

# Hilltop Health and Wellness Commission Meeting

Minutes from October 20, 2021

High School Library

Attendees: Maggie Larson, Todd Marsh, Don Austin, , Suzanne Weete, Ashley Wright, Mary Boisse, Nancy Michaud, Ariel Marquis

Todd Marsh called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

Todd asked for a motion to approve the Meetings Minutes from September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Maggie made the motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Nancy.

All in favor.

Todd reread mission of the meeting:

Mission/Objective: To examine, study and implement systems which foster, promote, and support mental health, wellness and recovery support to all city and school employees, students, and citizens of the Hilltop City. While creating a mental health, wellness, and substance recovery friendly Somersworth.

Mary Boisse, one of the commissions' facilitators kicked off the meeting, describing the meeting as a discussion based meeting.

Mary- We've examined where we are, issues in the city, provided data points to understand the current climate around mental health and substance use disorder.

Todd- a strong and confident community can be introspective. We are willing to practice that continuous improvement.

Mary- walked through the biggest challenges that this group has identified.

Mary- walked through data points that we've shown you to support the reasons for these challenges.

Mary talked about solutions that this group identified as potential solutions

Mary-Money aside, what do we recognize as barriers to solving these problems that stop forward momentum?

Todd – Money is a barrier to bringing in resources.

Don- everyone thinks it is somebody else's problem to solve. There is not a sense of shared responsibility in the community.

Maggie-isolation has hindered progress; technology has prevented people getting together and really working and talking together.

Don – how do you reach the people who aren't listening? How do you reach those people who need to hear the message?

Suzanne- Do you think there is a disconnect between the city decision makers and the community members?

Todd- yes to a degree. People tune in and out to what is important to them.

Mary-Who do we need to reach to affect change?

Ashley- I think there is a disconnect with a lack of real communication with what is really going on in the community. I think there is a level of transparency in the community that is lacking.

Todd-people have different motivations for making the choices.

Nancy – There seems to be generational view points on buy-in for community services that will affect change.

Mary- What about feedback from folks who are housing insecure, or who are using substances?

For example, the SPD was approached for implementing a criminal diversion program, and it was declined by SPD.

Mary-What about the Willand Pond encampment situation?

Todd-The homeless task force was comprised of faith groups, city government, homeless people themselves. This was a good thing. But it was apparent that city councilors don't know the types of resources that are potentially available.

Nancy – What is the planning boards' role and influence with making decisions for services coming into the city?

Todd- In order to own an issue, we need to acknowledge it. There seems to be competing motivations by agencies sitting at the table when issues are discussed. For example: economic development vs. social services have competing motivations.

Ashley Does there need to be more proactive collaboration with city services and planning boards? Are we all on the same page?

Todd – We need people within social services and the community to navigate through barriers.

Mary's takeaways: there are underlying barriers that are not as noticeable or reachable, we still are searching for overall buy in and transparency.

Ashley-Homework for the group- continue to brainstorm on who we'd like at the table to further this work.

Suzanne - Perhaps we have a summit to outline the specific challenges that we'd like to solve as a community – in 2022.

Todd asked for a motion to close the meeting.

Don made the motion.

Maggie 2<sup>nd</sup> it.

All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

Next Meeting- Wednesday, November 17<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

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Suzanne Weete