

RICHLAND COUNTY CHAPTER 980 COMMITTEE

February 5, 2020

A meeting of the Richland County Chapter 980 Committee was held at 8:30 a.m. on February 5, 2020 in the Main Conference Room of the Community Services Building, 221 West Seminary Street, Richland Center, Wisconsin.

Members Present: Tracy Thorsen, Mike Bindl, Lynn Newkirk, Benjamin Southwick (via phone) and Scott Timm (via phone).

Members Absent: Mary Collins Johnsrud.

Others Present: Meghan Rohn, Kristin Ihm, Billy Jones, Dane Kanable, Toby Johnson and Andrea Fields.

Approve Agenda and Posting: Motion by Benjamin Southwick, seconded by Mike Bindle to approve the agenda and proper posting. Motion carried.

Approve January 22, 2020 Richland County Chapter 980 Committee Minutes: Motion by Benjamin Southwick, seconded by Mike Bindle to approve the January 22, 2020 Richland County Chapter 980 Committee Minutes. Motion carried. Tracy Thorsen noted that while the minutes correctly reflected what was discussed at the meeting, the correct contact for the Sheriff's Department should be Dane Knable not Toby Johnson.

Consideration of Housing Options for Impending Release of Sex Offender Richard Sugden: Tracy Thorsen distributed a copy of the order given by Judge Rood at the time of the hearing that was held on January 14, 2020, noting it was signed and filed on January 27, 2020. It was clarified by Benjamin Southwick that the committee has 60 days from the date the order was filed to find a placement for Mr. Sugden.

Efforts that have been made so far to locate a placement were reviewed. Advertisements are currently being run in the Shopping News, however there have been no inquiries. Tracy Thorsen has reached out via email to all Richland County Town Clerk's to see if there are any properties for sale or rent in their areas. Richwood, Rockbridge and Dayton Townships were the only three to respond, all stating there were no properties available. Real-estate listings were also reviewed by Tracy Thorsen in an attempt to identify any potential properties that could be forwarded to the provided list of DHS vendors that purchase properties for the purpose of leasing them back to the state. A list of properties was created and forwarded onto Lynn Newkirk first to determine if the properties met the required criteria, then onto the vendors. One vendor did respond, however only to inform Tracy Thorsen that he is not purchasing properties at this time.

Benjamin Southwick will be reaching out to the County Board Supervisors, however has not done so yet. Mr. Southwick has however reached out to an acquaintance of his, Daniel Burns, who has been investigating several properties that are for sale. Unfortunately, it was determined this will not be a pursuable option.

Discussion was held regarding an approximate 4.5-acre parcel south of the city of Richland Center that the County recently took ownership of, on which is a house and several mobile homes. Benjamin Southwick explained a report was provided by Toby Johnson who confirmed there are several individuals living on the property in some of these mobile homes. However, if the County chose to do so, it is his understanding these inhabitants could be evicted if they are opposed to Mr. Sugden residing on the property.

Mike Bindle shared a map of the property and discussion was held regarding if it met the necessary 1500ft requirement and if the house met sewer and septic requirements. Mike Bindl explained that it was determined the property does meet the 1500ft requirement and while there is a joint well on the property for the house and the mobile homes, it is believed that access has been turned off to all of the mobile homes. Residences closest to this parcel were also identified on the map in the event that law enforcement would need to make contact with local residents.

The map of the property was reviewed in more detail in regards to which mobile homes are occupied. The map shows the location of the house (pink), occupied mobile homes, or active mailing addresses (yellow) and vacant mobile homes (green). Benjamin Southwick explained that one of the residents has approached him inquiring about purchasing the entire property and noted this is on the agenda for the consideration of the Property Committee. Mike Bindle also provided pictures of the property for the committee. Tracy Thorsen reviewed the major concerns with the property including looking into the well/sewer, existing residents, and determining if this is an option the County is interested in pursuing. Andrea Fields asked that clarification be obtained on who is residing in the mobile homes and if there are any children living in the homes. Toby Johnson reviewed again what homes he understood to be occupied. Andrea Fields noted she will contact one of the individuals believed to be living in one of the mobile homes.

