


CITY OF VENICE
Office of the City Manager

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Ed Lavallee, City Manager 
DATE: July 30, 2013
RE: Dr. Marbut

The City of Sarasota and Sarasota County are interested in bringing Dr. Marbut to our Community to develop a Strategic Plan to address homelessness. A request has been made by Sarasota County for City of Venice to share in the cost of this project.

Background:

The Gulf Coast Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County provided sponsorship to bring Dr. Marbut to Sarasota County. Last week, Dr. Marbut made a presentation about homelessness to county and local officials at Venetian Golf and River Club in Venice. Dr. Marbut shared his expertise and made some initial recommendations, particularly as they relate to the need for shelters for families in north and south Sarasota County and a shelter for the chronically homeless in the City of Sarasota. As this is a community-wide issue and a community plan, Sarasota County officials are soliciting the participation of cities and towns in the County to bring Dr. Marbut back to assist the County in the development of a Strategic Action Plan.

Dr Marbut's fee is \$5,732.00 per month for three months. He is adding another month pro bono. In addition to his consulting fee, the participating entities would be responsible for travel expenses including airfare, hotel, per diem, airport parking and car rental, as applicable. The estimated total cost for his services, including travel expenses, would be approximately \$40,000.00 or \$8,000.00 per entity, if all entities participate.

Attached is the County's draft Scope of Work.

Recommendation:

Provide Sarasota County with acknowledgement of City of Venice willingness to financially participate in bringing Dr. Marbut to the area to develop a Strategic Action Plan to address homelessness, contingent upon the financial participation of others, such that the cost to the City of Venice will not exceed \$8,000.00.

I. Primary Objective: Consultant shall develop a Strategic Action Plan (“Action Plan”) to evaluate and improve the efficiency and organization of homeless services providers.

II. Project Phases: The Project will be divided into seven phases, as described below:

1. Phase 1- Inventory. Consultant shall perform an inventory of all homeless services in Sarasota County and conduct visits to all homeless services providers. Many of these visits will be conducted during normal work hours. Additionally Consultant will visit sites during the off hours, on the weekends and the evenings, when the front line staff continues to provide services.

2. Phase 2- Needs Assessment. Consultant shall conduct a needs assessment of types of services (qualitative) and capacity of services (quantitative) needed in Sarasota County. This will require street level observation and analysis of as much data as Consultant can gather from the point-in-time-homeless counts, 211 information, HMIS (Homeless Management Information System), agency reports, etc.

3. Phase 3- Gap Analysis. Consultant shall conduct a gap analysis of services between inventory and needs. This often requires a lot of follow-up that may be done by phone and e-mail. If the gap analysis includes a recommendation for new facilities, the Consultant shall identify the type, size and general location for each facility as well as review potential sites for consideration.

4. Phase 4- Strategic Framing. Consultant shall perform strategic framing of the Action Plan. This will require Consultant to conduct in person meetings with government staff members, elected officials, business leaders, faith based entities, civic groups, educational groups, other agencies and homeless individuals. The Consultant will use his knowledge of national best practices to frame the proposed Strategic Action Plan.

5. Phase 5- Prepare a Draft Strategic Action Plan. Consultant shall prepare a draft Strategic Action Plan. A copy of the Draft Strategic Action Plan shall be provided to the City and County for review and/or comment.

6. Phase 6- Comment and Best Practices. Consultant shall present a draft Strategic Action Plan for comment and discussion. This phase will require Consultant to conduct numerous one-on-one briefings to government staff members, elected officials, businesses, faith based entities, civic groups, educational groups and other agencies.

7. Phase 7- Complete and Present Action Plan. Consultant shall finalize the Strategic Action Plan and submit the Strategic Action Plan to the City and County. This shall include a presentation at a City Commission and County Commission meeting, joint meeting or workshop.

