

Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council

P.O. BOX 662, Bellevue, WA 98009-0662

April 11, 2017 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held in the Undercroft of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church; it began at 12:00 noon & ended at 1:45 PM.

WELCOME: People helped themselves to lunch and the meeting was called to order and conducted by EISCC President Tony Copes.

OPENING PRAYER: Sandy Lewis & Farida Hakim

SELF-INTRODUCTIONS were made by 28 representatives, new people and guests.

MINUTES of the March 14, 2017 meeting as drafted by Secretary Karen Studders were approved by the board. No changes were suggested by members. Motion and second and unanimous approval of minutes by the membership.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Warren Marquardson reported our account balance as of 3/31/17 of about \$85,000. Approximately \$44,000 Backpack Meals, \$25,000 Congregations for Kids and \$16,000 EISCC.

ACTION NEEDED: Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council served as the fiscal agent for Congregations for the Homeless in its early years. EISCC supports this siting of the permanent men's shelter and supportive housing within the City of Bellevue. The City of Bellevue is accepting comments regarding the **proposed permanent men's shelter and supporting permanent housing at Eastgate**. Several public meetings have been held. The City of Bellevue and King County are working in partnership with Congregations for the Homeless & Imagine Housing. The site being studied is at 14350 SE Eastgate Way. Information can be found at <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/eastside-mens-shelter.htm>.

Please plan to attend the 4/17/17 Bellevue City Council Study Session & Council Meeting; 5:30-9:00 PM and wear red.

Please write and send emails/ letters to EastsideMensShelter@bellevuewa.gov or call Mike McCormick Huentelman at 425-452-4089, or contact Bellevue City Councilmembers directly at council@bellevuewa.gov. Encourage your pastor/rabbi/iman to sign the letter that is being drafted for submission to the Bellevue City Councilmembers.

PROGRAM: Washington's Paramount Duty by Rebecca Vaux, Co-Founder and Board member and Aaron Horton, Statewide Organizing Director

Washington's Paramount Duty is a non-partisan, grassroots group of parents and allies working to compel the state to amply fund basic education and swiftly fulfill its paramount duty. They envision a future where every child has equitable access to an amply funded basic education.

Opened with two questions: (1) What do you understand about our schools today? and (2) What questions and concerns do you have?

Schools funded by property and sales taxes. Founded Washington's Paramount Duty 18 months ago during teachers' strike. Parents complained. Found funding in Olympia broken. Rebecca and four others met and founded a Facebook group. Within a week they had 2,000 members including state legislators. Wrote op-ed letters, testified, marched in MLK marches and made the voice of parents heard.

It is difficult to be a parent. Parents put a lot of time and effort into schools. Invested about 1000 person hours raising \$50,000-200,000. Huge disparity in funding education. Hired Aaron and want to expand Washington's Paramount Duty statewide.

- 1889 Washington Constitution. Article 9 Section 8 “ample duty”
- 10 years ago McCleary decision
- 2009-10 WA Legislature defined basic education
- 2012 WA Supreme Court ruled that the state is not fulfilling its duty and established deadlines
- WA Legislature has been fined \$60 million to-date at rate of \$100,000 per day, by the WA Supreme Court
- 9/21/18 probably won’t happen
- Advocating for tax reform is a separate issue; Washington’s taxes are upside down (regressive).
- Washington’s Paramount Duty are dealing with the state’s budget and the two proposals:
 - Senate is republican, cuts TANF and Free and Reduced Lunch and bars education funding
 - House is democratic, funds \$4-10 million for education via 3 mechanisms:
 - Capital gains tax of 1.5% at top pay over \$450,000, under our current system the lowest income pay 7 times the taxes
 - Reform B &O, established in 1935
 - Close tax loopholes. Over 600 exemptions, WA is 2nd to NY state in number of exemptions.
- Washington voters passed class size of 17; actual class size is 30 today
- Outdated curriculum
- Huge equity issues of money collected v. money distributed
- People are very frustrated and feel it is very unfair
- Neither party has led the issue of funding basic education
- We have world class employers like Microsoft, Amazon and T-Mobile; makes sense to have world class economic system rather than the wealth inequality Washington state has fostered
- Washington’s Paramount Duty has a script, people can call or write letters to the editor
- PTSA want education funded
- At state legislature, \$4 billion is needed to fund education
- 2012 state income tax proposal failed
- **People need to hear a message 7 times before they listen/change**
- Flipping tax system takes time to change
- People are being pushed out of King County on both sides of the lake, but the wealth inequity
- Will be interesting to see what the Washington Supreme Court does
- We lead the nation in government reform and equality, why not taxation?
- Washingtonians consistently support education
- Taxes are an investment in society and kids and economy.
- Many recent property tax levies affecting all of us in this regressive tax system

SPOTLIGHT: Give Big Jan Starr, Backpack Meals

Give Big is May 10th; it is the 3rd largest in US. Everyone is thinking about people in need. 1,600 non-profits participate in in Washington’s Give Big. People give more when match funds available. They have a new system and expect to have none of the problems they had last year. Donations are tax deductible and you get a tax receipt.

Backpack Meals raised \$6K in 2016, \$7K in 2015, \$6K in 2014, \$7K in 2013 and established goal of raising \$8K in 2017.

