



# *Interagency Council on Homelessness*

## *ICH Full Council Pre-Meeting*



***18 June 2024***

Updated: 18 June 2024

# Meeting Agenda



- I. **Welcome & Agenda Review (10 mins)**
- II. **Full Council Member Swear-in Ceremony (20 mins)**
- III. **Panel Discussion on Full Council Agenda Topics (55 mins)**
- IV. **Summary & Adjournment (5 mins)**
  - a) Upcoming ICH Forums: see June & July At-A-Glance
  - b) Next ICH Full Council Pre-Mtg: September 10th from 1 – 2:30 pm

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# Notes for Pre-Council Meeting



- ❖ **Theresa Silla (ICH)** Welcome to Full Council nominees and everyone to the Pre-Meeting
  - Recognizing community representatives that have been serving on the Full Council and will be sworn in.
  - Review the agenda: Swearing in Full Council Members, panel discussion and talking through process for Public Comments during the Full Council meeting.
  - Recognizing the Assistant City Administrator for sitting in for the CA.
  
- ❖ **ACA Chris Rodriguez** - welcoming everyone. Second meeting attending. Have learned a lot and it was a great experience. Noting the heat emergency going on right now and through the weekend. Letting everyone know that people experiencing homelessness are at the top of the CA's agenda and getting people inside and safe. As former HSEMA knows how important it is to make sure people are safe during extreme weather. Look forward to hearing from members of the council.

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# Notes for Swearing-In



- ❖ **Vida (MOTA):** Officially swearing council members in. Missing from swearing in was Kelly Sweeney McShane.
- ❖ **TS (ICH):** Thanking MOTA and Vida and thanking those sworn in who have been serving already from the 2022 nominations.

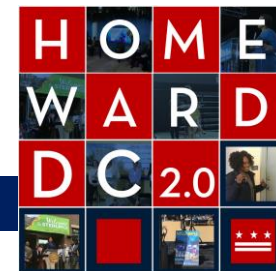
# Notes on 2022 Nominee Intros



- ❖ **CR ACA:** asking newly sworn in members to intro themselves and share what expertise they are bringing to the ICH.
- ❖ **AC (CC):** Been in the district for 16 years, clinical social worker. Passionate about serving people and social worker. Born and raised in Chicago. Father experienced homelessness during his adult life as he struggled with addictions and MH. When I look at the people we serve I see my Dad, uncle, and cousins. It is real to me and hopefully am also professional and skilled.
- ❖ **RM (Echelon):** Director of Kia's Place at Echelon. Second time living in the district moved from providence RI. I have been in direct services for about 25 plus years and always deeply involved in community-based work. I am a civil rights advocate. I wanted to be an attorney and fight from a legal perspective but decided wanted to be a change agent in this work ever since. I have worked for many years with people who are marginalized and often people of color. Feel that we are currently moving backwards and I want to make sure that doesn't happen and being a voice for people who don't have a voice. Homelessness becomes a word and not an existence.
- ❖ **RB (SYC):** native Washingtonian, experienced homelessness for a decade. I bring my life experience. I lived through gentrification and displacement. Black people are overrepresented and older adults. I bring the experience of a black male and a young one. I was 23 when I started experiencing homelessness. I now do advocacy and journalism. Decisions about people can't be made without them and we will be judged by how we treat the least of these.
- ❖ **QA (PFFC):** This job gives me strength to do the work. I get knowledge from you guys and I bring that to the table.



# Notes on 2022 Nominee Intros



- ❖ **SF (NHT):** served in the role since 2021 on the Housing Solns CMTE working on housing production. Senior Director of lending at NHT. Personal journey, I grew up in a 3<sup>rd</sup> world country and experienced poverty. I wanted to makes sure I could make things better for people who look like me. I work in the finance space now to ensure affordable housing is affordable.
- ❖ **KC (EH):** Came out in 98 for Law School. Did practice law in the area of DV and national level policy work related to homelessness. Grew up in Ann Arbor, 6 kids, 4 adopted. In family of origin there is a lot of homelessness, SUD, MH, and poverty. Seen the barriers that get put in place to accessing services. Right now really grappling with how we will face the next couple of years with the budget and staffing challenges and people coming with lots of needs.
- ❖ **CC (Unity):** primary care doctor and work with Unity health care. Largest provider for people experiencing homelessness. Been doing the work for 15 years and DC native. Dad was a civil rights lawyer. Always been an activist. Using the experience from working with people with lived experience and bringing that to the ICH. Biggest concerns are aging people, pointing out success of the PEPV program. Also medical respite.
- ❖ **KC (DCFPI):** been on the ICH since 2014. Steering committee for The Way Home Campaign. We know what solves homelessness, housing, it is a problem we know how to solve. Everyone including myself is upset with the state of the budget. We will live to fight another day and I will be looking to all of you to fight with me. Concerned about aging and lack of resources, also clearing encampments.



