

Present were James Lafolette, Dean Hackett, Terry Cummings, Kristi Atkins, Chris Hankel and Council representative Rod Hardin and Maria Duron. City staff present was City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong. Kristi opened the meeting in prayer at 4:01pm.

James stated he will be amending the agenda to allow the Stepping Stones Alliance presentation after the Youth Advisory Introduction.

Youth Advisor Introduction

Lilly stated the City is working with the Hermiston School District on a new program to encourage public participation and volunteerism, starting at a young age, as there is a nationwide shortage of volunteers and government participation. The program appoints Hermiston high school students to various City of Hermiston Committees and Boards; Katelyn Wadkins has been appointed to this Committee and we hope to see her at the next meeting.

Stepping Stones Alliance- Homeless Shelter

Stepping Stones Alliance Members Cathy Lloyd, Chris Barnum, and Steve Eldridge presented information regarding recent legislation that mandates each municipality to provide a place for homeless people to sleep, if these accommodations are not met, municipalities would need to allow people to camp on any public property.

Information was shared regarding Stepping Stones Alliance operational vision (attached) to help those who are homeless not only provide a place to sleep, as legislation dictates, but to also provide support services to better their lives such as: participation in setting goals and having a mentor to help them with those goals, counseling and recovery services, specialized training and employment services, etc, to eventually help them obtain permanent housing outside of the shelter. With this being said, there are people who do not want to set goals or change their living situation, but that does not mean they don't deserve a safe place to sleep. Currently, in the surrounding area, there is only the Hermiston Warming Station, however, this is only open about 100 nights per year and people must vacate in the morning. Stepping Stones would be open 365 days/nights per year and provide a place where people are also able to leave their personal items during the day and know they will be safe/not stolen when they return. Dinner and Breakfast would be provided as well.

Stepping Stones is working on a website with all of this information and will publicize it when it is complete. Stepping Stones is not affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, it is a non-profit that has been and will continue to accept in-kind and financial donations, it has also been awarded money from the American Rescue Plan Grant. Stepping Stones is working to find a location and is hoping to open the facility by late fall, but the timeline is dependent on many factors.

Members of the Committee asked questions regarding:

- Expressed concerns with the possible influx of homeless people coming into the area because of the shelter opportunity
- Was asked to elaborate on the mental health and addiction services and asked if Stepping Stones will be providing these specific services
- Asked how the homeless community will be set up for families and pregnant women
- Will there be training for volunteers

Stepping Stones members responded with:

- The Walla-Walla and Eugene homeless shelters have not been magnets. Each shelter has made

comments that they do get transients that come from out of the area but leave after a few days and they believe it's perhaps because of the rules that have been established at each facility similar to what Stepping Stones Alliance plans to have in place as well to include no drugs and alcohol allowed on site

- Stepping Stones will not be hiring someone to provide mental health and addition services, instead it is working with Community Counseling Solutions and Peer Support Groups in the area to provide a place to help people and encourage them to participate in these goals if they need them
- Accommodating families and pregnant women is going to be difficult but is attainable. Guardianship verification will be made for each child/adult, and will most likely help move them into Martha's House
- Volunteer training will be done annually and include de-escalation and active shooter training, similar to the School Districts training. New volunteers will be paired with someone who is experienced as well

Stepping Stones stated they will have a paid night staff security member working from 10pm to 8am, but what they will really need to keep this shelter open is volunteers. Stepping Stones is asking that the Faith-Based Advisory Committee and Community consider supporting this project by getting members from each church to volunteer; volunteer to help build the structures, feed people, but most importantly two volunteers will be needed daily from 6-8pm and 8-10pm.

Terry stated he was very much against this project when he first heard about it, but with this expanded vision, information, and the love and support system to help people transition and change their lives, it is easy to change people's minds about this.

Committee members stated it is obvious to see the excitement and passion the Board has about this project, and they are happy to hear that this is not just a homeless shelter but a place where people will have opportunities to improve their lives with the services that will be provided and offered to them and the most important thing to remember, like Cathy said, is that no one deserve to be discarded.

National Faith & Blue Weekend

Terry stated staff members of the Police Department (PD) met with staff members of the Parks and Recreation Department and had a great brainstorming meeting that he wanted to share with the group, and proceeded to go through the March 24th Faith and Blue Brainstorming Meeting mins (attached). Terry emphasized the "Sunday Service" section that gives all control of this part of the event to the Faith-Based Advisory Committee and asked the Committee what they envisioned the service to be.

The Committee spoke about: having a unified message and what that would be; promoting faith and justice with good policing, mutual respect and understanding to create awareness and good relationships; showcase how much our community loves our Police Officers; not having a "Sunday Service" but instead spending a little time on Saturday, when everyone is already there, to have a prayer/blessing over first responders and their families and have this translated into Spanish as well; etc. The Committee agreed to think and pray about these ideas, messages, themes, and scriptures to tie them together.

Minutes

Dean moved and Terry seconded to approve the minutes of the February meeting. Motion carried unanimously. (The Committee meets every other month, therefore there was no March meeting.)

Miscellaneous Discussion & Announcements

- I Love My City is May 21-22. Sunday service will be at EOTEC.
- Martha's House is seeking a new House Manager.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, June 7th at 4:00pm in the Library's Meeting Room. The Committee agreed to not hold meetings in July or August and resume meetings in September.

Adjournment

There was no other business and Maria adjourned the meeting in prayer at 5:22pm.

DRAFT

Our Vision

Stepping Stones Alliance looks forward to the launch of the **Stepping Stones Center!**


This vision includes facilities, support services and resources
that offer *stepping stones* along an *accessible pathway*
toward stable housing and self-reliance for those in need.

