

From: Anne Deacon
Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 9:06 AM
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Subject: HOT team and HSW concerns

Barry, Rud,

I have been given permission to share the below email chain from Greg Winter with you. The initial email is from Teri Bryant, director of the Homeless Service Center and supervisor of the Homeless Outreach Team. She is also a member of HSW.

We continue to hear from various housing partners about the detrimental behaviors of Markis D. and his newly-formed group, SOS. He and his colleagues have actively discouraged use of Base Camp and HOT services in their conversations with people who are living unsheltered. They consistently promulgate misinformation that is untrue and damaging to our most important community partners who are working to help those who are homeless. Their actions undermine our homeless housing system and put vulnerable people at risk.

Markis' membership position on the Homeless Strategies Workgroup as the designated County Council Advocate representative implies/assigns him a certain level of credibility. Yet his actions, and presumably his "mission", is counterproductive to the goals of local governments. I ask that you consider whether his continuation in this role is in the best interests of HSW identified goals.

Additionally, I have heard that a number of HSW members have contemplated quitting the committee, in part because of the contentious and vitriolic debates. Moreover, I am concerned that we are asking highly-valued community partners to listen to abusive and false comments about their organizations and their good work, without an ability on their part to defend themselves or set the record

straight. This happens in an open public meeting where the people launching these false attacks have been given some credibility by the county.

Please feel free to give me a call if you would like to discuss further. I do understand the challenges in addressing this difficult situation.

Anne Deacon, LICSW

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My incoming and outgoing email communication is subject to disclosure.

From: Greg Winter <greg_winter@oppco.org <mailto:greg_winter@oppco.org> >
Sent: Sunday, April 18, 2021 11:40 AM
To: Anne Deacon <ADeacon@co.whatcom.wa.us <mailto:ADeacon@co.whatcom.wa.us> >
Subject: Fw: HOT

Hi Anne. I know you share some of this feeling, but I wanted to share this email I got from Teri Bryant recently. Is there anything that can be done about this?

From: Teri Bryant <teri_bryant@whatcomhsc.org
<mailto:teri_bryant@whatcomhsc.org> >
Sent: Friday, April 16, 2021 4:47 PM
To: Greg Winter <greg_winter@oppco.org <mailto:greg_winter@oppco.org> >
Subject: HOT

Hi,

You don't need to respond to this – I think it's part FYI and part venting. The Homeless Strategies Workgroup reconvened today and Markis Dee's associates were heavily involved in public comment attacking HOT. Marisa and Theresa were both in attendance and this unrelenting assault has just become unbelievably grueling; they do this in just about every public comment opportunity, they write letters to the workgroup and to the councils, and of course Markis' cannot stop himself from uploading videos to social media to yammer on ad nauseum with half-truths and lies knit tightly around the tiniest golden thread of truth.

We are short-handed this week because Bob's daughter is getting married, so Theresa and Craig had just worked a 10 ½ hour day yesterday and were returning to 1111 at the end of it just to be accosted by Markis and Co. They were there handing out meals. Markis asked Theresa how she was doing (major side eye on my part) and she said, "Tired and busy." Then his folks blasted public comment this afternoon about how unhelpful they were and added plenty of garbage about they never see HOT in the field. And I just sit there on camera and take it, meeting after meeting.

This has been absolutely unrelenting for over a year now. HOT has no reason to collaborate with them and I believe that it would be unethical to do so since their volunteers persistently violate confidentiality of the people they serve on social media and they do not seem to have any understanding of professional best practices. For these reasons HOT is very reluctant to interact or share information with this group - meaning, all folks now associated with "Serenity Outreach Services."

The County continues to give credibility to Markis' divisive rhetoric by maintaining his "unanimously appointed role as advocate on the Homeless

Strategies Workgroup.” Today’s 1 ½ hour meeting spanned 2 ½ hours and in large part because he is constantly running his mouth, to the exclusion of all other voices and is consistently disrespectful to Hans Erchinger Davis, Anne Deacon, and Barry Buchanan. This group is starting to feel like a mandatory audience to his abuse and I just don’t know what to do about it.

I guess I should also make you aware that they went after Maple Alley Inn today too, for not being open, in case that comment comes up in the future. It’s hard work being this hated for trying to help people!

Anyway thanks for listening and have a good weekend. I’m gonna!

Teri Bryant, she/her/hers

Director, Whatcom Homeless Service Center

Opportunity Council

Phone 360-255-2091 x132

Fax: 855-604-0920

My schedule is M-Th, 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. If your need is urgent, please contact Chris Pollock at chris_pollock@whatcomhsc.org <mailto:chris_pollock@whatcomhsc.org> .

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