

## PRESS RELEASE



### **Assembly Leadership Responds to the Announcement of the Conclusion of Facilitation for Workgroup on Homelessness**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**June 17, 2022**

Yesterday, Assembly Leadership was notified that Tom Barrett and Belinda Breaux, third-party facilitators to the Homeless Facilitated Collaborative Process, announced the conclusion of their involvement in the project.

Formed in August 2021 by the Anchorage Assembly and the Bronson administration, the facilitated collaboration set out to work alongside stakeholders, including the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness and countless community organizations and businesses, to “develop a client and community centered approach to exiting from Mass Care” and improve upon the continuum of care for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. The plan to serve those experiencing homelessness and those needing to transition from mass care to permanent housing became referred to as the *From Homeless to Stably Housed* plan.

Assembly Chair LaFrance and Vice Chair Constant extend their gratitude to Admiral Barrett and Ms. Breaux for more than 14 months of service in support of the facilitated process.

“The facilitation provided by Admiral Barrett and Ms. Breaux has been essential to the progress and outcomes of the collaboration,” said Chair LaFrance. “Thanks to the dedication of the facilitators and the extraordinary work of community partners, the *From Homeless to Stably Housed* plan has outlined a multifaceted path forward to addressing homelessness. The recent creation of the Complex Care Shelter, formerly known as the Sockeye Inn, which opened on June 6, 2022 and offers 83 non-congregate beds managed by Catholic Social Services, shines a light on the potential successes the plan holds.”

Assembly leadership stands ready to work with Mayor Bronson and all community partners to successfully transition people out of the Sullivan and to make progress on the many projects to address homelessness developed in the facilitated process in accord with Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) and the state and federal constitutions.

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“There is still a great deal of work to be done,” said Vice Chair Constant. “Of highest priority is providing safe housing for the estimated 295 people anticipated to be unhoused after the closing of the Sullivan Arena on June 30, 2022, the majority of whom may end up on the streets. Combined with the potential unhousing of 150 individuals amid funding uncertainty for the Guest House, the legality of camp abatement while the mass care facility closes is a top concern to address. If completed as proposed, the recent actions taken by the Mayor will put the Municipality at risk for another round of costly litigation in violation of *Martin v. City of Boise* and the consent decree in *Dale Engle v. MOA*, 3AN-10-07047CI. We agree with Admiral Barrett and Ms. Breaux that transparency, accurate data, candor, and credible information are key elements to addressing these concerns.”

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**Contact:**

Allie Hartman, Communications Coordinator, Anchorage Assembly Legislative Services,  
wwmasls@anchorageak.gov, 907-215-8850

June 16, 2022

Mayor Dave Bronson, Municipality of Anchorage  
Suzanne LaFrance, Anchorage Assembly Chair  
Diane Kaplan, Rasmuson Foundation President / CEO  
Greg Cerbana, Weidner Apartment Homes

Re: Conclusion of Facilitated Process

We want to inform you we are concluding our work facilitating efforts by the Municipality and the Anchorage Assembly to improve the homeless situation in our community. We do not believe at this point we can add value implementing the client and community focused strategy the Assembly and Municipality have agreed to.

Homelessness is a complex, multifaceted issue impacting some of the most vulnerable members of our community and the quality of life of our community itself. Successfully addressing it takes proactive engaged, transparent collaboration among multiple government, philanthropic, service, business and religious organizations willing to rise above differences and partner with each other in positive, creative ways to achieve common goals.

Much progress has been made over the past year in Anchorage because of extraordinary work by many dedicated individuals and organizations. The Anchorage community can be proud of this progress, and we are proud of helping advance that work. We thank the Assembly and Mayor Bronson for the opportunity.

However, the transparency, candor and “we are all in this together” attitude that enabled that earlier progress has in our opinion broken down in recent months. The decision framework approach we apply to support issue resolution depends on willingness to engage on tough issues with transparency, candor, accurate data, and credible information. We are no longer in such an environment and are thus unable to add value supporting decision-making needed to successfully exit mass care at Sullivan arena and implement agreed to planks of the client and community centered homeless strategy. We encourage the Administration to continue working together with the Assembly and community partners over coming weeks as Sullivan Arena is closed, operating plans for a navigation center are developed, and for the long term given that gaps remain in supportive low-cost housing availability in Anchorage.

We thank the Rasmuson Foundation and Weidner Apartment Homes for supporting this initiative and the many individuals we got to know and work with over the last eight months. We hope the Municipality, Assembly, funders, and service providers continue work to make homelessness rare and temporary in our community, and keep people who experience homelessness safe, secure and on paths to better lives.

Sincerely,

*Tom Barrett* 

Tom Barrett and Belinda Breaux

cc:

Larry Baker, MOA Consultant  
Felix Rivera, Anchorage Assembly  
Kameron Perez, Anchorage Assembly  
Joe Gerace, AHD Director

Alexis Johnson, MOA Chief of Staff  
Courtney Petersen, MOA OMB  
Meg Zalatel, ACEH  
Michele Brown, Rasmuson Foundation

