



# BLUE RIBBON PANEL

## on High Risk/High Needs Residents

### MEMBERS:

Rick Allen,  
Chair

Phillip  
Brooke,  
Vice Chair

David Alger

Gina  
Breukelman

James  
Collins

Corinne  
Dixon

Darin  
Dressler

Paul Ellis

Shana  
Johnny

Rose  
Lincoln

Pastor Lee  
Madison

Edwina  
Magrum

Michael  
Mirra

September 28, 2005 Minutes

5:00pm - 7:00pm

Tacoma Municipal Building, Conference Room 1444

Members Present: Rick Allen, David Alger, Gina Breukelman, James Collins, Corinne Dixon, Paul Ellis, Rose Lincoln, Edwina Magrum, Bob Pearson (for Kevin Bovenkamp), Jeanne Peterson, Reverend James Payne (for Pastor Lee Madison), David Shirer (for Tom Hilyard), Walter Zisette (for Michael Mirra)

Guests: Eileen Bisson, Marty Campbell, Lisa Cook, Lisa Gordon, Ed Mahon and Alan Roberts

City Staff: Debbie Bergthold, Kyle Crews, Callie Cronon, Tom Dolan, Peter Huffman and Alisa O'Hanlon

### AGENDA TOPICS

- **Introductions**
- **Approval of September 14, 2005, Minutes**
- **Reaffirm Progress**
- **Discuss Department of Corrections discharge and supervision practices**
- **Discuss what people in neighborhoods can do to prevent problems from arising**
- **Next meeting Agenda**

Meeting commenced at 5:05 pm on September 28, 2005.

### INTRODUCTION

Chair Rick Allen called the meeting to order and asked that all participants introduce themselves.

### APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 14, 2005, MINUTES

It was moved that the September 14, 2005, minutes be approved and submitted after the addition of Rose Lincoln's name to the "Members Present" list.

## REAFFIRM PROGRESS

Chair Rick Allen reviewed the discussions from previous meetings. It was discussed that the committee identified nine areas of inquiry and decided to focus on six: landlord licensing, police protection and coverage, Western State Hospital (WSH) discharge and supervision practices, Department of Corrections (DOC) discharge and supervision practices, quality programs operations and what that constitutes, and quality neighborhood activities and responses when they find issues. On September 14, 2005, WSH discharge/supervision practices and how a quality program operates and relates to neighborhoods were discussed. WSH provide the committee with addition information tonight regarding the number of people admitted to WSH from Tacoma during July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005 by zip code and the number of people discharged to Tacoma from WSH during July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005 by zip code. This gave the committee a better representation of where the WSH patients go in comparison to the over saturation of homeless people in certain areas.

It was also brought up by David Alger that at the Tacoma-Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless Leadership Committee Meeting, a council member made the comment that the Moratorium would be extended. Chair Allen stated that the committee is driven by the original intent to get done by the time frame allotted.

## DISCUSS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS DISCHARGE & SUPERVISION PRACTICES

Bob Pearson, Community Corrections Supervisor, spoke to the committee about Department of Corrections discharge and supervision practices and provided an informative handout (**see attachment 1 Bob Pearson**). The DOC uses risk factors to target interventions and develop supervision strategies. Offenders that are under supervision usually have a sponsor (spouse/family member/friend) but there is a small number that are not sponsored. The sponsored offenders may live with their sponsor or in group home or residence of their own. In order not to release an offender homeless the DOC has to find a residence that is low cost and willing to rent to offenders. Because of the lack of landlords willing to rent to offenders most of the offenders reside in the same area. This accounts for the over saturation of offenders in certain places. Approximately, less than one percent of the offenders are released homeless.

Four to five percent of the offenders released never show up for supervision. The period of time that an offender is not available for supervision does not count towards the time they are ordered to be on supervision. Each Community Corrections Officer (CCO) has a caseload of 35-50 high-risk offenders in addition to their other offenders.