III. Consultant Deliverables:

A. Strategic Action Plan. Consultant shall prepare and provide the County with a written Strategic Action Plan (a 15 - 25 page document). The Strategic Action Plan shall contain an evaluation of homeless services providers and make recommendations to improve the efficiency and organization of service providers including recommending new facilities and programs. The Strategic Action Plan shall also include background information, assessment and a listing of proposed action items.

Edward Lavallee - FW: Media Contact re: Dr. Robert Marbut

From: Edward Lavallee
To: Bullock, Dave; Lewis', 'Jonathan; Reid, Randall
Subject: FW: Media Contact re: Dr. Robert Marbut

Thank you very much. I will include this information in our discussion

>>> Randall Reid <Rreid@scgov.net> 7/31/2013 1:29 PM >>>
 FYI

From: Lee Ann Lowery
Sent: Wednesday, July 31, 2013 1:07 PM
To: Mediacontact
Cc: 'Marlon Brown'; Pauline Tracy; Wayne Applebee; Nancy Paradise
Subject: Media Contact re: Dr. Robert Marbut

Received the questions below from Jessie Van Berkel of the Herald Tribune and responded via email. The Homeless Subcommittee of the Community Alliance met this morning and overwhelmingly supported hiring Dr. Marbut for the community. If we receive additional support from the three cities whose participation was requested, it will be used to reduce our costs.

From: Lee Ann Lowery
Sent: Wednesday, July 31, 2013 1:04 PM
To: 'Van Berkel, Jessie'
Cc: 'Marlon Brown'
Subject: RE: Dr. Robert Marbut

Jessie, I am headed into a meeting but have answered your questions below in **purple**.

From: Van Berkel, Jessie [<mailto:jessie.vanberkel@heraldtribune.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, July 30, 2013 4:57 PM
To: Lee Ann Lowery
Subject: RE: Dr. Robert Marbut

Ok, if you get a minute today or tomorrow, please give me a call. Or if email is easiest:

Will the county and City of Sarasota only hire Marbut if all five municipalities agree to chip in?
No, the County and the City will move forward to hire Marbut but we remain committed to reinforcing the concept that this is a community-wide issue that does not recognize municipal boundaries.

If all five are not on board, then what?

Does it seem like it will take longer than anticipated (more than a month) to determine whether to hire Marbut?

No, the County Administrator and City Manager are authorized to execute the agreement with Dr. Marbut. With the support of the Homeless Subcommittee of the Community Alliance, we are moving ahead with finalizing the agreement. As soon as we have a signed version back from Dr. Marbut, with copies of

insurance, etc., the County Administrator is prepared to execute the agreement. I anticipate that could be as soon as the end of this week but no later than the end of next week.

Thanks much Lee Ann! My deadline is tomorrow around 3 p.m.



Jessie Van Berkel, *city reporter*
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jessie.vanberkel@heraldtribune.com

From: Lee Ann Lowery [<mailto:LLowery@scgov.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, July 30, 2013 1:40 PM
To: Van Berkel, Jessie
Subject: RE: Dr. Robert Marbut

No, I won't.

From: Van Berkel, Jessie [<mailto:jessie.vanberkel@heraldtribune.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, July 30, 2013 12:41 PM
To: Lee Ann Lowery
Subject: RE: Dr. Robert Marbut

Ok, thanks. Will you be at tomorrow's meeting?

From: Lee Ann Lowery [<mailto:LLowery@scgov.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, July 30, 2013 12:11 PM
To: Van Berkel, Jessie
Subject: FW: Dr. Robert Marbut

In case I don't get a chance to call, this is the only response I have had from the cities.

