

**Shelter Grievance Advisory Committee (SGAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 22, 2020, 2:00-4:00PM**  
**Microsoft Team Video Conference**

**Members Present:** Terezie Bohrer – Chair, Nicholas Kimura, Stephen Irwin, Lessy Benedith, Jennifer Friedenbach, Kate Shuton, Henry Brown

**Members Absent:** Jose Landaverde

**Shelter Client Advocates Present:** Leah Simon-Weisberg, Ben Baczkowski, Meghan "RK" Johnson

**HSH Staff Present:** Cordell Thompson, Mecca Cannariato, Cathy Perdue, Janay Washington, Genevieve Herreria, Lisa Rachowicz

**Others Present:** Alejandro Nuno, Gwendolyn Westbrook, Rodrigo Avila, Shondra Aaron, Sara Shortt, Emeka Nnebe, Maria Bellinger, Deborah Borne

**Introductions and Welcome:** Members and guests introduced themselves.

**Meeting Agenda:** The agenda was reviewed and approved.

**Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes – 9/24/20:** Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved. I amended the minute for the September 24, 2020 meeting. The following statement that was attributed to Kate Shuton was stricken from the record: “Kate Shuton supported the idea of stronger representation for shelter clients. Also, she believed the new policy is problematic and the new process is moving too fast.”

### **SGAC Business**

Jennifer Friedenbach introduced a motion that the second hour of the meeting would be used to cover SGAC New Business. Lessy Benedith seconded it. The motion was passed.

### **Review of Shelter Grievance Statistics**

## **15 Month Denial of Services, Internal Hearings and Arbitrations Report 5/19-7/20**

### **Summary of DOS's by Shelter for April – June 2020**

Chair Bohrer went over the 15 Month Denial of Service and Arbitration Report.

### **Client Advocate Reports**

#### **Hearing and Arbitration Monthly Comparison Report – April – June 2020**

Leah Simon-Weisberg went over the Hearing and Arbitration Monthly Report. She noted that the Client Advocate Report provided more data than the City requires (e.g., race, age and disabilities). Their data revealed that African Americans and Latinos were more likely to get a denial of service (DOS). Leah told the committee that there was no data for DOS Shelter-In-Place (SIP) Hotels. She also shared her concerns for the lack of reporting requirements for the SIP Hotels.

Leah suggested that the City provided the capacity of beds in each shelter, so the percentage of DOS for each shelter could be accurately compared.

Chair Bohrer asked Cordell Thompson if the information could be added to the City's 15 Month Denial of Service and Arbitration Report.

Cordell replied that he'll check with the Data and Performance Team to see if they can add the capacity of beds to the report.

Leah requested that the Data and Performance Team to show the results of hearings and arbitrations from each shelter.

### **Old Business**

#### **New SGAC Members/Homeless Coord. mtg – Jennifer**

Jennifer discussed how the SGAC had three vacant seats available: Family, Single Adult and Arbitrator.

The Chair reminded everyone that the deadline for submitting an application was November 20<sup>th</sup>.

Jennifer explained that the Local Homeless Coordinating Board (LHCB) was the organization that would select the new committee members. She directed people to visit the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) website and look for the link to the LHCB site to find more information about the process.

Cordell provided his email to the meeting attendees, so they could request an application.

Meghan "RK" Johnson expressed her interest in applying.

Lessy expressed her concern that the SGAC doesn't have a representative from the Navigation Centers.

According to Jennifer, there was no due process in the Navigation Centers when they first opened. She believed that the Navigation Center needed to be held accountable and have oversight. Plus, Jennifer wanted to make sure that the clients are being treated fairly. Also, she explained that the committee could add more than the current three vacant seats. Seats are available to the providers, arbitrators and shelter clients. She'd like to have representation from the client advocates.

The Chair offered to take the suggestion of adding more seats to the LHCB.

## **New Business**

### **Report of meeting with Abigail: Terry, Jennifer and Nick**

Mecca Cannariato, Director of Outreach & Temporary Shelter, provided an explanation of the Working Group. The Working Group's focus is to work on documents such as the SIP Hotel Exit Policy and the SIP Manual.

Chair Bohrer recounted how Nick, Jennifer and herself met with Abigail Stewart-Kahn, the Director of HSH. The group shared their concerns about not being included in the drafting of the SIP Hotel Exit Policy. The Chair sent out a summary of the meeting to SGAC members. HSH Director Stewart-Kahn and those in attendance agreed to have SGAC members be a part of the working group.

Furthermore, The Chair explained a series of correspondence with department heads that resulted with little response. She continued by recalling an email interaction with Mecca that expressed the SGAC's concern about not being allowed to provide oversight for the SIP Hotels and congregate sites.

