

Potrero Connect Meeting 3

February 18, 2015

Guests: Sam Dodge (MYR), Ross Mirkarimi (Sheriff)

- A. Questions from Potrero Connect group
- B. Why the group members want to participate and what they hope to accomplish (Introductions)

1. What successful programs have you learned about that can be used here?

- What cities have had the most success reducing homelessness and how have they done it?
- What methods that we are using to work with the homeless population have been documented to help long term?

2. What plans are in place to provide housing, not shelters for the homeless population?

- What is the best way to quickly increase the supply of apartments available as permanent housing?
- Is SF pursuing a “housing first” strategy and, if so, who is at the helm coordinating all available housing resources?

3. What plans are there to reduce spending that does not have results and increase spending on programs that work?

- Where can the funds come from to provide housing for thousands living on the streets? Will new taxes and bonds be necessary or can current revenues be redirected?
- What are the costs associated with the various interactions the city has with our homeless population (e.g. police, hospital, shelters, outreach)?

4. Involving the homeless population

- I would like to hear more about engaging service providers to be more involved.
- Having the ID lost or stolen is disempowering. Will there be DMV services to obtain IDs? . At Homeless Connect there was a special DMV person who could get the California ID with Photo the same day. That was the longest line at Homeless Connect. Navigator will not be able to obtain services or advocate for the homeless person with it. This has to be a priority,. Will it?

5. How can we effect the cities politics to solve this problem?

- If you had a magic wand, what would you change so we can move forward?
- How do we make this an important issue to our mayor?
- How can we best put pressure on our local and state government to show our commitment to ending homelessness
- I am looking for some leadership to tell me what can I do to help? Raise money? Participate in a political campaign? Recruit neighbors to volunteer? Attend supervisor meetings? Write letters?

6. How can the Police Department and Sheriff's Department become a positive part of the solution?

- What is the police role in dealing with the homeless population in the city? Has it changed since the introduction of sit/lie laws?
- Some homeless make a living operating bicycle chop shops and dealing drugs. What focus is given to arresting and prosecuting these types of criminals?
- Do police still issue citations to homeless for misdemeanors? Why or why not?
- The jails are where people are held when their warrants, often from failure to appear for unpaid quality of life citations, are served and they are taken into custody. So, the Sheriff perhaps has a diversion opportunity as people come through the system. He also has some control over the reentry of folks from jail. Questions about how this fits into the system, and what more can be done, and how to get it done, seem appropriate
- Will there be coordination with the police to remove the police records for homeless that did not appear when called by the courts. Homeless have no address and the courts have not really contacted the individual to show up for a court hearing yet the court charges them with no show. And on and on it goes, As long as there is a police record, the Homeless person is not eligible for services- food stamps, housing etc. At Homeless Connect, a representative of the police, was able to erase the charges to enable the homeless person to access services the same day of Homeless Connect.. Will there be such services available at the Navigation Center.

7. **How can we, the people, move the cities work from managing to eliminating homelessness?**

- Think outside of the box of the existing bureaucracy and identify some ways you think ordinary citizens (those not affiliated with government agencies) can take action to solve the issue of homelessness in San Francisco
- What are existing bureaucratic restrictions that prevent ordinary citizens from taking part in the ways we might?
- What restrictions make sense to remove and how might we help you remove them
- What can community members do to help Homeless individuals or are only NGOs and Governmental agencies that need to work together able to get results?
- Besides having community meetings to talk about homelessness, what can everyday citizens like us, do to help you as a city official, work towards solutions?
- In your view, what is the biggest challenge or roadblock?
- If you had a magic wand, what would you change so we can move forward?
- What does the new Navigation Center need that it does not have? Art on the buildings (can clients be involved)? Software that thoroughly describes both the individual and the resources (homes, services) and produces a set of matches to choose from: individual to available resource? Activities for clients when they are at the center?
- 85% of homeless are in Districts 6,9,10. How do we engage the rest of San Francisco in helping to solve this problem?

As a block co-captain I feel it's important to be a part of this committee and work to find a solution to our homeless problem and the gentrification concerns our whole city is facing. I'm passionate about seeking solutions to end this, not just manage it. I think it is the number one problem we should be focused on as a city. Our 3 blocks are very active and engaged, I feel once we have a clear plan, there are many Potrero neighbors who will work to accomplish our plan.

