

**SEMINOLE COUNTY GOVERNMENT
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

SUBJECT: County-owned Land Dodd/Dike Road (Children's Village)

DEPARTMENT: Administrative Services **DIVISION:** Support Services

AUTHORIZED BY: Jamie Croteau **CONTACT:** Meloney Lund **EXT.** 5256

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|---|
| Agenda Date <u>05/25/04</u> Regular <input type="checkbox"/> Consent <input type="checkbox"/> Work Session <input type="checkbox"/> Briefing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Public Hearing – 1:30 <input type="checkbox"/> Public Hearing – 7:00 <input type="checkbox"/> |

MOTION/RECOMMENDATION: Staff is seeking direction on the use of the structures located at Dodd/Dike Road.

BACKGROUND:

In 1985, Environmental Services purchased approximately 24 acres adjacent to the Southeast Regional Water Treatment Plant for future expansion.

In 1987, the BCC approved a lease with Sharing Concern For Seminole County Shelter Children, Inc. (SC3) for approximately 1.5 acres of the vacant land. Members of SC3 and the Rotary Club raised funds to construct two (2) 5,500 sq. ft. structures and construction was completed in 1990. The lease refers to the structures as Seminole Children's Village. Seminole Children's Village provided temporary care shelters for children. In 1992, SC3 amended their lease and turned over the day to day operations to Seminole Community Mental Health Center, Inc. (SCMHC).

SCMHC used the facilities as a shelter for children until 2002. State funding became difficult to obtain and SCMHC discontinued use of the property. County staff worked with SCMHC to try and place other children's groups into the site. In 2003, the BCC approved a sub-lease to Conductive Education Center of Orlando. Conductive Education Center did not execute the lease agreement. Also in 2003, the BCC approved the surplus of the property. After the structures remained empty for over 18 months, County staff terminated the lease on March 4, 2004, in accordance with the terms of section 18(c).

District 1, Commissioner Maloy

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Reviewed by: | _____ |
| Co Atty: | _____ |
| DFS: | _____ |
| Other: | _____ |
| DCM: | <u>[Signature]</u> |
| CM: | <u>[Signature]</u> |
| File No. | <u>BASSS03</u> |

Since Seminole County terminated the lease, SCMHC approached the County with a new program. Several other non-profit agencies have approached the County regarding the possible lease of the structures; Seminole County School Board, Elizabeth House, Opportunity House, Inc. and Conductive Education Center of Orlando.

The Seminole County School Board is unable to use the facility due to the structures wood frame construction. Attached are the requests that have been received in writing. Staff has conducted an internal appraisal of the property and determined that the land value is \$161,000 and the land and structures combined are worth \$890,000. The land and structures are assets of the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund.

The Board has four (4) options:

1. Surplus through competitive bid process
2. Retain the property and leave vacant
3. Negotiate a new lease with Seminole Community Mental Health Center
4. Conduct an RFP process to allow all interested non-profits to respond

An RFP process could be conducted to allow for non-profit agencies to respond and allow the BCC to choose from the pool of respondents that would lease the property for a specified timeframe.

Staff is requesting direction on the use of the property.

SEMINOLE COMMUNITY
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.

237 Fernwood Blvd.
Fern Park, FL 32730

Ph. (407) 831-2411
Fax (407) 831-0195



April 23, 2004

Seminole County Board of Commissioners
Seminole County Services Building
1101 East First Street
Sanford, FL 32771

Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Seminole Community Mental Health Center, Inc. (SCMHC), I would like to present you with the enclosed materials that describe an exciting new program we would like to implement on the Seminole Children's Village campus. As you're aware, two years ago we were left with no choice but to discontinue services at the Village when the Florida Department of Children and Families advised us that they were unable to raise our per diem rate for children's emergency shelter care to an equitable level. The bulk of our community based services were being negatively impacted by our continued operation of the Village at a financial loss. We had been operating the Children's Village and serving Seminole County's children with consistent and quality shelter care services for over eleven years and it saddened us, as well as our community partners such as the area Rotary Clubs and SC3 (Judge Ken Leffler, Jim Gamble, Art Grindle), tremendously to have to discontinue those services for fiscal reasons.

Since the closing of the Children's Village, we have searched diligently for a program (or funding) that would allow us to once again address the critical needs of our community's children. Our research has been extensive, cautious, and time consuming, but we now believe we have come up with a perfect match for the facility. I have attached an overview of our proposed *Shared Family Care* program, which we've developed based on services provided by a nationally known model currently operating successfully in several states.

We hope you will take a few moments to review the enclosed material. We also ask that, when considering your decision about renewing our lease at the Seminole Children's Village, you take into consideration SCMHC's years of dedicated service, our commitment and our investment in Seminole County's children and their families.

