

# NEIGHBORHOOD INFORMATION MEETING

PROJECT: Community of Christ Temporary Overflow Shelter

DATE: November 10, 2014

APPLICANTS: Guy Mendt (Catholic Charities)

STAFF PRESENT: Sue Beck-Ferkiss (Social Sustainability), Sarah Burnett (Neighborhood Services), Beth Sowder (Social Sustainability), Delynn Coldiron (Neighborhood Services), Clay Frickey (Planning), Bruce Hendee (Sustainability Services)

## Presentation Summary:

- Existing homeless shelters anticipate bed shortages
- Overflow shelter held at Community of Christ Church several years ago
- Shelter used last year unable to serve this year
- Zoning for church does not allow homeless shelters
- Council is proposing temporary exemption to zoning from November - March to allow homeless shelter at Community of Christ Church
- Will serve women only
- 20 beds
- Hours of operation will be from 10:00 PM - 6:15 AM
- Drug and alcohol free facility
- Will have on-site supervision
- No meals will be served
- Will be operated by Catholic Charities

## Questions, Comments & Responses:

**Question (Citizen):** What is your response protocol? You said that you would be available for any problems that would occur within 24 hours. Usually people have protocol and we're not concerned with how clean the facilities are here. We need the support staff for our neighborhood. Let's say I have a problem with someone hanging out in our alley? What is your protocol?

**Response (Applicant):** What we do right now is we have a systematic protocol we use at our mission facility. I am notified immediately along with our Vice President and our risk management staff. When our risk management staff is identified, we determine if the incident is a level 1, 2 or 3 violation. We respond depending on the level. Level 3 violations are handled by Catholic Charities staff. Level 2 might be a scuffle or raising of voices. For those sorts of violations I get involved, there is a protocol with how we review it, and we make a decision that day if they can stay in the shelter. For level 1 violations we get the risk management team involved. For any violation involving the community, they would be level

1 or 2 violations. That would trigger my intervention to whoever is raising that incident and we could involve Rick or the City if they don't respond according to our agreement. That is my proposed response.

**Question (Citizen):** I am curious because I run by Jefferson Park daily and Rick said the Police are responsive and I feel safe there but there are problems here in broad daylight. I have my neighbors to the right that have kids and I don't want anything to happen to them.

**Response (Applicant):** There is a difference between homeless and transient populations. I don't have anyone who is hanging out in Jefferson Park that is staying in our shelter. One, they are drug free and alcohol free. Most people staying are local through one situation or another find themselves homeless. There's a difference in terms of people willing to follow the rules and those that aren't. The vast majority in our shelter are Ft. Collins residents who find themselves homeless.

**Question (Citizen):** So this is a different population than Willow Springs? They are trying to create a transitional home at Willow Springs.

**Response (Applicant):** I can't speak to that. (After the meeting, we determined the resident was asking about the potential lease of a single-family house on a City-owned property at 2313 Kechter Rd. to Catholic Charities for use as a transitional group home for women or women with children.)

**Question (Citizen):** I was going to ask about children. Will they be allowed to stay at this proposed facility?

**Response (Applicant):** We have a different facility for them. With this facility opening we would also open up a 5<sup>th</sup> room in our facility on Linden St. and if they overflow we will put them in a hotel with hotel vouchers. We have a deal with the Super 8 Motel at Mulberry and I-25 and we will give them a ride to the facility. We have 2 families going there tonight. This won't be a facility for children.

**Question (Citizen):** Where do these women go in the morning?

**Response (Applicant):** Most go to the downtown area. We have daytime shelters that open at 9. At noon we open up at Linden St. Breakfast is served at the Fort Collins Rescue Mission.

**Question (Citizen):** What time do they start serving breakfast?

**Response (Applicant):** 6:30.

**Question (Citizen):** When you say temporary what does that mean? Is this a one-year deal or will this go longer?

**Response (Applicant):** What we are asking for is for this year only so it will only go through March. This is a recurring problem and we thought that when we increased capacity at Catholic Charities a few years ago we were on top of it but the homeless population has grown. What we're asking for tonight is this year only. The 5 to 10 year plan would look at other sites as well and partner churches that can act as an overflow shelter different years. We can do this sometimes without zoning relief and other times not. In the Downtown zoning district this is permissible. I am only kidding but if they could move into the

little building next door, we would be ok from a zoning perspective. In this case it is close to the Downtown zone district but we want to move it.

