



JOHN J. TECKLENBURG
MAYOR

City of Charleston
South Carolina

OFFICE OF
COMMUNICATIONS

For Release: February 4, 2016

CITY AND PARTNERS ANNOUNCE 10-POINT PLAN FOR “TENT CITY”

Charleston, S.C.—At a background briefing today, the City of Charleston -- along with partners including the Lowcountry Homeless Coalition, One80 Place and others -- laid out its roadmap for helping the citizens living in the area that has become known as “Tent City.” The encampment has emerged on the northern peninsula of Charleston over the last year and the City is working with partners to assist homeless individuals in finding necessary supportive services, including shelter and permanent housing.

“This plan is a roadmap to get us started,” City of Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg said. “I am grateful for the assistance One80 Place and the Homeless Coalition have provided in creating this way forward. Not only will those without shelter have the resources they need to begin re-ordering their lives, but we are doing this in a way that will return the area to normalcy within the next 30-60 days. We are a caring city, and we are approaching this situation with attention and respect for everyone involved.”

The Lowcountry Homeless Coalition’s executive director Anthony Haro added, “This has clearly become an unsustainable situation. We look forward to working with the city, the county and others to find permanent homes and long-term housing solutions for these individuals as well as others in our community who are experiencing homelessness.”

The ten-point roadmap includes the following steps, according to City of Charleston Housing and Community Development Director Geona Shaw Johnson:

- Beginning Friday, February 5th, the property’s principal owner, the South Carolina Department of Transportation will begin to clean up the site, removing trash and debris that has accumulated near the main encampment.
- On Monday and Tuesday, February 8th – 9th, the area around Lee and Meeting streets, including the large white tent, will be cleared. Those currently living in that location will be offered immediate shelter by One80 Place.

- In the same timeframe, the areas on the East side of Meeting St. will also be cleared, with shelter again offered by One80 Place.
- The City will partner with SCDOT to establish clear legal jurisdiction over the area through a new lease agreement, which will be presented to Charleston City Council.
- Collaborate directly with churches and other charitable organizations to coordinate any further distribution of donated items and to keep the encampment clean.
- Support the work of the Lowcountry Homeless Coalition and other non-profit and faith-based organizations to provide information and housing-assistance services to homeless individuals, including the development of individualized housing plans.
- Continue current efforts with county officials and nonprofit partners to identify additional shelter space to house those who have been living in the encampment until more permanent housing options are available.
- Work with area residents, local elected officials and neighborhood association leaders to ensure that the needs of neighborhood residents are protected throughout the process.
- Establish a city-affiliated website, which will allow private citizens to get involved by making donations and volunteering their time. The associated fund will be opened with \$50,000 -- \$35,000 from the City of Charleston and \$15,000 from the 2016 Charleston Inaugural Committee.
- Appointment of a citizens “blue ribbon” commission to begin bringing people together around long-term solutions to the problem of homelessness in our community, so that this situation does not repeat itself in the future.

“No plan is perfect,” said Johnson, “and we understand there are going to be challenges. However, we believe that this strategy will allow us to resolve this situation humanely, and in a way that benefits the city, the neighborhood residents and those currently living in Tent City.”

###

MEDIA CONTACT:

Jack O’Toole, Director of Communications
 Media Relations/Public Information
 (843) 518-3228
otoolej@charleston-sc.gov