Discussion was held regarding how a negative reaction from surrounding residents could impact the outcome if this property is pursued as a viable option and if. Scott Timm confirmed that there is no official requirement for children to live outside a specified distance from the property. Benjamin Southwick emphasized however, that while it meets the official requirements, the last property did as well. The issues that was encountered with the previous property was the ability for the Judge to use discretion when approving these placements. Scott Timm agree and noted that while Mr. Sugden is not considered a serious child sex offender and therefore the statutory requirements do not prohibit living within 1500ft of children, he suggested the committee attempt to eliminate as many potential barriers up front as possible.

If the Property Committee decides to pursue this property one of the next steps would be for the committee to request law enforcement to make contact with the 5 residences indicated on the map and submit a report back to the committee. Dane Knable and Billy Jones noted they would be willing to make these contacts and Andrea Fields noted she is willing to accompany them. Andrea Fields explained that she received a lot of calls regarding this placement and knows what many of the concerns are of the public. It was determined that it may be beneficial for her to accompany law enforcement so she can answer any questions residents have up front, as well as take any questions

she is unable to answer back. Residents will also be reminded that these Committee meetings are open to the public and is another opportunity for people to voice concerns or ask questions.

Scott Timm reviewed what monitoring for Mr. Sugden looks like in the first year of release for the benefit of law enforcement and Andrea Fields when speaking to residents. Mr. Sugden will be on supervised release including house arrest and will only be permitted out of the house for pre-approved specific activities. When leaving the house Mr. Sugden must be transported and monitored by a Department of Corrections contracted staff member to provide direct supervision which includes sight, sound and physical access of him at all times. This even includes things such as law care or snow removal.

Mr. Sugden will also be equipped with a GPS ankle bracelet that will be tracked and monitored at all times by the Department of Corrections Madison Monitoring Center. If there would be an alert based on his actions, an alert would be sent to the monitoring center and they would respond through their procedures. If it is found that the GPS is spotty or they are finding issues with false alerts, there is also an option of also equipping Mr. Sugden with a second radio frequency bracelet which would attach to a landline phone. This is designed more for house arrest monitoring and would give a perimeter around the house.

The individuals contracted to transport and supervise Mr. Sugden will also be provided with a key to the residence and be contracted to conduct scheduled monitoring checks of the residence. Mr. Sugden is unaware of when these checks will occur and can happen day or night. The contracted individual will use their key to access the home and conduct a check of the home.

Mr. Sugden is currently approximately halfway through his first year of supervised release. After his first year Scott Timm emphasized it does not mean that all of the supervision ends. After the first year a community team will be assigned consisting of a Department of Corrections Agent, Case Manager, and a Sex Offender Treatment Provider. These individuals will make decisions as to when certain privileges will be allowed and when to reduce the level of supervision. Scott Timm noted that while Mr. Sugden had a few struggles adjusting at the beginning of his release, he has not had any serious violations.

Andrea Fields inquired if there is a way the GPS bracelet can be tested on the property prior to pursuing the option and noted it would go a long way in the eyes of the public if the committee is able to state the device was tested and works properly. Toby Johnson noted law enforcement would review cell service when they went out to make contact with other residents. Scott Timm noted these bracelets are set up and contracted through the Department of Corrections and they would most likely need to be contacted to determine if this is a possibility. Kristin Ihm noted she will look into this as well, however she was doubtful it will be possible due to how individuals are put into the system. Scott Timm noted he would be willing to work with her if there is anything he can do to help.

Tracy Thorsen reviewed the next steps for the committee. It was noted that Tracy Thorsen, Mike Bindle and Benjamin Southwick (via phone) will be attending the Property Committee Meeting later today at 3:00p.m and determine if this is an option the County is interested in pursuing. If so, law

enforcement should move forward with making contact with the residents living on the properties that have been identified by the committee. This committee will meet again Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at 2:30p.m.

Adjourn: Motion by Benjamin Southwick, seconded by Lynn Newkirk to adjourn the meeting.
Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meghan Rohn

Confidential Administrative Secretary