

PPTFH Guest Speaker Addresses 'A Pending Homelessness State of Emergency?' at Recent Meeting

By **Lily Tinoco** - August 5, 2021



Photo courtesy of PPTFH

By LILY TINOCO |
Reporter

The Pacific Palisades Task Force on Homelessness hosted a virtual community meeting on Monday, July 26, to discuss

solutions and further address homelessness across Los Angeles.

PPTFH Co-President Sharon Browning began the program by sharing some updates and remarks.

“We don’t typically speak in terms of solutions because we have learned that homelessness, in the words of tonight’s speaker, is a marathon versus a sprint,” she said. “However, as the number of homeless people on our streets is increasing, and our ... elected officials are proceeding with what they describe as a solution to the crisis, we must now think and act in terms of solutions.”

Browning said recent speakers have indicated that the issue is evolving into a public health and safety emergency, and appropriate action is required.

PPTFH invited John Maceri, CEO of The People Concern, to speak on “A Pending Homelessness State of Emergency? The Perspective of a Comprehensive Service Provider.”

Maceri expressed his gratitude for PPTFH’s efforts and partnership in this “challenging endeavor.”

“I think any of us who have lived in Los Angeles for any length of time know that in the last few years we’ve seen an explosion of encampments all over the city and county,” he said. “Yes, we have a public health and public safety crisis.”

As service providers, Maceri said The People Concern begins with street outreach and engagement, and added that they are actively doing so in the Palisades and beyond, trying to connect individuals to housing and services every day.

“For us, it’s not about housing first, it’s about housing always,” he said. “The retention in housing is critically important because when we move people indoors, we don’t want them to fall out of housing.”

Maceri said there needs to be an exit strategy in place for temporary interventions, and The People Concern is advocating for that.

“Regardless of the drivers that drive people into homelessness ... unless and until we get serious about the scaling and sustainability and production of permanent housing, not just for people experiencing homelessness, but affordable housing generally ... we are never going to get ahead of this problem,” Maceri said.

Maceri said a primary current concern is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor market and the inability to meet growing demands.

“The challenge going forward for the system and the proposals that are now being put forward are that we ... are really strained right now to be able to handle the demand that is being placed on all of us, both on temporary housing interventions that are being suggested and in many cases, stood up across the county, as well as the permanent housing that is going to be needed,” he said.

Maceri said the issue needs to be addressed headfirst.

“It is dire, there’s no way to sugarcoat that,” he said. “It is unhealthy, it is inhumane and it absolutely cannot continue. I am still hopeful that the end will be that we will see a reduction [of individuals experiencing homelessness] in the Palisades, and people will be housed, happy and safe. That’s the goal.”

PPTFH invited community members to attend its next meeting, slated for Monday, September 27, at 7 p.m.

For more information or to watch the meeting, visit [pptfh.org](https://www.pptfh.org).