



Social Services and Public Safety Committee

October 14, 2025

Summary and Motions

Chair Jennifer Reynolds called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Committee Members Vice Mayor Dan Wu, Council Members Chuck Ellinger II, Tyler Morton, Shayla Lynch, Lisa Higgins-Hord, Joseph Hale, Amy Beasley, Whitney Elliott Baxter, and Hilary Boone were present. Council Members James Brown, Emma Curtis, Liz Sheehan, and Dave Seigny were present as non-voting members.

I. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 26, 2025 COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Motion by Ellinger for approval of the August 26, 2025 Committee Meeting Summary. Seconded by Baxter. Motion passed without dissent.

II. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 26, 2025 SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Motion by Morton for approval of the August 26, 2025 SPECIAL Committee Meeting Summary. Seconded by Ellinger. Motion passed without dissent.

III. A CARING PLACE (VILLAGES MODEL INITIATIVES FOR LEXINGTON)

Roxanne Cheney, Chair of A Caring Place, reviewed the steps to implement the village model, a community-driven approach to supporting older adults who are aging in place. Currently, there are 425 villages across the United States, with the nearest one to us in Berea. Lexington is being considered as a village location since the area has a growing senior population, with nearly 15% of Fayette County residents aged 65 and older. Older adults account for a disproportionate share of healthcare costs, and aging-in-place models can help reduce them. There are six scopes of work: community needs assessment, technology needs assessment, revenue streams, HOAs, subsidized senior homes, and a village program assessment.

Several Lexington neighborhoods expressed interest in joining the “village” initiative. Cheney outlined the next steps: data analysis, crafting our story, distributing results, hospital collaboration, alignment with the state plan, expanding partnerships, organizational development, and sustainability/growth. Data collection for all six scopes of work should be finalized, and preliminary analysis should begin in January 2026. When asked when the feasibility study would be completed, Cheney confirmed it is expected to be completed by the end of the month. When asked how the Council can help, Cheney said they can be supportive and present. The more they attend town halls, the more people in the community attend. **No action was taken on this item.**

IV. OFFICE OF HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Jeff Herron, Homelessness Prevention Manager, provided an update on the Office of Homelessness Prevention and Intervention (OHPI), established in 2014 in response to the Mayor’s Commission on Homelessness. While the office does not provide direct support services, its responsibilities include coordinating homelessness services, managing encampment removal, preparing annual updates, and conducting strategic planning. In 2025, the homeless encampment response included 22 cleanups at 19 locations, at a total cost of approximately \$65,500. To improve the encampment response, an encampment coordinator was hired to begin work in the fall, and revisions to the Homeless Encampment Standard Operating Procedures are underway. The office is nearing the end of its five-year strategic plan, with 36 of 55 recommendations completed.

When asked how the street surveys compare, Herron said the Point-in-Time (PIT) count aligns with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) methodology. The PIT count is a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January, while the count conducted by Catholic Action Center includes those in treatment facilities, hospitals, and detention centers. PIT is a more comprehensive count intended to provide a snapshot of homelessness in a community and to convey the overall scope of homelessness in America. The two surveys are not apples-to-apples comparisons.

Speaking about the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness, Herron said the mayor met with the two co-chairs, and Commissioner Lanter, and the task force is set to begin meeting in November. Addressing the causes of homelessness and its impact on our approach, Herron explained that average rents exceed HUD's minimum and that securing subsequent housing is challenging. The shortage of units has been a problem, as have federal-level cuts to supportive housing. Herron said the primary challenge is funding, and we can't provide ongoing, sustainable support for temporary and permanent housing because we don't have sufficient funds. **No action was taken on this item.**

V. REVIEW OF RECOVERY RESIDENCES (SOBER LIVING HOMES) ORDINANCE

Michael Cravens, Managing Attorney in the Law Department, provided a summary of proposed amendments to the Revised Draft Ordinance for Recovery Residences (also known as Sober Living Homes). The Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act protect persons from discrimination when enacting any ordinance. Those in recovery from substance abuse disorders generally qualify as disabled persons, which prohibits the use of regulations in a way that would discriminate against the disabled.

The proposed draft ordinance adopts state law requirements for recovery residences. Minor amendments were made for clarity and to clean up language. The ordinance includes a 6-month amnesty period following the Council's passage, during which operators may come into compliance. The ordinance requires operators to obtain a Recovery Residence License and provide proof of certification to LFUCG. Other key changes include an occupancy limit aligned with the Zoning Ordinance, an enforcement scheme, and a rehousing section/notification requirement. The proposed ordinance does not treat recovery residences differently with respect to land use, as they are residential uses and should be treated like other residential uses.

Motion by Morton to approve an Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government to adopt state law requirements for certification of recovery residences and regulations for the licensing of recovery residence operators, including enforcement regarding the same. Seconded By Ellinger. Motion passed without dissent.

Motion by Morton to suspend the rules and have this reported out at the Work Session on October 21, 2025. Seconded by Lynch. Motion passed without dissent.

V. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

Motion by Wu to remove the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Update from the list of committee items. Seconded by Ellinger. Motion passed without dissent.

The meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.