**CoC Strategic Planning Meeting
April 16, 2013
Almshouse- 4th Floor Conference Room**

**Attendees Present:**Dick McMillen, Marlene Piasecki, Santo Gairo, Emma Weisser, Susan Hauser, Nancy Szamborski, Fonta Reilly, Marti Woglom, Rich Aichele, Robyn Milgram, Gail Friedman, Patty Smallacombe.

**Lessons learned/ value from past planning:**

* Previous efforts began to investigate the reasons for lack of affordable housing in Bucks County.
* Began to look at the entire inventory of housing.
* Employment and economic self sufficiency issues are still important factors.
* Prevention/diversion component is important to include.
* Previous planning efforts have been too insular- we need to expand to include other .stakeholders: banks, hospitals, private business, builders, etc.
* Shared vision is beginning to move the CoC in a new different direction.
* Same challenges exist across jurisdictions and over time.
* We want to acknowledge the successes from past strategic planning.
* We need to build accountability into the plan complete with action steps and measurable outcomes.
* We need to recognize the challenges and issues that have changed in recent years in order to be aware of the economic climate and trends that effect the target population.
* We should ensure there is inter-departmental coordination at the County level including Commissioner support and coordination of HOME, CDBG, Planning, Fair Housing plans, and other County housing-related departments/funds.
* We should focus on sustainable planning

**Issues critical to success:**

* Identify and involve missing stakeholders- comprehensive representation of the community at large
* Develop a Roadmap- what are we trying to do and how are we going to get there regarding the Strategic Planning Process
* Memorializing the final, written plan. Garner support and buy-in from public officials and the community at large
* Identify action steps to know how to achieve the goals in the plan
* Roles and responsibilities need to be identified- who’s going to do what/ and when?
* Developing an accessible language
* Data collection (including gender-specific data)

**Strategic Planning Value Added**

**For the Community:**

* Identify gaps in service provision and presenting solutions
* Provide direction to the Community so that limited resources can be best used
* Identify best uses and most needed uses of funds
* Create a partnership of community investment, county dollars, and other leveraged funds to focus and address identified actionable items
* Stable, safe and affordable housing will result in benefits to the general community, children, education, families, self-sufficiency, etc. Make it a community that youth want to stay and work instead of leaving
* Create a safety net for unstably housed and other special populations to prevent/divert them from homelessness and to quickly assess and assist them when they do become homeless
* Ownership- Participation- Perspective- gives a voice to the entire range of community
* Homelessness is expensive- untreated health conditions/mental health, children tend to do poorly in school. The solution might not be less expensive, but the quality of life will be better. This will reduce the likelihood that the pattern of homelessness isn’t repeated. We need to consider the Economic Cost and the Human Cost.
* Establish goals and outcomes related to homelessness to ensure we are dedicating funding to the programs that are achieving established outcomes to reduce homelessness
* Provide education to break through resistance around the issue and ideas of housing in the community (NIMBY)

**For Agencies/Providers:**

* Provide an opportunity to critically look at the programs and services available
* Will make a better case for why providers do the work they do, besides “it’s the right thing to do”
* Identify gaps and address them. Deliver services in a way that’s wanted, necessary and fundable
* Interagency coordination- to be able to provide more services more efficiently with limited resources
* Provide direction on goals - Providers should understand the goals of the CoC so they know how their agency fits into the bigger picture. This information should flow throughout the agency (front line staff, case managers, etc) so they see how they fit into the continuum.
* Educate the Boards so they can understand the system and how their agency fits in. Within each board are community members who have innovative ideas about how things can be handled and issues can be addressed.
* Promote CoC efforts to identify new non-profit providers. Provide a forum to bring them together as a more marketable, unified voice for the issue. Build credibility as a coordinated group.
* Make the case for other “providers” to participate: ie. Corrections, MH/DP, Community and Business Dev., etc. Make the case that housing is an issue for all of the systems that serve the target populations and show them how these efforts can benefit their organization.
* Will allow us to speak a common language and avoid the “buzz words”. Providers will understand what the terms mean- viewing “housing” to include building, human services, zoning, etc.
* Understand how the needs of the population fit in with funding trends
* Spend time planning rather than reacting

**For Funders:**

* Setting measurable goals and objectives to make the case for funding
* Collaboration between community, local and governmental funding/leverage funding from a variety of sources
* Data driven decision making
* Ability to leverage resources and measure outcomes.