Thank you, in advance, for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

James P. Berko, MSW, ACSW
Executive Director

JPB/djb
Enc.

SEMINOLE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER, INC.

237 Fernwood Blvd.
Fern Park, FL 32730

Ph. (407) 831-2411
Fax (407) 831-0195



SHARED FAMILY CARE PROGRAM

I. Program Description

Seminole Community Mental Health Center, Inc. has worked collaboratively with the Seminole County Healthy Start Coalition, the Florida Department of Children & Families, and the Seminole County Baptist Association to develop a program that will prevent families with substance abuse issues, who are at risk of involvement in the child welfare system, from being divided. This residential program will also provide a safe and secure environment for the reunification of families who've already been separated. Together these entities have worked to secure community support, identify potential program participants and mentors, and to ensure that the program model addresses the priorities identified by the Seminole County Alliance's Children's Services Committee.

The program is designed after the ***Shared Family Care Program*** currently operating successfully in scattered counties across ten states. In the model program for Seminole County, three to four families will be placed in a supervised group home. Unlike traditional residential group home and shelter care settings, Shared Family Care offers a unique opportunity for entire families to remain together in a controlled environment on an around-the-clock basis. While parents maintain primary responsibility for the care of their children, they receive support on a 24 hour basis and are taught relapse prevention, practical parenting and life skills training in the context of "real life" daily activities, often for the first time. The ***Shared Family Care Program*** enhances a family's ability to cope, substance free, with the stresses of daily living while ensuring the safety of the children.

Once a family is accepted into the ***Shared Family Care Program***, they are assigned a mentor from the faith-based community to aid in the development of parenting skills, and to be actively involved in the family's transition to independent living. The families and mentors work with a professional ***Family Support Team*** that incorporates the client's perspective and input to promote recovery from substance abuse and help the family identify their goals. The Team ensures that those goals are consistent with the family's relapse prevention/recovery plan, and helps them in developing a practical strategy for achieving those goals. The ***Family Support Team*** and the mentor then monitor and facilitate the family's progress. Professional crisis intervention is available on a 24-hour/as needed basis.

While the immediate goal of the ***Shared Family Care Program*** is to prevent families from being separated due to substance abuse issues, the overall goal of the program is to strengthen our community by helping families to achieve permanency for their children and move toward self-sufficiency. The program can **prevent** removal of children in a family at risk of separation, or provide a safe and supportive environment in which to **reunify** a family that has previously been separated.

Placements in the *Shared Family Care Program* generally last from 6-9 months during which the *Family Support Team* provides the family with intensive case management services, as well as linkage to community resources. Educational, vocational, treatment and housing issues are all addressed with the goal of stable employment and permanent housing for each family. Although daily costs for providing the *Shared Family Care Program* are similar to the costs of providing traditional foster care, program participation is generally 6-9 months, while average involvement in the foster care system runs between 12-18 months. In addition to the obvious financial benefits, the community realizes less tangible, yet invaluable, savings resulting from promoting recovery from substance abuse, providing housing to parents as well as children, providing employment support and other services to parents, preventing (or minimizing) parent-child separation, and reducing the risk of children entering or re-entering the child welfare system.

Close collaboration and involvement with the Department of Children and Families' ADM office and the partners of Community Based Care of Seminole (CBC) on this project is anticipated. Contacts with Carolann Duncan of the DCF/ADM District 7 Program Office and various CBC partners have revealed their willingness to become involved with and support these much-needed family and children's services in Seminole County.

At a time when the failure of the classic social services systems regularly grab headlines around the world, the *Shared Family Care Program*, by definition, provides the tangible and long-term benefits of keeping families together, preparing them for stable and independent living, assisting with that transition, and offering support until the family is no longer considered to be at-risk of involvement with the child welfare system.

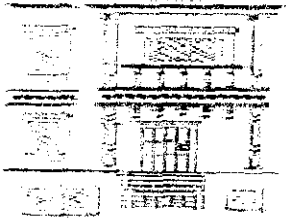
II. Anticipated Program Outcomes

1. Family/parental skill development;
2. Maintenance and care of dependent children in a healthy home-like environment;
3. Prevention of breakdown of at-risk families;
4. Relief for the child care/Sheriff's assessment systems and staff;
5. Majority of families will transition into permanent housing upon successful completion/graduation.
6. Prevention/reduction of initial entry and re-entry to the child welfare system.

III. Program Funding

With the support of the local Department of Children and Families Substance Abuse and Mental Health Program (SAMH) office, SCMHC will re-navigate \$145,000 current funding to provide for a SAMH Residential Level IV cost center configuration. The Shared Family Care program will enjoy the tangible and intangible benefits and round-the-clock management support from SCMHC, which operates on a 24/7 basis.

In addition, approximately \$40,000 in local match dollars are anticipated to be generated from contributions and donations from individuals and foundations, grants from local and national faith-based organizations, and client fees for room and board based on a sliding scale fee schedule.