**Question (Citizen):** I was just curious how many other sites you pursued that are zoned appropriately?

**Response (Social Sustainability):** Last year's shelter did not require a zoning exemption but they are too busy this winter. We did this the year before that at Knights of Columbus. This year, this church was the best situation. Another church was willing but was way out of town and would require transportation to get the women to the site so it did not make sense.

**Question (Citizen):** Are the women being driven to this site?

**Response (Applicant):** No.

**Question (Citizen):** I guess this question is for the City. Is it the City's plan to concentrate homeless people in downtown? That seems like that's what is happening but I don't understand why the whole town can't be utilized.

**Response (Social Sustainability):** That is not the plan and we do have services that are not in downtown. We're in the process as a city of figuring out our role in providing services for the homeless population. We defer to our partners and we support them and try to make the best decisions possible. But we are looking at that and we are trying to figure out where we have a role to play. A lot of the action is downtown and the two shelters are here too and they are used to that. We have a map the Rangers did of illegal campsites and they are throughout the community.

**Comment (Citizen):** This seems like this is a 3<sup>rd</sup> shelter downtown and then there will be a 4<sup>th</sup>, and then there will be a 5<sup>th</sup>, I don't find this site appropriate. I think this will be a detriment to the area.

**Response (Social Sustainability):** The businesses are interested in this issue as well and we are working with them to find solutions. These people are here now and they are staying downtown now unsheltered. I understand your point from a long-term perspective but I would ask if they should be outside or if they should be sheltered for the winter.

**Comment (Citizen):** It seems like the City has lots of resources and I am not sure why this site was chosen.

**Response (Social Sustainability):** This is a Catholic Charities proposal.

**Comment (Citizen):** It's already November and if this was well planned, why were we not here in August?

**Response (Applicant):** We have been working on this since August. This is why we need a long-term plan so we can get it approved so we aren't doing this year by year. Like a lot of things, things don't happen until it gets cold.

**Comment (Citizen):** It doesn't instill confidence coming with a proposal at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour.

**Response (Social Sustainability):** We don't want to do it that way again if we can avoid it. There were mitigating circumstances.

**Question (Citizen):** I was curious, you said the 20 women have hardship issues but they are drug free and alcohol free? How many beds are you proposing? How many re-applicants do you have for the programs you offer at the main Catholic Charities shelter? Do you accept re-applicants? How many women enter the lottery to become enrolled in the program?

**Response (Applicant):** The facility will have 40 beds. Our program at our main facility has a 60-65% success rate. We accept re-applicants and have a time period for them to reapply. The women who stay in the overflow shelter will have the opportunity to get into that program. They have to enter a lottery to get those spots.

**Question (Citizen):** What is your Plan B? This is the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. I get the sense you don't have an alternative? Will this be pushed through no matter what even if you decide the impact is too much on the neighborhood?

**Response (Applicant):** If this is not approved women will be on the street.

**Comment (Citizen):** Our backs are against the wall.

**Response (Applicant):** We started this process in August and we would have had to go through the development review process otherwise which would have taken 6-9 months. City Council determined it was an emergency and that is why we are here tonight.

**Comment (Citizen):** I may just be speaking for myself but I just moved here and I have never met such a friendly community. People are kind and helpful. What is bothersome is that this proposal being given to us at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour and we have not had time to respond as a community. What can we do to develop a transitional program? None of us want women freezing but will this set a precedent that does not offer long-term solutions? We don't want this to be a flop house. If we all got a chance to get together and problem solve we could have helped but that didn't happen. It's a little frustrating.

**Response (Social Sustainability):** We want to acknowledge that concern but we want to give people from the City time to address other things that are going on and then shift back to this issue. We are hosting a community summit on homelessness in January and everyone is invited. It will be in January and it will be in conjunction with Bohemian and the Chamber of Commerce. We want to share these programs with you and we have been gearing up to begin implementing these programs. We have immediate needs as well and we hope this summit will give us some new tools to address the homelessness issue in Fort Collins.

