

## **Summary of informal GNA meeting with Com. Meieran 9-9-24**

The group started by identifying the main subjects on people's minds. Questions centered around a few main themes:

- Timing of entering into a GNA
- Enforceability of GNAs and what options for enforcement might be available
- Safety and security planning
- Transportation planning

### **Timing**

**There was a strong feeling that a signed GNA should be in place before the opening of the center.** At the very least there should be a meeting of the minds between the County and neighbors around the direction of the agreement, with neighbors having confidence that we are well on the path to reaching agreement, by the time the center opens.

Neighbors are committed to working with the County so long as they feel like there is a good faith effort by the County to authentically engage and try to understand and meet their needs. Some doubt was expressed about whether this was possible, and if it wasn't going to be possible, what the value would be of expending a tremendous amount of time and energy in the process. The group wanted to emphasize that they want to be as supportive of the work as possible, so long as there is open and honest engagement by the County.

The group noted that the cancellation of this meeting at the last minute after so many meetings had already been rescheduled, with the center scheduled to open within weeks, and after the County had finally agreed on the consistency and timing of meetings, gave them pause in terms of trusting the County. But they are trying to be optimistic and open in terms of the ongoing work.

### **Enforceability**

**There was a strong feeling that a GNA should be binding, with meaningful remedies available.** There was some conversation about what this might mean - for example, if conditions of the agreement aren't met, would it be possible to have the center shut down until it comes into compliance? If there are concerns or disagreement about whether the terms of the agreement aren't being met, is there an option for arbitration, mediation, etc.?

Again, some doubt was expressed about whether the County would truly consider enforceability and there is a sense that the County has already made up its mind on this issue, but neighbors hope that there will be authentic and open negotiation.

### **Safety and Security**

**A distinction was made between safety and security. The group strongly believes there needs to be a clear, proactive plan around external safety for the surrounding neighborhood.** They also believe there needs to be a plan in place for internal security of the workforce, clients, and visitors at the center, but that is less relevant to the GNA specifically.

Essential features of any external safety plan include:

- **Proactively and explicitly describing a clear plan** for both prevention of predictable safety issues and prompt response to situations that develop. This must include a clear delineation of who will be responsible for prevention, de-escalation and responding to crises, and what types of responses, within what period of time, can be expected.
- **Developing rules and enforcement mechanisms** involving not only the close-in perimeter of the facility, but that extend further out. What would a reasonable “penumbra” be?
- **Ensuring that individuals brought to the facility have met basic safety screenings**, including exclusion from a narrow list of criminal offenses particularly impacting children.
- **Clearly articulating a communications system** where safety issues are responded to by a real person in real time with a clear hierarchy for escalation if concerns persist beyond the initial response.
- **Articulating a clear and reliable plan for mandated transportation of people away from the facility.**

**The group clearly expressed that relying on neighbors to call a general number for help in the case of a safety incident was not an acceptable approach.**

### **Transportation**

**There was consensus that there should be mandated transportation away from the facility.** The group feels that no clear justification for *not* requiring transportation away from the facility has been presented.

Clearly the County is developing the rules around what constitutes “deflection”. As part of their own rules they've required that a person agreeing to deflection has agreed to be transported TO the facility, even though they are not under arrest. There does not appear to be any legal justification for not requiring, as part of the same agreement, that the person agrees to also be transported AWAY FROM the facility once the deflection process has been completed.

If there is a counterargument that shows why the agreement can require transportation to the facility but not away from it, the group would like to understand the legal basis for the inconsistency.

If this is a subjective, rather than a legal, decision, the group would like this to be clearly articulated, along with the reasoning and an understanding of who made the decision.

The group feels very strongly about this requirement.