Elizabeth House, Inc.

SERVING SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

April 26, 2004

GOVERNING BOARD

Father Mike Grenier, President

Open Homes Drug Rehab

Brenda Grenier, Counselor

Darlene Lambert, Victim Advocate

FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

Sandra Preston

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Kellie Tomeo, Esq., President

Law Offices of Kellie Tomeo

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End Tax Problems

Larry Hoppen,

Northwest Mutual

Mike Ketzner

Regus Business Center

Sgt. Louis J. Tomeo,

Seminole County Sheriff's Dept.

Chairman Darryl McLane
Seminole County Commissioners
Seminole County,
Florida

Re: Proposal for the Two House on the Corner of Dike and Dodd Roads
Previous Project Named: Children's Village

Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of ELIZABETH HOUSE, we would like to submit our proposal for the use of these two houses that were formerly occupied by the program known as the Children's Village.

Elizabeth House, Inc. was incorporated in June 2003 and we received our letter from the IRS in December of that same year. Our mission is ***"to provide a transition home for women and their children who are survivors of domestic violence, no longer in imminent danger, but need a place to heal in body, soul and spirit while putting their lives back together through a life-changing foundation based on Biblical principles."*** Our state-certified emergency shelters offer the temporary safety she needs (usually only 6 weeks) and do a wonderful job of helping her heal from the abuse. After this short stay, a survivor and her children often need a safe and affordable place (they live with us free) to live while rebuilding their lives and integrating back into the community in an independent and reality-based environment. The crucial services that a transitional housing program offers victims of domestic violence help turn a survivor into a thriver!

It was once said by a child survivor, "if you want to keep me safe and help me, keep my mommy safe and help her". We can use these two houses to expand our bed capacity as we only have 6 beds available now and we have been full since the third month - we opened right after Christmas of 2003. In fact, I had to turn 3 families away in the past month and am beginning to compile a waiting list.

These houses that are presently vacant are already full-equipped to provide beds for these mothers and their children, as well as fully equipped kitchens, living and

P.O. Box 620586 Oviedo, Florida 32762

Phone: (407) 671-7423 • Cell: (407) 709-0052 • E-mail: sandra@elizabethhouseinc.com

dining areas and playground space outside.

Our funding comes from individuals in our county, churches, organizations and clubs as well as from various fund-raisers held throughout the year. Also, I am presently writing for grants from Publix, Target, Walmart and Mary Kay. In June, I will be submitting a request for funds from the Community Assistance Program through Dave Medley.

Though Elizabeth House is a new agency in town, I bring to the table many years of management background as well as five years as Executive Director of two battered women's shelters and a transition home. Also, I sat on the Board of Directors of the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence for several years.

Attached are letters of support from the Sheriff of Seminole County as he was one of our first Founders, and also letters from Child Protective Services and Harbor House. Jeannie Gold, Executive Director of Safehouse, is also writing us a letter of support as the need is so great for our particular service in our county.

Should I be invited to make a public presentation to the Board of County Commissioners, I will be glad to provide detailed statistics as they relate to our County and anything else needed to help our Commissioners make an informed decision about the service agency they believe should occupy these houses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandra Preston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "P".

Sandra Preston
Founder & President

cc: Kevin Grace, County Manager

Law Office of I. Michael Tucker, P.L.C.

100 SunTrust Bank Building
498 Palm Springs Drive
Altamonte Springs, Florida 32701

Phone: 407-977-8836
Fax: 407-977-5252
Email: estates@cfl.rr.com

May 3, 2004

Ms. Meloney Lung
Administrative Services Department
Support Services
200 W. County Home Road
Sanford, FL 32773

In re: Property at Dike & Dodd Roads

Dear Ms. Lung:

It has been recommended to me that you are the person that I should contact regarding the property at the intersection of Dike & Dodd Road.

I represent Opportunity House, Inc. a not for profit organization recently established with the Secretary of State's Office. Mr. Michael Mitchell and Mr. Wesley Robbins of Sanford are interested in obtaining either the property itself or a lease on the property to run a group home for boys. Mr. Mitchell is currently the athletic director at Greenwood Lakes Middle School in Sanford. One or both of these gentlemen may have already been in contact with you or your office about the property.

It is my understanding that a waiting list has been established regarding the use or possession of the above-mentioned property. If so, Opportunity House, Inc. would like to be added to that list. If there is any other additional paperwork necessary at this time, please forward same to me at my office. I will be glad to assist Opportunity House, Inc., Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Robbins in any way that I can. Should the Dike & Dodd Road property is unavailable for any reason, I would appreciate a list of any properties located within the county that would be suitable for the intended purpose of Opportunity House, Inc.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Very truly yours,



I. Michael Tucker