



City of Palm Springs Homelessness Task Force Homeless Town Hall – May 4, 2015 Summary of Issues Identified

A Homelessness Town Hall Meeting, hosted by the Palm Springs City Council Homelessness Subcommittee, was held May 4, 2015, at the Mizell Senior Center. Palm Springs Mayor Steve Pougnet and Councilmember Ginny Foat joined the City Manager, Police Chief, City staff, and members of the public to address the ongoing homeless issues in Palm Springs and discuss potential solutions.

Many members of the public, some of whom are homeless, spoke during the standing-room-only, 90-minute meeting to offer their suggestions on how to help tackle the homelessness issue. Several specific areas were discussed and are outlined below:

Concerns

- Number of homeless
- Lack of mental health facilities
- Criminal element associated with the homeless population
- Crimes committed against homeless persons
- Stigma of being homeless
- Substance abuse problems

Needs

- Assistance for those currently housed but that may soon be displaced
- Advocates to match needs with existing services
- Transportation to necessary services
- One-on-one assistance
- Lockers, showers and a climatized structure
- More awareness regarding homeless veterans
- Greater education on homeless issues

Suggested Solutions

- Increase funding for Roy's Desert Resource Center. Currently Roy's is not fully funded by the County and cannot provide the level of service envisioned
- Churches, Business, and Government need to work together
- Additional City funding from the Measure J sales tax
- Job Entry Placement program
- Tent Shelter
- Provide homeless with community service opportunities as a way to "pay" fines received for citations

There was also discussion about what programs in other communities were initiated to help deal with their homeless issue. Some members of the public commented specifically on the following programs:

- Florida's Marchman Act, which provides for voluntary or involuntary assessment and stabilization, and provides treatment for substance abuse
- Utah's Housing First program, a state initiative to place homeless into supportive housing with no prerequisites
- Street Life Project, a California religious-based, for-profit program

While there was some concern from residents that providing services to help the homeless would simply attract more homeless to the community, the overall consensus indicated strong support in finding answers to this important issue.