**Comment (Citizen):** My family came here in 1869 they were guided by compassion and they were part of a religious community that came here. My great grandfather was a veteran of the Civil War and his spiritual conviction has been passed down through the generations and they guide me to try and be compassionate. The zoning department is not my favorite due to the ridiculous changes to Peterson St. However, I think this is well thought out and a good thing to do for the community.

**Question (Citizen):** It sounds like the daytime programs are well managed and the nighttime programs are well managed. It doesn't sound like there is any control on the in between. Will you look at the transition for the In between times?

**Response (Applicant):** The thing that has been looked at is to make as much accommodations in the daytime and give them a place at Murphy Center and Catholic Charities.

**Comment (Citizen):** I think those options are soft. I think it is those between times where we see most of the problems. There are people behind my building that have been arrested.

**Response (Applicant):** As a program operator and shelter operator, I am focused on when I can help them in terms of their safety and giving them the resources to try and change their situation. We can't manage people outside that.

**Comment (Citizen):** That is my concern though. The impact on the community is in the between time.

**Response (Applicant):** We hope hospitality centers will help.

**Question (Citizen):** If they go through your overflow facility, will they get access to the daytime shelters?

**Response (Applicant):** Yes, assuming this goes forward as planned they would get a ticket to those centers if they show up the night before. If this doesn't go then the daytime service would not happen. This is the limited overflow shelter we are able to serve these people while we are open. Aren't the police supposed to handle the issues you experience during the daytime?

**Question (Citizen):** My question is why not expand the service hours for the overflow shelter beyond 10:00 - 6:15?

**Response (Applicant):** Money, staffing and facilities. We can't use the Community of Christ Church because it is used 3-4 times a week at earlier times.

**Question (Citizen):** The proposal only goes until March. Is there any flexibility on extending this service until April if the weather is still bad?

**Response (Applicant):** Whatever we pass in the emergency ordinance is what happens. We have had some conversations about when the last day should be and we are working on it. Last spring we did a shelter at Catholic Charities and we have one again for men and children this year. As you recall the winter weather went until mid-April last year so we scrambled with the Fort Collins Rescue Mission and hotels to figure out how to provide those services. I will try and figure that out if it happens again this year.

**Question (Citizen):** I have comments but I have 3 questions. Bedding, how is it arranged?

**Response (Applicant):** We use portable sleeping mats that are portable and storable. We also provide a couple of blankets to each person as they come in.

**Question (Citizen):** You were talking about the facility being drug free. What about medical marijuana?

**Response (Applicant):** Catholic Charities gets funding from the federal and state level and to comply with them we can't allow in people who are using medical marijuana.

**Question (Citizen):** Picking up on the issue of the day shelter I was curious about those shelters but it seems like the day shelter is sketchy?

**Response (Applicant):** The day shelters open at 8 -11:30 so there is a lag time between when we let our women out and when those shelters open. Then there are shelters that are open from 12-4. So there are gaps, but they are more or less covered. When we're looking at balancing funding and resourcing the facilities we will always be challenged.

**Comment (Citizen):** If I was in this situation, if I have an hour without a place to go it will be a real bummer. I hope it is on everyone's to do list to improve daytime services.

**Response (Applicant):** I wish we could make it happen. One agency can't fix that problem, it is a community wide issue.

**Comment (Citizen):** I own the building next door. Based on our experience in 2010-11 I am skeptical of this proposal. I had to call the police multiple times. We had a knife fight, people who lived in the building were threatened, I have serious concerns. How is this different now? Perhaps the fact that this shelter is only for women makes it different but that transition time present holes. The idea police will help is fine but those minutes between shelters closing and opening is a concern. The parking lot behind the building was always filled with alcohol, cigarettes and people. How will this be different?

**Response (Applicant):** I wasn't here then and I can say that our facility now is great. You can come down and visit our shelter on Linden St. any time. We have rules, expectations and consequences that work very well. I don't know if they were in place then. I would invite you or anyone else to come to Catholic Charities to give you a tour. Come by unannounced so I can't clean anything up beforehand. I think these rules and consequences work. You have to build communities, rules and consequences. The population will be half of what it was at that point in time as well, we are talking about 20 beds versus 40 beds. I think the populations are different too.

