

MINUTES

Purpose: Engage Okaloosa County community members in a health improvement process through an open, two-way dialogue to reduce the impact of harmful events such as pedestrian injuries, older adult falls, and substance use and to reduce the housing burden.

Attendees: Emily Pickens, Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa); Taela Cintron, DOH-Okaloosa; Beth Smith, DOH-Okaloosa; Robert Bage, Fort Walton Beach Police Department; JB Whitten, City of Crestview; Greg Cain, Okaloosa County EMS; Jason Fulghum, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office; Amanda Colwell, DOH-Okaloosa; Melissa Garza, Emerald Coast Association of REALTORS; Jenna McElyea, Bridgeway Center, Inc.; Shannettra Francis, City of Niceville; Sheila Fitzgerald, Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners; Tim Gibson, City of Fort Walton Beach; Gabriel Laramie, Eglin Air Force Base, Trisha Dall, DOH-Okaloosa; Autumn McAllister, Lakeview Center; Lisa Reese, Catholic Charities; Devon Ravine, City of Fort Walton Beach; Carrie Parker, Bridgeway Center; Donna Tashik, Fresh Start; Bonnie Barlow, Bridgeway Center, Inc.; Kendra Henderson, Ascension Sacred Heart; Claire Jones, A Bed4Me.

Opening – Elizabeth “Beth” Smith

- Beth opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
- Minutes from the April 18, 2024, meeting were reviewed and approved.
- Beth shared the Community Engagement Survey results from the previous meeting. Attendees reported their opinions were heard and the collaboration was a strength.

Action Plan Updates – Robert Bage and JB Whitten

Okaloosa Walton Housing Summit Debrief and Feedback

- JB Whitten gave a brief overview of the Okaloosa Walton Housing Summit.
 - There were over 160 attendees. Feedback was positive and led to interest in additional trainings about the topics discussed. Attendees suggested avoiding Monday events and shortening the length of future events.
- Emily Pickens shared the report developed from the breakout session using strategies approved in the Okaloosa County Attainable Workforce Housing Strategic Plan.
- Melissa Garza shared action steps agreed upon by the Housing Steering Committee:
 - Develop a comprehensive public education campaign.
 - Continue training seminars (i.e., Live Local Act, advocacy, developer incentives, community land trusts).
 - Create a County-wide “one-stop-shop” resource website with information for the public, developers, and ways to get involved.
 - Convene a group of key stakeholders to review developments and provide expert input to County and municipal governments.
- Attendees discussed the potential reinstatement of the Community Development Corporation (CDC) or a similar entity.
 - Sheila Fitzgerald cautioned this action step due to previous issues.
 - Melissa and others clarified the proposed group would serve in more of an advisory/expert role in conjunction with the Affordable Housing Advisory

Committee. It would include realtors and other key experts from each municipality. It could review proposed projects and serve to link developers to resources and clarify needs, make recommendations, and address other needs.

- Sheila announced they expect to fill the Housing Program Manager position soon, who will be responsible for carrying out items outlined in the County's Strategic Plan.
- Emily opened discussion for the public education campaign.
 - Members reviewed previous discussion of a county-wide campaign to target NIMBY-ism, address key concerns, share local statistics, and direct to resources.
 - PIOs encouraged the group to choose specific verbiage and stick with it.
 - After discussion, members agreed to refer to it simply as "housing" to avoid issues being overcomplicated with 'workforce' or 'affordable' being such subjective terms depending on the audience.
 - Emily shared the Housing Steering Committee desired more information about key housing issues in each municipality.
 - Attendees agreed this may vary greatly in each area.
 - Claire Jones encouraged the group to remember other populations that may be overlooked. Non-profits will be encouraged to provide feedback at the next meeting once more details of county-wide issues are known.
 - Robert Bage suggested developing video shorts highlighting the issues from each municipality using data and short pieces of key information.
 - Attendees agreed a good first step is to compile information from each municipality regarding their key issues. The group should also inquire about resources available to developers, and information they would like available to the public/developers online for the "one-stop-shop" site.
 - Emily will recruit help from committee members to schedule meetings.

Post Overdose Support Team Update

- Emily stated the pilot with FWBPD began the week of June 17th. On the first day, the team conducted outreach for five non-fatal overdoses in Fort Walton Beach. Two individuals accepted information on community resources.

Action Items – Robert Bage and JB Whitten

- Emily will recruit help from group members to set up meetings with each municipality. Results will be shared at the next meeting for further discussion.

Partner Updates

- Emily reminded attendees about the International Overdose Awareness Day community event on Thursday, August 29th at Crosspoint Church in Niceville. There will be free dinner provided at 5:30 p.m. followed by a program from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- Robert Bage shared that the Fort Walton Beach Police Department will host a Community Bike Ride on July 16th at 6:00 p.m. starting at the Landing. The bike ride will be approximately 3.5 miles long. There will also be a Community Walk on June 25th at 5:00 p.m. starting at the Ballet Academy. The walk will be approximately 1.5 miles long.
- Gabriel Laramie shared that Eglin Air Force Base will be hosting a hiring event at the University of Florida REEF in Shalimar on July 25th and July 26th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There

will be over 70 positions available and will vary from science and engineering to operations and maintenance.

- Melissa Garza shared that ECAR will be partnering with the Fort Walton Beach chamber for a candidate forum for those running for Okaloosa County Commissioner, school board district, and the sheriff's office. The first one will be Thursday, June 27th at 5:00 p.m. at the Fort Walton Beach Auditorium. There will be another candidate forum for Niceville, Valparaiso, Destin, and Crestview chambers that will be held on July 9th at 5:00 p.m. at Niceville High School.

Closing – Elizabeth Smith

- Beth thanked members for attending and asked them to complete the Community Engagement Survey.
- She stated the next OCHIP Healthy Communities Meeting will be held in combination with the Healthy Behaviors group to discuss International Overdose Awareness Day action steps. The meeting will be held at DOH-Okaloosa on July 18th at 9:00 a.m.
- Moving forward, there will be an OCHIP Housing Meeting each month held from 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. at DOH-Okaloosa prior to the regular Healthy Communities meeting.

*Next Meeting – Joint OCHIP Health Behaviors and Healthy Communities Meeting:
 July 18th at 9:00 a.m. at DOH-Okaloosa*

Action Items	Owners	Deadline	Status
Coordinate with municipal leadership to determine key issues of each area and resources for “one-stop-shop” website	Emily Pickens & Group Members	7/18/2024	Not Started
Review Okaloosa County Attainable Workforce Housing Strategic Plan & TPMA Breakout Report	All	7/18/2024	In Progress