report:

- a. 46 adults, 14 children, 7 families, 2 pets.
- b. There were three 911 calls: all medical (everyone is fine!)
- c. Everyone pitched in to shovel surrounding sidewalks during the Snowpocalypse.
- d. Lots of donations were received including gloves, coats, food, and blankets
- e. 10 residents participated in the MLK march and had lots of fun.
- f. There have been a high number of intakes since last month, ~10-12
- g. Nickelsville is campaigning with the Transit Riders Union for revisions to the current light rail fare enforcement policies and penalties (currently a criminal misdemeanor with a \$500 fine) and with other organizations to strengthen eviction protections and allow rent control.
- h. In 2018 there were 118 deaths of homeless people in King County outside or by violence. So far in 2019 there have been 12.
- i. On Wednesday 2/20, Nickelsville will be at the public hearing to oppose the nomination of Jason Johnson as head of HSD.
- j. Representatives from groups working on tiny houses in Denver and Tucson will be visiting Othello Village this month.
- k. Latest data shows a 42% placement from tiny houses to housing compared to 4% for basic shelters and 20% for enhanced shelters

## 3. OV resident suggestions for CAC:

Residents appreciate the work the CAC is currently doing, especially things such as the recent letter to the City which are “speaking truth to power”. The concern was raised that many residents aren’t very connected with the CAC and its work and that we might wish to remedy this. We were told that some other CACs send representatives to village meetings and decided that we would like to do so also. Nickelsville staff will share the dates and times of meetings open to the public and we will establish a rotation.

#### 4. **LIHI Report:**

- a. 8 move outs to transitional housing (2 families, 6 singles)
- b. Helped get 2 people to the laundromat to address bedbugs
- c. Helped with moving costs
- d. Helped people replace ID & social security cards, & 3 people w/passports
- e. Funded Uber rides for people to get ID cards, etc during the snow when buses were more limited
- f. Arranged for employee and hiring references for some residents
- g. Bought towels, air mattresses, heaters, hygiene supplies, etc
- h. All houses are filled
- i. A family is preparing to move out and two more people are scheduled to move soon.

#### 5. **Update from Josh Castle (LIHI)**

- a. No further information on clarifying the role of the CAC, but when that moves forward he would like to do so in collaboration with Nickelsville. We're waiting on the City, which has been kept busy responding to the snow.
- b. Scott and Josh will be meeting next week to discuss additional members for the CAC

#### 6. **Update from Shawn Neal (HSD)**

- a. Permit expiration: a process will be rolled out soon. OV residents would like a timely update if they will be flyering for the public input session as they have in the past.
- b. Status of legislative remedy: no update at this time. Will continue to try to get more information.
- c. Seat at the table for residents: No update.

#### 7. **Update from Eliana on CAC letter to the City**

Eliana spoke with aides to each of the Council members except CM Juarez (unavailable) & CM Harrell (spoke in person) about the need for a legislative fix to the ordinance governing tiny house encampments so it is possible under the ordinance to extend encampments beyond the 2 year deadline (with community approval). Overall this was met with agreement and support.

It was recommended by one aide that the OV CAC talk with or even coordinate with other CACs who are also advocating for some changes. Eliana will reach out to other CACs and report back at the next meeting.

A response from the City was received. We reviewed it and noted that:

- a. It names LIHI as "operator" and Nickelsville as "subcontractor" which does not match Nickelsville's understanding of the relationships.
- b. It names site visits, representative at CAC meetings, etc as residents' chance for input and seems to see no need for inclusion of residents in actual policy discussions or decision making.

- c. It says there is an “established process” for permit renewals, but this does not match our experience over the past year. Shawn Neal will try to get a copy of this process to bring to the next meeting.
- d. It says there will be a rollout soon of a permit renewal outreach plan. We infer that this means another community meeting for input after which another permit will be issued, but this was not explicitly stated nor was any timeline given.

We will discuss our response via email.

**8. Report back from OSCAT meeting by Dick**

At the OSCAT meeting LIHI shared updates on the plans for the OV site. There is funding now for developing affordable housing on the site. The process is somewhat lengthy, however, and the site should be available for the next 2 years, possibly longer.

The current site is 20,000 sq feet and a new site needs to be found and prepared. Josh will report back about the estimated timeline and we will discuss further.

**9. Report back by Sean, Scott, and Jesiah on Nickelsville/City/LIHI meeting**

On Tuesday 2/12 there was a meeting to discuss establishing a Memorandum of Understanding between Nickelsville and LIHI which would establish protocols for communication and decision making. Although the shared encampment operation has been very successful overall, there have been areas of friction and miscommunication.

Jesiah attended as a CAC observer and shared some concerns about the draft MOU proposed by LIHI, including the provision that would allow LIHI to overrule bars imposed by encampment policies. Josh explained that LIHI believes this is necessary to allow LIHI to intervene in, for example, cases of discrimination. Sean described the existing process and the protections Nickelsville sees as inherent in that process.

LIHI is being held responsible by the city for certain outcomes and wishes policies in place to ensure they can fulfill these requirements, but the City has not supplied written documentation of some of their more recent requirements and some of these (including the requirement for residents to work regularly with case managers) are seen as unjust by Nickelodeans.

Information is not getting consistently conveyed between the two organizations and there have been stressful, perhaps dangerous situations that weren't known promptly by those who needed to know. (Some information was learned for the first time at this meeting.)

There are areas where LIHI wishes to have the power to make final decisions (with the assurance that this would be used very sparingly), but Nickelsville believes the checks and balances in their self-governing structure make that unnecessary. (A key difference that adds to the challenge of sorting this out: both parties have, at different times, been told by the City that they are the “operator” with all the final authority that role entails.)

Cierra and Billie Jean shared that they have had residents claim that camp leadership

discouraged them from discussing their challenges and experiences with them in their capacity as social workers for the camp. Nickelsville explained that their policy places no limits on residents discussing their own issues with other entities, but that they discourage trying to address internal camp issues by involving people outside of the camp and Nickelsville staff. There was disagreement over where those lines should most usefully be drawn.

Cierra and Billie Jean also highlighted their need for timely updates around upcoming potential bars so they can be part of encouraging residents to meet their obligations and not be put back into homelessness.

Scott expressed Nickelsville's appreciation for the role of the social workers in helping residents obtain housing.

Billie Jean clarified that the issues she and Cierra have experienced have not been with Nickesville staff, but with some of the local camp leadership (which changes as people come and go and fresh elections are held).

Josh pointed out how well the collaboration has gone overall and expressed his hoped that by talking through the frictions and developing a clearer plan for coordination that the future will be even better.

[note: the above represents highlights of a wide ranging, at times tense conversation.]

#### **10. Question from Mary**

Mary shared that she has been bringing some donations to Othello Village that she has raised through her church. In one visit, however, she had a resident asking her for direct assistance and she wondered what the camp policy is.

Official camp policy (as was clarified in an email after the meeting) instructs campers to not ask visitors for personal donations or favors. As was explained: "it is more likely there will be a fair distribution if the donation is made to the camp, and the elected Donation Coordinator decides how to distribute it." However, if a donor does share something with an individual, it would be best if they mentioned it to camp leadership for transparency, but if someone comes with items to donate and wishes to hand them individuals, the focus will be on appreciating the kindness. It was also explained that service providers aren't donors and can assist individuals directly.

**Next CAC meeting: 4pm March 14, 2019 at Le's Deli and Bakery**