From: Edward Lavallee [<mailto:elavallee@venicegov.com>]
Sent: Saturday, July 27, 2013 1:22 PM
To: Lee Ann Lowery
Cc: Curt Preisser; Randall Reid; Raeanne Keefe
Subject: Re: Dr. Robert Marbut

Lee Ann

Thank you for the clarification. I will schedule this item for discussion with the City Council. The next scheduled Council meeting date is the second Tuesday in August. If you need an answer before that time please advise me. Thanks

Edward F. Lavallee

On Jul 26, 2013, at 4:15 PM, "Lee Ann Lowery <LLowery@scgov.net>" <LLowery@scgov.net> wrote:

Ed,

Thank you for the response. As noted below we are proposing up to \$8000 per participant. The variable is the travel expenses.

From: Edward Lavallee [<mailto:elavallee@venicegov.com>]
Sent: Friday, July 26, 2013 3:11 PM
To: Lee Ann Lowery
Subject: Re: Dr. Robert Marbut

Lee Ann

Thank you for the correspondence. I will forward the information to the City council for consideration. Do you have a thought about how the cost would be distributed among participants?

>>> Lee Ann Lowery <LLowery@scgov.net> 7/24/2013 10:24 AM >>>
 Gentlemen,

As you know, the Gulf Coast Foundation and the Community Foundation brought Dr. Marbut to Sarasota County last week for a look at the homeless issue in our community. Dr. Marbut also shared his expertise with us and made some initial recommendations, particularly as it relates to the need for shelters for families in north and south Sarasota County and a shelter for the chronically homeless in the City of Sarasota.

The City of Sarasota and Sarasota County are interested in bringing Dr. Marbut to our community to develop a Strategic Action Plan to address homelessness. Since this is a community-wide issue and a community plan, we are asking if your city is willing to participate in bringing Dr. Marbut here, hopefully very soon. His fee to provide four months of consulting services is \$5732 per month for three months, with the final month pro bono. In addition to his consulting fee, we would be responsible for travel expenses, including air fare, hotel, per diem, airport parking and car rental, as applicable. We estimate that the total cost for his services, including travel expenses, would be approximately \$40,000, or \$8000 per entity, if all participate.

Please let me know as soon as possible if your city would be willing to join this effort and ensure it is a community-wide effort. The timing is right and we are excited about getting started!



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Homeless expert issues warning to Sarasota County

By [David Hackett](#)

Published: Thursday, July 18, 2013 at 2:03 p.m.

Robert Marbut issued a warning Thursday about what Sarasota County can expect if it does not change the way it is dealing with homelessness.

"Your homeless population will increase 20 percent in the next 24 months," Marbut, considered an expert on homelessness, told a summit of more than 100 government, business and community leaders.

The combination of returning veterans with post-traumatic stress; more female victims of domestic abuse; and an economic recovery that has largely bypassed people without college degrees will escalate a problem that has already moved to the forefront in Sarasota County.

But the good news, said Marbut, who toured Sarasota County's homeless camps and social service agencies on Wednesday, is that he has never seen a community "so engaged" in addressing the problem. Usually, it takes a murder or other tragedy to galvanize a community. But the impetus here is to find broad solutions to a problem that runs from downtown Sarasota to the eastern woods of South County.

"Your community is the most generous I have ever seen," said Marbut, who has worked with hundreds of homeless organizations in 21 states.

Marbut offered concrete recommendations, many of which will require local governments and social service agencies to work together in a way they have not done before to create a unified system for not only providing shelter, but also guiding the homeless into self-supporting lives.

His recommendations include:

- Opening small shelters for families and children, one in South County and another in Sarasota. These facilities, which could each care for four to eight families at a time, would support families in immediate crisis for a few days while longer-term help is found.
- Establish in the city of Sarasota, where most of the area's chronically homeless congregate, a multi-service center, including food, shelter, health assistance and training. Marbut said for a homeless center to be effective, it must be placed where homeless gather, have magnets like showers and food, and offer services in the same place.

He said an approximately 3.5-acre lot north of Gillespie Park, where some advocates are seeking a shelter, is a good location, but he said it would be better to find an existing building that could be more quickly and cheaply refurbished. He said such a center would bring homelessness inside, off the streets, and would even raise the property values in the area in which it is located.

