Safety committee meeting, 4/13/21

1. Introductions
2. Shootings in Hardy Drive and question about trauma.
3. Brandon: PHAR out in the neighborhood a bunch last week and every conversation mentioned multiple shootings. Some understanding that security is being pulled back but a lot of nervousness about that. Residents concerned about what will happen when security pulls back. Feel that police and current security company is worthless. Residents feel that they’re at their wits’ end and don’t know what could be better.
4. Brandon: Guns Down Inc. doesn’t have much of a presence in westhaven, might want to increase
5. Need to clarify what the presence is going to look like when Guns Down and other groups are present.
6. Resident: need to keep trauma in mind. Residents afraid to speak up. Residents feel they should have been consulted before getting rid of security. Families are scared.
7. On trauma: peer support is the number one thing. Peer support is the first response: people from this community who have experienced the same things, people who are empathetic to what the community is currently experiencing. Second, would want an effective mental health team come in for counseling (region 10 or women’s initiative). Where do you connect after peer support? Will region 10 be able to help?
8. Maybe look for counseling options that are elsewhere even if virtual? That way can get people who can relate to residents even if they aren’t in Charlottesville.
9. Gunshots are on top of all the trauma that residents are dealing with. Need good counselors who are able see all the layers of trauma that residents are dealing with. Maybe a group therapy option and coordination of care with a variety of service providers together.
10. Identify the people in organizations who are being referred to. Need to find the good person in the organization so that residents get what they need.
11. Hesitancy about neighborhood watch. Didn’t feel like it would fly really well. Residents don’t want to be snitches.
12. Resident: a long time ago, each block had a block captain. Not just about reporting, but they were also the person to disseminate information. Block captain. Person who is trusted. Block captains informed residents about all sorts of stuff that was going on. Have residents pick block captains. Need dialogue. People stuck with it even if it was difficult. Block captains need support—can’t just leave them out there by themselves.
13. Youth programming needs to be a part of the puzzle. Peace in the Streets is doing this and maybe we can reach out to them. Made up of a group of young Black men
14. Housing authority does not always know what’s going on at various sites. CRHA wants to be involved in those efforts.
15. We need to have CRHA staff out with residents and building relationships so that residents know they can trust staff. CRHA should be empowered to start building relationships with residents.
16. Need to partner with groups that are already organizing. Have ambassadors in these organizations just for CRHA
17. Resident: residents opened up when PHAR and others went door to door. Everyone needs to get out of their comfort zone and engage with residents.
18. Need to be boundaries between groups and residents. Need an MOU between groups and the housing authority.
19. Q: is what they’re doing now within acceptable boundaries?
20. Resident: Wants additional options other than Buck Squad etc. Some residents still like the idea of security even if prior groups weren’t doing their job. Is there a different security firm? Also like Block Captain idea. Maybe would be confusing initially but eventually residents would understand what’s going on.
21. Whatever you do for one organization, you have to do for all. Residents feel disrespected by those who are supposed to be helping them. Need to have clear responsibilities outlined, need to know who is responsible for what and what responsibilities different groups have to each other.
22. More of Westhaven needs to be heard. Need a back up for community safety initiatives. Should be planning for the unknown even if we don’t know what the unknown is. Neighborhood watch needs a lot of support and needs to talk to housing authority. Need something that’s ready to roll pronto in addition to building the holistic approach. Residents want something standing in the way of the violence that’s happening every month.
23. Need to know what the city is going to do. Keep resident safety in mind whatever the solution is. Need to make decisions about protecting residents.
24. **Need an update about police at next meeting. Police only drive through during the day. Don’t come at night at all.**
25. Resident: how can residents help? How can CRHA be more effective.
26. Ms. Hite: goal is 100% safety. Want more of a working relationship with residents. Willing to do door to door, community meetings, and whatever it takes, but is willing to make that happen.
27. CRHA staff need to be more present with residents—that is one of their priorities.
28. Resident: Get on the agenda for the mayor or city council to express how residents are feeling about violence and police.
29. Put resident safety as a question to those running for city council. Use that it’s an election year to our advantage to get better resident safety. But what is it that we want the city to do to address safety? Need to figure out what will be effective.
30. Residents need to know what police procedures are when they come for instance when people are on drugs and causing trouble. Gather information about police protocol when police come to the scene because someone is having a mental crisis. Resident can’t be left alone, but not safe for residents to be there. Need to have person in crisis escorted off the property.
31. Residents also need to know what their rights are when police show up at residents’ doors.
32. Resident: Residents and staff need to know who has the power to change things. Need to do a power analysis to find out who to talk to.