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- III. **Panel Discussion on Full Council Agenda Topics (55 mins)**
  - a) FY25 Budget: Council Enhancement & ICH Engagement Debrief
  - b) Evaluating Progress on Ending Homelessness
  - c) Focusing Priorities & Projects Given Budget & Progress
- IV. Summary & Adjournment (5 mins)

# Notes on Council Enhancements



- ❖ **DR (SBY):** something that really concerns me is the budget has remained flat. Top of mind for me is young people in encampments. If we want to look at ending homelessness long term we need to invest in youth. How we can collaborate across agencies and invest in youth. What are investments we need to do right now for the long term.
- ❖ **RH (CCNV):** Excited the district govt will partner with us for PSH on the parking lot we currently own. Mitch Snyder and I had to settled for shelters. They went to a building that was extremely dangerous to get the federal govts attention. We really want housing. We settled for the shelter. We are finally there to go get housing.
- ❖ **NS (SS):** sometimes I feel like I shouldn't be sitting here. I am still homeless. That word hurts. It is a long and tedious process. Stigma has gotten us where we are today. Things have been created to hurt us. We need to start making some big changes. It has taken a long time to get housing. I won't be a statistic. I am happy but feel bad about the situation that I have been put in. People should be evicted from encampments and put into housing. People shouldn't be living outside.
- ❖ **RE (PFFC):** product of housing first. Outside for 17 years with co-occurring disorders. I want to make sure people have a voice.
- ❖ **CC (DMHHS):** I want to hear from all of you. It is a tough budget season but I know there are things we can be mindful of.
- ❖ **RW (CFSA):** Youth in foster care and don't exit to homelessness. There are vouchers through the federal govt. We need to engage them in a way so that they can be successful.



# Notes on Comments from Full Council and Agency Directors

- ❖ **DMD (DOES):** our passions take us to the causes of employment homelessness. We look forward to feedback and what changes we can make to serve residents.
- ❖ **LA (FP):** Director of Advocacy at FP. Special interest and strong need for better support for individuals across the board. During COVID we had PEPV with medical support, but we don't have that anymore. We need to look at different types of funding. People in PSH need better medical care.
- ❖ **HG (DCHA):** looking across the room and seeing the growth in the programs and funding. It is never enough. Always love to hear the suggestions and work on solutions together.
- ❖ **JW (DOC):** worked with DC govt for the past 27 years. Been coming for about a year now to ICH meetings. Working to bring more awareness for those returning citizens who become homeless. I work in pre and post release and work at the READY Center. It is important that we release people with dignity and a place to stay. It only takes 3 days for people being incarcerated to become homeless.
- ❖ **NLM (OSSE):** been involved with ICH since 2014. Representing the Director. We want to ensure young people experiencing homelessness and in our school system that they receive all the supports they are entitled too. Welcome any opportunity to partner and if you know of anyone who needs supports come and talk to me.
- ❖ **VP (DHCD):** role is cross cutting to work with all of our programs and serve people better. Our role is longer term than direct response. We are supporting housing development.

# Notes on Comments from the Public



- ❖ **Willie (SSM):** new to DC about 3 months, has experienced homelessness. Heard that Finland ended homelessness and they used housing first. We have a lot of spaces that are vacant that we could use for shelter or housing.
- ❖ **Kenneth:** Homeless for the past 5 years. God hasn't been able to get me housing. How can we say we are a nation under God when we don't love our neighbors. 7 ways to love one another, stop injustice, reduce burdens, free oppressed, share food, shelter the homeless, and cloth people.
- ❖ **Jennifer:** I have a federal voucher. I want to know how other people get a voucher.
- ❖ **Solange:** Branch manager at PNC Bank. My branch is closing because people are working from home. One of my clients I met is on the street and was able to be a financial advisor and she ended up finding a job and she has an apartment. And now she helps others who are on the street. In the banking world we want to get out of the bank and teach people about financing and strategize.
- ❖ **Josephine:** new to the DC area, have a HUD voucher from FL. I don't know if HUD will absorb me into the community. Can someone help me. – HG (DCHA) will assist.
- ❖ **Simeon:** I have been homeless for almost 2 years. I went to Miriam's Kitchen and got on the list. I waited for about 6-7 months. This March I was told I was approved for PSH. I am at NY Ave Shelter. I have a CM at MK. Waiting on DCHA about my voucher. I will also talk with HG. The temps are so hot. I have been waiting for my voucher now for 4 months.
- ❖ **Concerned Concern:** Homeless for 2 ½ years. I have a voucher that doesn't work. It feels like I am kept in a vicious cycle. The other issue I have is the stigma for every homeless person. Puts everyone in the same basket. Lack of seriousness from you- the council- you see us through the stigma. We are not the same. We each have our own life experience. Lack of empathy. We are treated less human and measured on a different scale. Intellectual laziness.