This operational vision will become reality in Phases:

<p style="text-align: center;">Phase 1 – The Sleep Center</p> <p>Spring of 2022 following a winter season partnership with Hermiston Warming Station, the year-round overnight emergency shelter will launch.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Phase 2 – The Navigation Center</p> <p>Incremental launch will begin as early in 2022 as expanded facilities become available and already committed service delivery partners can be scheduled.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Phase 3 – The Housing Center</p> <p>Summer 2022 is targeted for opening the first group of small housing units to those demonstrating readiness. Additional units will be added as participant numbers increase.</p>
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The Pathway to Self-Reliance

<p style="text-align: center; color: #0070C0;">Enter here:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Sleep Center</p> <p>Night to night shelter for those in need</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: #0070C0;">Then engage here:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Navigation Center</p> <p>Needed services and access to resources available to active participants through Center staff, community partners and volunteers</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: #0070C0;">Stability while progressing:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Housing Center</p> <p>Transitional housing units for participants engaged in personal action plan utilizing Navigation Center resources</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exterior securely fenced and lighted Scheduled transportation to and from site Options for individuals and families Fully staffed during hours of operation Basic food and hygiene supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant goal and action plan support Counseling and recovery program access Technology resources for action plan work Common area for groups and community Scheduled transportation to and from site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small 8 x 8 units for one or two adults Working or volunteering for housing unit credit Utilizing onsite resources for future housing plan Shower unit available per schedule Outside covered common area



Stepping of Stones

H E R M I S T O N

An Alliance of Hope and Prosperity

Connecting to Community

Developing Self-Reliance

Supporting Human Needs

Stepping of Stones

HERMISTON

Example Project

- ❖ The Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless (Sleep Center)
- ❖ Approximately 2/3 of an acre
- ❖ 39 huts
- ❖ Shower/laundry building and a commons building



Conestoga Huts

- ❖ Available for one resident, one couple or parent and child
- ❖ Residency requirements: compliance with site regulations and progress towards self-reliance
- ❖ Cost estimate (materials only): \$2,000
- ❖ Construction: easily obtainable materials, rapid setup, and simple/inexpensive repairs
- ❖ Financed through donations and grants



The Navigation Center will develop partnerships with organizations to provide the following services:

- ❖ Medical support
- ❖ Dental support
- ❖ VA support
- ❖ DHS support
- ❖ Community Counseling Solutions
- ❖ COPES
- ❖ Educational advisor support
- ❖ CAPECO support



Stepping Stones of HERMISTON

The background features a series of smooth, grey stepping stones arranged in a path across a body of water. The water is depicted with soft, painterly splashes in shades of blue, green, and yellow. A faint, light-colored map of the state of Oregon is overlaid on the scene, with the location of Hermiston marked in the southeastern part of the state.

In summary:

The intent of Stepping Stones is to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment where those in need of temporary housing might sleep. This site is truly meant to be a stepping stone and not a permanent destination. The goal is to provide an immediate short-term place for the night for some as well as longer term arrangements for others willing to work, volunteer and/or improve themselves so they might gain the means by which they can obtain permanent housing of their own. Opportunities to receive work credit/scholarships for nightly housing will become available.

Stepping Stones is being modeled after successful programs in Walla Walla, Bybee Lakes Center for Hope (Portland), Watered Gardens (Joplin, Missouri) and The Other Side Academy (Salt Lake City, Utah).

Currently funding has been provided for Start Up funding. A search is on for the best location and for the best housing options. Contacts are being made with providers for the Navigation Center.

Faith and Blue Brainstorming Meeting

March 24, 2022

Participants: Jason Edmiston, Brandon Artz, Kasia Robbins, Mya Hayden, Daniel Wattenburger, Travis Eynon, Lili Gomez, and Terry Cummings. Erica Sandoval was on duty.

The dates are Saturday and Sunday, October 8-9, 2022 to be held at EOTEC; 10:00 am to 6:00pm on the 8th and approximately 10:00 am to noon on the 9th. (More details below). Perhaps at noon on Saturday a short presentation/thank you could be given by Police Chief, Mayor, or someone else. This is intended for all of Umatilla County, not just Hermiston.

These notes are not in any order, rather they represent the brainstorming ideas as they came up.

Food: Since the Farmer's Market season will probably just be over, invite these folks to come with their fruit, vegetables and products. Let's invite food vendors/food trucks so there are several choices for food. We want this to be a family friendly event.

HPD has \$1500 in their Wellness Budget that can go toward this event and they have just received a grand from Good Shepherd Hospital for \$2000 that can also be used.

Activities ideas such as: bounce house, bounce suits, hay rides, hay maze, three on three BB tournament, free throw contest between officers, clown with balloons, cornhole game, pumpkins, pumpkin carving contest, black and white HPD posters for kids to color, stage area with local bands and/or church bands or vocal groups given approximately 30 minutes each, have a photo booth for a "Picture With a Cop".

Sunday service: let the Faith Based Advisory Committee be in complete charge of this service. In addition advertise that those attending can bring clothing items that will be distributed to area schools; canned goods and/or toys will be given to the Christmas Express program; financial gifts can be shared with Agape House, Martha's House, True Care Pregnancy Clinic (also diapers, etc.). Designated areas or booths can be set up for each organization (this could also be available on Saturday).

Ideas: Invite all area law enforcement agencies, perhaps UCSO K-9 unit could give a demonstration, yard signs saying "Back the Blue" could be available at a booth including HPD magnets, blue ribbons and other hand out items. These would be available at a booth and *not* handed out by someone. Maybe a police film could be shown on Saturday evening. The chaplains have several DVD's in their office. One in particular is "Courageous".