Mecca presented a PowerPoint to update the SGAC on her progress from the meeting on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Based on the complaints from the SGAC, the SIP Hotel Exit Policy is currently on hold. She mentioned that she'd like to get feedback from the SGAC on the Congregate Shelter Operations Manual.

During her presentation, she shared data from the SIP Hotels. The information explained why clients in the SIP were discharged from the hotels for violations like acts of violence and threats of violence.

Jennifer asked what were some of the other behaviors that clients were being DOS'd?

Mecca didn't have a breakdown of the numbers of the violations. She told the committee that she would provide that information in a future meeting.

Mecca proposed that the client advocates could continue using the Shelter Grievance Policy for the family shelters. However, the decision to reinstate the shelter clients back into the SIP Hotels would be made by the Department of Public Health (DPH). Furthermore, DPH would make the decision where the shelter client would be re-sheltered.

Nick Kimura stated that the Shelter Grievance Policy should apply to the SIP Hotel clients. He felt that the creation of a new policy was misplaced and unethical.

Alejandro Nuno agreed that the grievance policy should be reinstated. He believed that the shelter clients should have their right to due process.

Henry Brown believed that the Covid-19 pandemic would last several years. Therefore, the grievance policy should be used to oversee the SIP Hotels. Also, he voiced his concern that clients were being exited for not wearing their masks.

Genevieve Herreria asked what was the best way to assure that the clients received due process?

Leah replied that the hearing process needed to return. Also, she explained that the shelter clients need to be provided with the proper documentation when they are exited from the SIP Hotels.

Jennifer believed that the City eliminated the rights of shelter clients when it placed them into the SIP Hotels. She stated that there needed to be independent decision makers outside of the institutional powers. Jennifer made it clear that the shelter clients deserved a right to advocacy, a fair hearing and arbitration if needed.

Deborah Borne, COVID-19 COMMAND CENTER: Health Policy, Vulnerable Populations and People Experiencing Homelessness representative, stated that there was no public health reason not to have a grievance. The second issue that she addressed was that clients with certain medical conditions had to be placed elsewhere. DPH would preselect a congregate setting for the clients, before the grievance hearing if they need to leave the SIP Hotel. If the client had a medical condition, a release of information might be needed. Third, if a client is asked to leave a SIP Hotel because they are medically unable to wear a mask and / or socially distance, the City would need to relocate the client.

After a grievance is heard, the City wants the client placed in an appropriate setting that's medically specific to them.

Nick said that the DPH's plan sounded good, but he emphasized that the existing grievance policy was the proper direction to go.

The Chair reminded Nick that Director Steward-Kahn wanted the SGAC to focus on the congregate facilities first.

Nick responded that SGAC oversight should be in both the SIP Hotels and congregate settings.

The Chair suggested that there could be a policy that covered the SIP Hotels where DPH needed to be involved.

Ben Baczkowski believed the proposed policy lacked key due process procedures that are present in the existing grievance policy. The grievance policy has a clear notification system to inform the clients and client advocates of an internal hearing. Also, the policy makes it clear that the client is entitled to a hearing within a certain amount of days. Plus, there's an arbitration process that allows an

independent arbiter to look at the merit of both sides case. Furthermore, Ben mentioned that the grievance policy has rules for presenting evidence.

Genevieve appreciated Ben's concerns by repeating Ben's core arguments for using the current grievance policy.

RK stated that it was already a challenge to work within the perimeters of the current policy. She felt that the temporary process during the pandemic has not served the needs of the clients.

Mecca apologized for the lack of response from the City. She acknowledged that the people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco are the most impacted by the pandemic.

Leah reiterated that there was no need for the SIP Hotel Exit Policy. The Shelter Grievance Policy should be used to oversee the SIP Hotels and congregate settings.

Rodrigo supported the grievance policy, because it provides good governance and a structure to create a safe environment for shelter staff and clients.

Kate believed that everyone has done an amazing job dealing with complications created by the pandemic.

## **Options, Recommendations**

### **Next Steps**

Mecca appreciated the group for raising their concerns. Next, she will discuss these issues with HSH leadership and the COVID-19 COMMAND CENTER. First, She will see how they can apply the grievance procedure to the congregate setting, then the SIP Hotels afterwards. Mecca said that she'd be willing to meet with the Working Group or with the SGAC.

Chair Bohrer believed a meeting should happen sooner than later. She suggested that the Working Group and client advocates move quickly to resolve any outstanding issues.

Mecca directed Genevieve to provide a copy of the Congregate Manual to the SGAC members and client advocates.

The Chair told Mecca that the Working Group would review the Congregate Manual and provide feedback within seven to ten days.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Next Meeting**

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

2:00-4:00PM

Video Conference

### **Meeting Adjourned**