## PIERCE COUNTY JAIL

Eileen Bisson, Chief of Pierce County Jail, discussed the release of prisoners from the jail. She stated that in previous years DOC wasn't holding hearings for probation

violator until two or three weeks after they were in jail and this was causing overcrowding. Now there is a DOC representative that works in the jail and that situation has become better. The jail is in Compliance Release Mode (releasing prisoners up to September 2006) because it is over capacity. If the DOC doesn't want a particular offender to be released they have to take them to another jail. When a prisoner is released from the jail they are simply let out the door. They try to release people between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. The offenders that are released are chosen by the criteria that follows: the charge they were sentenced under, how much of the sentence they have served, their behavior inside the facility and their criminal history. From January 1, 2005 to September 27, 2005 there have been 880 compliance releases, of which 418 were misdemeanors and 462 were felons. Seventy-five to eighty percent of the prisoners are repeat offenders. The maximum stay at the prison is 12 months per sentence. Offenders with more than one offense might reside at the jail for longer than a year. The jail is opening 65 more beds this weekend to try and help the over crowding issue. Unfortunately due to the overcrowding some of the offenders only go through a Special Identification Process (SIP) where the offender is brought into the jail, finger printed, gets an updated photo and then is released. If the offender is "extremely nice" and it is not a felony offense the police officer might site the person and make them appear in court.

The problem with the system goes back to the courts. The court system knows that if a person gets sentenced they will go to jail but possibly be Compliance Released early. Because of this the bail is high or the prosecutor won't make a plea bargain. The prisoner then stays in jail awaiting a trial and the prosecutor has more leverage for a plea bargain. This process causes the jail to overcrowd and forces people to be released. Because of the constant release of offenders the internal programs in the jail (i.e. educational programs, work release) do not get established. They are always looking for an alternative to keep the offender population down and still work within the system.

The county jail has tried to partner with DOC in a Transition Option Partner (TOP) program to identify offenders that have DOC status and try to siphon some of them out of the jail and into programs out in the community, such as, Rap Lincoln and Progress house. This would open up bed space for the jail and get the high-risk/high-needs DOC offenders into programs that they need. The effort with the change in leadership at DOC has stalled the TOP program.

## **TACOMA POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Alan Roberts, Tacoma Police Department (TPD) Lieutenant, said that their philosophy is to keep hardened offenders locked up. On a daily basis TPD works with DOC making contacts. TPD tries to be proactive when working with DOC but usually has to work with them because something is wrong. This takes up the resources of the Community Liaison Officers (CLO) who are trying to keep crimes from occur but instead have to work with DOC issues.

The second highest group of people that are reporting problems are in zip code 98402. TPD has done research on why there is a saturation of DOC offenders in this zip

Human Rights & Human Services Department: 747 Market Street, Room 836 ■ Tacoma, WA 98402-3779

■ (253) 591-5151 ■ [www.cityoftacoma.org/humanservices](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/humanservices)

Tacoma Economic Development Department: 747 Market Street, Room 900 ■ Tacoma, WA 98402-3768

■ (253) 591-5364 ■ [www.cityofdestiny.com](http://www.cityofdestiny.com)

[www.cityoftacoma.org/highneeds](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/highneeds)

code and have found that there are apartment managers that have made it well known that if someone has the money they will take them in. The only resource that TPD has for this is the community surrounding the area.

### **DISCUSS WHAT PEOPLE IN NEIGHBORHOODS CAN DO TO PREVENT PROBLEMS FROM ARISING**

At this point in time, approximately 6:30 pm, the committee broke into two groups to discuss the statement above. Group One consists of Jeanne Peterson, Bob Pearson, Rose Lincoln, Edwina Magrum, Marty Campbell and Paul Ellis and Group Two consist of Reverend James Payne, James Collins, David Shirer, David Alger, Gina Breukelman, Walter Zisette, and Corinne Dixon.

At 6:50pm, the groups reunited to discuss their findings. Group One's suggested neighborhood councils approve the agencies that provide housing for offenders upon release and to provide comprehensive care for the offenders that will in turn create an environment where offenders can get support from the community. Group Two's approach was to establish neighborhood block watch similar to Safe Streets, use neighborhood councils, involve the CLOs in the neighborhood, get the churches to encourage their members to be "neighbors," and to create financial incentives to improve safety.

### **NEXT MEETING AGENDA**

Chair Rick Allen proposed that through October the committee meet every week, October 5, 12, 19, and 26 in order to wrap everything up and begin drafting the recommendations. A vote with a majority rule decided to accept the proposal and meet every week in October.

The next meetings agenda will include defining behaviors and clarify what that is, refine recommendations, reaffirm progress, finalize the language and discuss with Safe Streets what their work is.

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

The next meeting will be October 5, 2005, in **Room 1444**.