# Notes on Comments from the Public



- ❖ **Concerned Citizen:** what role will returning citizens have in determining how they won't become homeless. I want to be a part of that process.
- ❖ **Sierra:** Program Manager at SMYAL. Working with people experiencing homelessness for about 10 years. Having to flag OHR because of shelters, service centers. We do have OMS. We need more Spanish speaking services in all of our services. Two trends are older people not getting SSDI and people who are undocumented.
- ❖ **Concerned Citizen:** People we call homeless, not houseless. How has 2.3 bil been spent already? I never see enough people at these events who are homeless. We never have enough time to speak. We need a homeless talk show, talent show. If you created housing for all of us then jobs will be eliminated. Do your research on all of the black towns that were destroyed. People need to heal and there is never enough time to share.
- ❖ **Ronald:** experienced homelessness 7 times. Also attend college while homeless in DC. I am housed now. I didn't get a voucher. My experience gives me incredible insight and education is the way to do it. I am a vendor for Street Sense. To have a section in the shelters that is open to college students. I had no where to study with space available. Need to help people love and care for themselves it is a chain reaction. Rehab places are missing how to present their messages for different learning styles.



# Written Comments from the Public



**The following notes were transcribed from the station for written feedback during the pre-meeting.**

- ❖ “Churches in DC have their own laws and belief the DC government should look at”.
- ❖ “Federal govt. did not allocate to DC enough funding to maintain current system of resources, vouchers, shelters and other non-profit support. Could DC as an independent entity reach out for support to the 1% or celebrities?? Could DC start a GoFundMe or similar donation portal specifically for vouchers, Rapid ReHousing, Low Barrier Shelters and actual housing? Could DC get funding for turning empty office spaces into apartments for affordable housing and homeless people specifically?
  - With housing the citizens of any government spend their incomes on NEEDS, which grows the economy!! There are few resources that “trust” or offer cash or prepaid debit cards. The “Sigma” of being an addict pervades policymaking, even for resources for families and children. Local gov. focusing on GDP has resulted in gentrification and increased rent for all citizens and businesses in DC. Citizens with more income grow the GDP more consistently over time. With housing, more people are capable of maintaining work to continue to provide for themselves rather than draw from the budget for social services.
  - Getting people off the streets more often leads to self recovery and less mental health problems. Getting people housed lowers crime rate from desperation. Lack of nutrition leads to lack of clear cognition and poor decision making. Cleanliness is necessary to maintain employment, and there may be 2 shower centers in the entire NW DC. Public restaurants stigmatize homeless and do not allow restroom use and hire security to enforce this discriminatory practice. Few public restrooms are available and current places are often locked or out of order. Shelters often charge per night, which leads to panhandling or theft, just to sleep at night. Making reportable income often gets benefits cut or cut off.
  - Could DC provide its resource department heads and office from one of the unused buildings to establish a “coordination center” for Interagency communication?? Could DC work with landowners and business owners of the empty or abandoned properties to “share rent” or get a reduced rent or tax relief in exchange for letting their spaces be turned into apartments or shelters?”

# Closing Thoughts



- ❖ **KSM (COH):** Apologize for being late, but hearing your voices is the most important.
- ❖ **Terry:** Senior Community Organizer for Bread for the City. Housing is a human right. Everyone deserves safe and affordable housing. We need more oversight over developers. We don't want people to be moving into bad situations. I was homeless and we need to make sure everyone gets what they need and deserve.
- ❖ **CR (ACA):** Thanks to everyone for the discussion. The issues you face are real, and we need to create these spaces. We look forward to the Full Council meeting.



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  - b) Next ICH Full Council: Tuesday, September 10th
    - Pre-Meeting from 1- 2:30 pm
    - Full Council from 3 – 4:30 pm

**\*Focus on**

**FY25 Winter Plan &**

**FY25 Annual Work Plan – Priorities/Projects**