**Question (Citizen):** What about the time, can they leave before 6:15?

**Response (Applicant):** When you are in for the night, you are in. You can't leave early.

**Question (Citizen):** I don't know if the City knows, but do you know if this ordinance will pass?

**Response (Social Sustainability):** We don't know.

**Question (Citizen):** When you say they can't be on premise when the facility isn't open, do you mean on this property specifically? So the police will then have to monitor other areas?

**Response (Applicant):** That is correct. I can't tell people where they can and can't go in the city. But what I can do is talk to our residents and I can tell them what their expected behavior is in the community and I will set those expectations in terms of behavior. I think we have people that linger in these places now that have nothing to do with the shelter.

**Comment (Citizen):** But you are adding more people here.

**Response (Applicant):** I don't know if it would or not but we will have a different population than what you see now.

**Question (Citizen):** Who can we contact right away to ask questions about this proposal?

**Response (Social Sustainability):** Either Sarah or I can triage the questions. You can send those questions to either one of us. We can make sure to put you in contact with the right people. We get it's a short turnaround but we will do what we can. It seems like a lot of what you're hearing is how will we deal with offsite impacts and what can be done to address those issues? What we will do is anyone who has provided their e-mail, we will forward the written document to everyone as soon as it is available and it is the same document that we will provide to Council. Questions can be e-mailed to Council directly as well. Or you can go to the Council meeting on Wednesday night and provide your input then.

**Comment (Sustainability Services):** I am assistant City Manager. I oversee the area of Social Sustainability and Sustainability Services and Council Member Bob Overbeck is here as well and we can have one on ones with any of you when we are done. I didn't bring any cards in but Sue can make me available and I am happy to talk to any of you. One point I would like to make is about the distribution and planning for low-income housing. Our zoning distributes low-income housing throughout the city so we do not create low-income neighborhoods. With respect to creating housing or keeping all homeless people downtown, we just had a top-off party for Redtail Ponds, which is supportive housing. But that is at the complete other end of the city. We are intentionally working towards addressing this in a comprehensive way. There has been an increase in the homeless population here this year. The legalization of marijuana has increased transient visitors to our city. This has heightened the visibility of the homeless population in Fort Collins. We are coming to council for a work session to talk specifically about homeless issues. We talk about 3 cases of homelessness: chronic homelessness, where they have dependency issues and in this case we struggle with them. Situational homelessness is another case where they fall on hard times (single mother, etc.) this is the population we would see in this facility. The third are transients that bother the most and they are typically the ones that cause trouble. We try and focus on the fact that you can't generalize to one population and we are trying to help people who want help. I also wanted to make sure you knew I was here along with Bob.

**Comment (Citizen):** I guess when I think about what is on the table, it sounds like you have a good accountability program but I don't live within one block of this facility. Is there a way to change it from November-March? Can there be an accountability piece so that if there are too many missteps it doesn't get to go to March? I don't think that will happen but is there a way to negotiate in such a way that will make community members feel they have more say in the matter?

**Response (Applicant):** I would be hesitant to do that just because I would be worried if there was one source of complaints that it would put the population at risk.

**Comment (Citizen):** We just want leverage and the ability to help out.

**Response (Applicant):** I will offer another thing as the proposed operator. I get funding from various sources and some of it is Community Development Block Grant funds from the City that we use to provide services at Linden St. It is in my best interest this operates smoothly so I can get grants in the future. I have a built in motivation to make sure this works.

**Response (Social Sustainability):** We can also commit to quantifying any complaints so if we have to revisit it or when we plan long term so we can address any complaints and why.

**Question (Citizen):** So the church that didn't want to renew the facility for this winter, how many complaints did you receive?

**Response:** 0

**Question (Citizen):** But yet they don't want to do it again this year?

**Response (Social Sustainability):** They have increased activities and so they can't handle it this year. It has nothing to do with the program.

**Comment (Citizen):** I think it is important we make a distinction between the people who are coming and leaving versus the people who are using the shelter as well. There may be people that are causing trouble in the surrounding neighborhoods that don't use this shelter.

