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**Broome County Safe Housing Task Force – Core Group  
Tuesday, February 12, 2-3pm  
Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:** Sonja Bennett (Deputy Commissioner of TA – Department of Social Services), Chris Schleider (City of Binghamton Code Department), Tom Costello (Director – City of Binghamton Code Department), Pam Guth (Rural Health Network of Central NY), Larry Sal (Landlord – Sall Associates), Christina Cramer (BC Executive’s Office), Mark Schuster (Co-Chair – BC Health Department), Rebecca Rathmell (Co-Chair – Southern Tier Homeless Coalition)

1. Public Forum Debrief

- a. Key Input – over 60 individuals at the Forum, full video available online
  - i. Larry – negative feedback and attacks on Social Services were unhelpful, also ignorant of situation landlords are in. year and a half behind “rent reasonable” definition. TRCA doesn’t work.
  - ii. Mark – discussion with someone not in attendance brought to light that resentment and complaints are many, but solutions are limited. Concerns that they had were correct, but solutions do exist for some of them that are not common knowledge – connecting people to services and assistance.
  - iii. Sonja – would have been nice to redirect from criticisms to ideas, confirmed Rita’s comment at Forum that folks come to DSS in stressful, dire situations and any negative response is seen poorly
  - iv. ?? – the larger system in people’s frustration and anxiety, even case managers have a hard time navigating the system. How can we better and simplify the system to benefit tenants, landlords, AND DSS? How can we develop education for proactive processes? Heard about a lot of vulnerable populations- we need different strategies or resources for different populations.



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- v. Chris – suggestions were well presented, and some suggestions had more support than others at the Forum. Some people had solutions in mind and weren't open to others until certain things came up.
  - vi. Rebecca – tenants need involvement in the process, what does that look like? Attendance at meetings, more public forums? Who do we ask – individuals or collective voice?
  - vii. Tom – notes that current Task Force members aren't making it, so how do we bring in more people and make it work? Tenant may bring personal stories, but not systemic information. Higher engagement by Core Group members.

## 2. Next Steps

- a. What do we do after March? Other communities have developed non-profits or funded entities to push forward the solutions. Do we bring together all the many housing groups?
- b. What should we do with the list of contacts? Distribution of survey.

## 3. Executive Committee Update

- a. State Appropriations
- b. Now is the opportunity to expand to other municipalities, encourage municipalities to engage in committing to specific suggestions.
  - i. Mark and Rebecca at Broome County Assoc. of Towns & Villages Presentation – 2/28/19
- c. Broome County Legislature Engagement

## 4. Protocol & Policy Recommendations – Continued Discussion

- a. Sonja asked to reword/change the “1/3 of locally subsidized apartments indicate home health hazards” – where does that data come from? Also requested we discuss tenants responsibilities and education.
- b. Tom – re: health hazards, homeowners have resources, but tenants do not. We need to provide them with resources or connect them. Also, in the 10 years at Code, there has not been enough new construction to replace the old/poor housing for lower income. Municipal leadership needs to speak out



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against the excessive development of luxury and student housings, including apologizing for any waste of public dollars.

- c. Rebecca – strategic and new development of housing for low income is absolutely part of the consensus and recommendations. Any developers we should include in the conversation?

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 26, 2-3pm