

MINUTES

8 May 2008

Oregon National Guard Building

Veterans' Services Task Force

Aging Veterans and Retirement Subcommittee

Attendees: Dan Estes, Marion County, Chair; Representative Jeff Barker; Jerry Lorang, ODVA Advisory Committee; Mac MacDonald, United Veterans Groups of Oregon; Frank Van Cleave, Representative DeFazio's Office; Pegge McGuire, Oregon Housing and Community Services; Paula Brown, ODVA; Jose Samaniego, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Max Brown, Human Services/Seniors and People with Disabilities (scribe).
Guests – Rick and Elizabeth Peters.

Meeting commenced at 4:10 p.m.

Proposed Oregon Veterans Center

The Peters opened the meeting by presenting the group with a project they are working on in Wilsonville, the Oregon Veterans Center. The Peters discussed Wilsonville as an ideal site – both because the town has a reputation of being veteran-friendly, and because it would be a central, convenient location for over half of Oregon's veterans. Based on a "one-stop shopping" model, features would include:

- Veterans Benefits offices
- An outpatient clinic
- Care facilities: skilled nursing, assisted living, dementia care
- Living facilities (affordable housing)
- Pharmacy
- Public meeting spaces
- Veterans Service Organizations
- Oregon Veterans Museum
- Park and Outdoor Areas
- Sports and Recreation

The Peters also mentioned that there are strong public-private partnerships forged in making this project a reality when asked by Dan Estes.

The Center would be on property developed by a property developer Bob Bobosky.

Estes asked about the certificate of need issue for long-term care. The Peters replied that the HB 3009 removed the certificate of need requirements for a second Veterans' home.

Housing Resources:

Pegge McGuire next spoke about the presentation she gave to the larger group at 3 p.m. Initial discussion centered on the basic concerns of homeless veterans. Are the numbers inflated (is the percentage too high in saying that a substantial portion of the homeless population are veterans)? How can agencies work together to identify the homeless veterans so that they can access benefits they've earned, and may not know about?

Mac MacDonald and others also brought up the opposite problem – what about cases in which someone presents as a veteran, but really is not? What screening processes are in place?

Returning to the structure of housing programs in Oregon, McGuire described the state agency, Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) and the non profits that OCHS partners with and supports, such as JOIN and Section 8 Housing Authorities in urban and rural areas of the state.

Jerry Lorang asked about how this fits into the picture with veterans? McGuire replied that many programs are open to all who qualify, though there are certain programs that are self-support for veterans, such as the program in Portland.

Lorang made the general observation that just as there are screening processes for need-based programs, there are screening processes for programs limited to veterans. McGuire agreed, and pointed to the OPUS database as one such screening device.

Lorang also said that there is one veterans' homeless coordinator in the VA's regional office, and this person works with the nonprofits.

Also, it was mentioned that ODVA has emergency financial assistance funds.

Homeless organizations also make referrals to local or state Veterans' Service Officers.

JOIN – premise of this organization is to do outreach in “their space” – ie., on the streets where the homeless live. There is a referral protocol if they find out a person is a veteran, but it is not necessarily the primary question they ask an individual.

Lorang asked about benchmarks for success.

JOIN- look at indicators such as housing retention after one and two years, but also some psychological and physical, vocational benchmarks as well.

Meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m. to return to larger group.