**Comment (Citizen):** We're neighbors. I am a pastor from the Mennonite church across the street. I want to thank the members of this church for offering this place as a shelter. I want to thank Catholic Charities for stepping up to fill the gap because we have a lot of gaps in serving the homeless population. I hate to make people feel responsible for that and I am happy that a Council member is here to make sure we are committing resources to a comprehensive program to fix the homeless problem. We need to address these concerns. Our backs are against the wall. I am thinking I am glad I don't have to sleep under a bridge tonight. I have lived in cities where people have died because they didn't have a place to go. I am thinking that gosh, we should have done this last week but I don't want to put this off another week because we run a risk of a human being laying out in the cold tonight. I want to keep this in perspective. We had no problem when the shelter was here before. I want to speak for our congregation and we want this to happen and we want to support Catholic Charities and the church in any way we can.

**Comment (Citizen):** I'd like to address some of the concerns from people around here. One, the population that will use this shelter is women. I don't think you will be mugged by a homeless woman. Let's just sort of consider what the situation is. Also, it's one winter. Try it out and if there are problems, we can revisit it then. The most important thing to me is why is this happening so late? It's because the whole community has not adequately addressed the issues as a whole and had the community as whole acted then we would not be faced with a time crunch. Maybe a lesson to be drawn from all of this is that all of us insist that the city take a more proactive stance on homeless issues. I want to point out Bruce has an article that addressed the issue of luxury vs low income housing and apparently only a small amount of low income housing is available and the city council needs to bear responsibility for that and we need to take responsibility as a community and make sure the needs for low-income people are met. I live in DMA Plaza just a block south of here and this is one of the low-income places for seniors and disabled people and it is a good place to live. We have problems with drunks coming out of the bars and the police will not respond to them. They have stated they will not deal with it. The police have their own agenda, which does not conform to what people need. But the issue is we do not have problems with homeless people there. Police are called when there are noise complaints. One drunk kid toppled a sign on a woman's car, for example. One time I looked out the window and saw a



homeless guy sitting on a bench with his large pack and he looked unattractive but he was just sitting there but a police car drove around the lot for 15 minutes until he finally got on a bus and he left. I called the police and they said there was a complaint about this individual. We need to ask ourselves, how are we behaving? I think we should go out of our way to get these people a leg up.

**Response (Social Sustainability):** The summit can provide solutions to that issue.

**Comment (Citizen):** Please read Bruce's article.

**Question (Citizen):** You mentioned that in the years this program has been in place that there have been no fatalities from people sleeping outside in the cold weather. Do you have data from years where this program wasn't in place?

**Response (Applicant):** No, I don't have that data but I could dig it up and give you data for the last 10 years.

**Comment (Citizen):** I have spent time with homeless people that move from different churches week after week, these are typically people that have lost their homes, and they are just trying to survive and get back into a home again. They are here in Fort Collins all around you and I don't think they have caused problems. I live a block away, I have never seen them cause problems, and we can help these people. Especially for women who suffer all sorts of abuse so I think this is a great thing.

**Comment (Citizen):** I've lived here for 23 years in the same house one block east of the library. I've worked in a shelter for homeless and runaway kids and I think our neighborhood is feeling the burden of the transient population. I am here for that reason. I live next to the church next to library that is commonly visited by the transient population. I have had to clean up used condoms from my yard. I have witnessed a prostitution ring being run by the people that hang out at the church. I have had all of our bikes stolen from our home. When this was a shelter 3 years ago I had to find different ways to get around so I was not cat called. I have been in my backyard pregnant when a homeless man came up to me saying awful things about what they would do to me with my toddler right next to me. I have had prostitutes stop me to wave their wares at other people with my children here. It is hard to be committed to this community when this is going on in front of my house. My kid cannot come of age without anything happening. I don't think anyone is more committed to Old Town than me. All of my friends with kids move away from this area, though. It weighs really heavy, this transient population. I am not uncompassionate but I want to be safe. I want to support this but we can't enable transients without saying enough is enough. I really feel strongly about it and I am worn down. My husband and I talk daily about how long we can continue to deal with these issues. I don't want to move.

**Response (Neighborhood Services):** Please take my card so we can get you in touch with the neighborhood enforcement team.

**Comment (Citizen):** I don't think you can understand what it's like when someone breaks into your house at 2:30 in the morning. And then hear a library person say they feel like a guard when dealing with the transient people that hang out at the library. They are helpless. I've seen a dog chained up outside the library with another man who is doing a drug deal but when I left there were not 2 of them but 5 of them using foul language. Children shouldn't have to be exposed to this behavior. I don't walk

home anymore through Library Park at night. It's really bad. This is a vulnerable population. Those folks are drug users in Library Park.