I've worked with the Project Connect veterans program at the jail and I'm very impressed by the progressive programs at the San Bruno Jail. Very innovative and helpful. Would love to see similar programs focused on homeless folks.

-April

I am involved with this committee because like many San Franciscans, I do not accept the status quo. If we work collectively by bringing together our talent, experience and financial resources, we can dramatically reduce homelessness in our city.

-Daphne

I am involved in this group because I believe that we can do better as a City in treating our indigent population. The recent migration of the homeless to northwest Potrero has driven home that the City's current policies are not effective, and only serve to move the homeless from neighborhood to neighborhood. By being involved in this group and learning more about the City's policies and how other jurisdictions operate, I believe that we can help educate our neighbors and begin to provide the political support necessary to support better policies. My goal is safer and healthier outcomes for the homeless population, and cleaner and safer streets for the neighborhoods.

-J.R.

I have lived at 449 Utah Street since May of 2014 but have lived in SF for 30 years. While I have been aware for many years of homeless encampments in SF, I see them becoming larger and more entrenched. I would like to see the encampments under overpasses on 17th Street and Vermont Street cleaned up permanently so that I can feel safe walking to Whole Foods and Trader Joe's.

-Libby

As a resident of Potrero Hill and citizen of San Francisco, I perceive my civic duty is to identify where existing democratic values and principles are not being manifest by existing policies, procedures, structures and systems. I have taken on leadership positions with the Potrero Hill Democratic Club and the Boosters' Neighborhood Association, as well as have facilitated conversations among neighbors and fellow citizens to identify courses of action to address the inequities we collectively perceive. I see my membership in Potrero Connect as resonant with my larger goal to inspire fellow citizens to participate in making San Francisco what a principle-driven, democratic city of the 21st century can be.

-Monisha

I'm on this committee because I care about treating our homeless neighbors as real people with needs and rights. I am also concerned about safety and hygiene issues associated with homelessness (both for them and for my family).

-Briony

I joined the Committee initially because I became alarmed at an upsurge of both property crimes like car break-ins and delivery package thefts and witnessed homeless campers casing cars and stealing packages, and my neighbors have been victimized. When I walk through the neighborhood I have to walk through piles of trash and heaping encampments on sidewalks that are stinking from being used as toilets.

As I participated in meetings with my neighbors, met with Bevan Dufty, met some of my homeless neighbors, and participated in the city's Homeless Count, I have become more interested in helping to find ways to get more people off the street and into housing. This is the right way to clean up the streets-by helping people who cannot help themselves. I am looking for some leadership to tell me what can I do to help? Raise money? Participate in a political campaign? Recruit neighbors to volunteer? Attend supervisor meetings? Write letters?

-Steven

After we toured the Navigation Center I was 90% pleased with what I learned, except for one issue. "Skin in the Game". Services are provided without any expectation of services returned. Maybe there wasn't time to cover this and I'm late to the game. However I would expect Navigation clients to provide services as well. Help with keeping the center clean. Periodic cleaning of the buildings. Partnering with DPW with tasks in the immediate area.

I'm reminded of this one way relationship everyday when I go to Franklin Square Park and find trash is left on the ground because they know Rec and Park has a special crew that comes through and picks it up for them.

-Michael

Inequality resulting from the socio-economic system needs to be addressed by the system. The system is man made and we are mankind, so we need to correct the system. Those who have not won the competitive game in school, job, relationships or health need to be helped by those who have. The SF homeless situation is a blatant slap in the face which points out a need. Not a simple problem, but one that can be solved.

-Jean

I am a member of the Unitarian Church that holds dear the "inherent worth and dignity of every person" and practice "Love is the Spirit of this church and service is its prayer". One of the co founders of the Faithful Fools in the Tenderloin, is a unitarian Minister that educates seminarians, youth, international students about Homeless through direct experience/training called Street retreats. I am a "shadower" for youth and international students on Street Retreats. I have volunteered many times for Homeless Connect and see and feel the many needs of the homeless. I have been part of the group that acknowledges the death of the homeless person by person in front of City Hall each December.

-Mary Jane