SPOTLIGHT: Support for State Homeless Legislation and Proposed Permanent Men’s Shelter, Karen Studders, Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council

Originally Karen was asked to discuss **RCW 36.01.290**, Temporary encampments for the homeless, hosting by religious organizations authorized and prohibitions on local actions and he impact of the numerous ordinances on the Eastside. A copy of the RCW is provided for each of you on the tables and our discussion about the burdensome ordinances will be postponed. Karen quoted what the 2010 Washington State Legislature said:

“The legislature also finds that in many communities, religious organizations play an important role in providing needed services to the homeless, including the provision of shelter upon property

owned by the religious organization. By providing such shelter, the religious institutions in our communities perform a valuable public service that, for many, offers a temporary, stop-gap solution to the larger social problem of increasing numbers of homeless persons...

It is the hope of this legislature that local governments and religious organizations can work together and utilize dispute resolution processes without the need for litigation."

Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council members will be working with state legislators to ensure the voice of the faith communities who provide shelter to people experiencing homelessness are heard. With the intent of addressing congregations' concerns about the numerous overly burdensome local ordinances governing faith communities who use their property to host people experiencing homelessness in East King County during this State of Emergency.

A copy of the **SHB 1570 Community Statement of Support** were available on the tables. Karen asked for the membership's approval to sign EISCC onto the Letter of Support. All people in Washington deserve access to a safe, healthy, and affordable home. We urge the legislature to prioritize our state's homelessness emergency by passing SHB 1570 this year. Elizabeth Maupin asked that the Letter be read out loud. Motion made and seconded and unanimously approved by the membership. [Karen later signed the letter on behalf of the Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council.]

Secondly and most importantly your physical presence is requested to support the Proposed Men's Shelter Discussion at **Bellevue City Council on Monday, April 17th, from 6-9 PM**. Bring a friend, member of your family or congregation, organize a carpool and most importantly **wear red!** The Study Session is 6-8 PM; sit in the audience wearing red to be seen by the Councilmembers as visibly supporting the proposed Permanent Men's Shelter at Eastgate. Red signifies Spirit and is worn by Faith Action Network participants when faith communities lobby in Olympia.

In addition, a letter is being written to be circulated amongst and to be signed by pastors. If your congregation is interested please mark it on the sign-in sheet. Four of the Bellevue City Councilmembers are up for re-election. And it is important that they know that the faith community supports the siting of the first permanent shelter on the Eastside.

REFRESHMENT COORDINATOR Sandy Lewis:

Please thank Elizabeth Maupin, Sr. Amalia and Sr. Valerie Ross, Nicky Sherriff, Warren Marquardson and Rev. JC Mitchell (awesome homemade shortbread) who provided the food for today's meeting.

REPORTS:

President's Board Report: Tony Copes commented that we lead the nation in government reform and equality, why not taxation? Washingtonians consistently support education. Taxes are an investment in society and kids and economy. Many recent property tax levies are affecting all of us in this regressive tax system in Washington State.

Backpack Meals: Jan Starr

Backpack Meals has a goal to raise \$8K at Give Big on May 10, 2017.

Congregations for Kids: Nancy Jacobs

Nancy commented that it is important to hear stories of the youth they help because it makes the need real. She read a story about a homeless 4th grader in one of the Bellevue elementary schools. Congregations for Kids has helped over 1400 kids with backpacks and/or school supplies in Bellevue this school year. The number of students experiencing homelessness is increasing: In 2016: final number was 250. In Oct 2016 the number was 149 kids experiencing homelessness. In Feb 2017 already 232 kids were experiencing homelessness, and in April the number was up to 242.

EISCC Legislative Coordinator: Jean Harris

To contact your state legislators, call **1-800-562-6000**. Tell them where you live and they'll provide you contact information for your legislators. **Email or postcards are the best way to reach state legislators.**

- HB 1508 Kids Ready to Learn/Breakfast After the Bell passed
- HB 1783 Legal Financial Obligations, LFOs, passed
- HB 1129/SB 5069 Prisoner Education to lower recidivism, Community College AA degrees
- HB 1048/SB 5499 Tax Credits for Solar
- HB 1079 SB5030 and 5072 Human Trafficking, awaiting Governor Inslee's signature
- Governor Inslee speaking at Seattle University on **April 12th** on Public Service and Ethical Leadership in These Times, 5:45-7:45, Tickets free on EventBrite.
- April 12th, 5:15 PM Rally and protest against methanol plant by Japanese Company in Puget Sound

Hopelink: Brittany Holmes

Hopelink is partnering with other non-profits: Washington Cash teaching class for low income people in Spanish at Hopelink end April. YWCA Bank Works help with "relatively high paying jobs." Solid Ground is providing financial assistance resources for clients. Fred Meyer is helping with Facebook coordination.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sandy Lewis announced that we need to fold and put away the tables and chairs and leave the room as we found it.

Elizabeth Maupin announced that Issaquah will be deciding on the disposition of the former Sisters of Providence buildings and seeks partners to save the building and its stained glass windows.

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CLOSING PRAYER: Diane Richards ;-)

THE NEXT EISCC MEETING will take place on Tuesday, May 9, 2017, 12:00 – 1:30 pm

PROGRAM: Our Homeless Youth: "Congregations for Kids' Good Start Back to School Program: - Change is Underway" & "Update on Homeless Students and Impact of new Immigration Regulations in the Bellevue School District"

To be jointly presented by Nancy Jacobs, Congregations for Kids, an EISCC sub-agency and Betty Takahashi, McKinney-Vento Liaison (Homeless Students), Bellevue School District

LOCATION: St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Bristol Hall, 4228 Factoria Boulevard SE, Bellevue, WA

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Studders

Secretary, Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council Board