Marbut's recommendations address the two different kinds of homelessness facing the region, he said.

In South County, the problem is families with children, many in crisis, either from domestic abuse or losing jobs.

By contrast, Sarasota is center of chronic homelessness, where getting people off the street is just the start.

Marbut said the public's perception of the two kinds of homelessness both underestimates and overestimates the problem: The number of homeless families with children is probably less than officially estimated, but the number of chronic homeless is far greater.

A count done by local agencies in January found 953 households were homeless in Sarasota County on any given night. Of all the homeless individuals in both Sarasota and Manatee counties who agreed to be surveyed, nearly 25 percent had been on the street longer than a year.

Another distinguishing factor of Sarasota County's homeless population is that it is less violent than many he has seen. In most homeless communities, Marbut sees just 25 percent women, but many dogs, which are kept to protect homeless from crime and other threats. But in Sarasota County, he observed 50 percent women in some camps and few dogs.

Law enforcement, too, is far less threatening here than many areas he has visited, almost to the point of enabling the homeless, he said.

Marbut warned that even if Sarasota County develops a systematic approach and opens a shelter that provides numerous services under one roof, helping the homeless requires patience and a long-term commitment.

Often, many chronic homeless are disoriented from so many years on the streets that the first step is just to get them hydrated and sleeping. It can take as many as a dozen stays to launch a successful transition back into society.

Sarasota County is a model for preventing people on the edge from becoming homeless, Marbut said. But those efforts wane and are not coordinated when dealing when dealing with the actual homeless.

"You're almost myopic," he said.

Like many communities, he said, Sarasota County's efforts fall into enabling or incarcerating — neither of which is effective. He pointed to agencies that deliver food to homeless in camps or parks, which while it might seem charitable, does nothing to help the homeless pull themselves out. Jail is equally ineffective, costing between \$70 and \$125 a night without addressing the real problem.

By embracing a systematic approach, bringing shelter, food, guidance, training together, Marbut predicted that Sarasota could reduce the number of street homeless by 80 to 90 percent and "graduate" half of the current homeless off the streets for the long term.

"If you have a heart attack, you don't send someone to jail or to the beach," he said.

"You take them to an emergency room. Homelessness is a life-crisis heart attack. They need to go to an emergency room."

While Sarasota's engagement impressed Marbut, the question remains whether the county and its cities can work together to solve a problem that for decades has often been ignored.

"The political will has to change," County Commissioner Carolyn Mason told Marbut, drawing applause from the group.

Later, in an interview, Mason said the county should make dealing with homelessness a department of government, with financial support from the cities.

With local governments in the process of approving their budgets for next year, she said, now is the time to start.

Sarasota County Sheriff Tom Knight said he was optimistic that governments can come together to address homelessness because so many other groups, including the Gulf Coast Community Foundation and the Community of Foundation of Sarasota County, have embraced the issue. Knight also said that the media attention on homelessness, including a sold-out forum at the Herald-Tribune on Thursday night, signal to government leaders that citizens want action.

Staging Thursday's meeting at the ritzy Venetian Golf and River Club, with no actual homeless people in attendance, might strike some as ironic, or so Sarasota.

But many of participants said it was one of the first times, if not the first, that so many government, agency and business leaders had come together to address the issue. Some said bringing in Marbut and other recent efforts mark a turning point.

At Thursday's meeting, Benny Weaver, chairman of the Community Alliance of Sarasota County, announced the alliance has formed a committee to lead the efforts to address homelessness and it will be headed by Paul Sutton, who retired this spring after 30 years with the Sarasota Police Department.

Sutton, who has worked on homeless issues for many years, said he is more encouraged than ever that the community is committed to working together to find new and effective programs. He said he agreed with Marbut's analysis and his proposals.

A meeting of the Community Alliance Homeless Committee, is scheduled for next Thursday.

Staff writer Jessie Van Berkel contributed to this report.