**Comment (Citizen):** I think it is important to focus on what I have heard, which is a well thought out, limited, reasonable plan that does good. I appreciate the effort from faith-based organizations. It occurs in a larger context that is unpleasant but that is not what we are talking about with this proposal. We see drunks leaving bars as being the way things are but people are reporting someone sitting on a bench to the police. I am appalled.

**Comment (Citizen):** I want to point out that all of these comments are frustrations that are not this issue here but are related in that the City police are not doing their job. If you have problems of being broken into or abuse in your neighborhood near your house or yard, you should be able to call the police and have them come. My experience is that in calling the Police you can't find their phone number and if you call them you get a voicemail and if you call in for emergency and it isn't they give you the number to the voicemail. I think the police needs to do their jobs better.

**Comment (Citizen):** Just to tagalong, we can't speak for police and something I wanted to hear is that you had a plan and that you had been in contact with all of these parties and just as it is a disservice to assume all homeless people are criminals it is also a problem to say it is only men that cause these problems. We have to assume there will be problems with a proposal like this. Homeless people have chaotic lives that are difficult to manage. I would have like have heard that there is some sort of protocol that says we will revisit this proposal in three months as opposed to assuming we are NIMBYs, that you have talked to police officers, I would like homeless people to feel safe.

**Question (Citizen):** We had homeless people sleeping in our carriage house. We don't want anyone to freeze to death. Why will the shelter open at 10? Why not 8? We're just being asked to say yay or nay.

**Comment (Citizen):** I would like to recap everything and that I agree with everything that has been said. I knew other things would come up. So I do support the shelter for what it is and I also really want to see we have a leader. Who is the leader? It sounds like it is a group effort and I am excited to hear about the summit where this conversation will continue. We'll ok this proposal for this winter, but don't let it be a precedent. Let's get a handle on homelessness. The City wants to be progressive in everything so let's see you do the same for this issue. My question is what can we do to help? Can we make donations without enabling bad behavior?

**Response (Social Sustainability):** Thank you for that and thank you for that recap. I think that one of the troubling issues with homelessness is that it is complex with a lot of different populations and the community is polarized about how we can respond. I think we have compassion fatigue since this comes up over and over again. The City does not do direct service, our partners do everything. United Way's call center is where you can call and figure out how you can help. If you have an interest in families, or youth, there are great targeted programs you can support. Catholic Charities also accepts donations so you can help them out. There are lots of resources.

**Response (Applicant):** I just also wanted to say there is a lot of frustration in the community. This is a complex, multi-layered problem and you can't have a discussion with one word. There are folks out there experiencing homelessness very different from one another. Some are well behaved and some are doing whatever they want to do. We are trying to address those that want to help themselves get out of homelessness or don't know how. There are some who are mentally ill or have addictions that can snap out of it with support. As far as how you can help, look at what organization fits with your own values and beliefs as far as self-determination, compassion, etc.

**Question (Citizen):** You don't have specific needs for the shelter?

**Response (Applicant):** I could use a couple hundred thousand dollars so I have my card if you would like. All kidding aside, you can also make contributions through United Way and Catholic Charities. When we look at doing projects we look at facilities and funding. This covers staffing, but we can't do a lot without professional staff. We use a lot of labor and when trying to run a professional organization you need professional staff. We will not operate in a debt situation. Then we are ineffective and can't stand behind our services.

**Question (Citizen):** Given that this goes to vote, is it too late to incorporate accountability? So it isn't too late to say, "Let's see how this goes in 3 months," and then revisit?

**Response (Applicant):** Then my question to you is would we suggest shutting down the program in the middle of the winter?

**Comment (Citizen):** I suggest we have another conversation.

**Response (Applicant):** I don't have a problem with that. I am not okay with shutting it down. If I am to service these folks for the winter months and I can't do that if we don't meet certain conditions I won't do it. I am okay having talks but I am not okay with doing something that would shut it down halfway through the winter.

**Comment (Citizen):** I think it's hard to notice when you don't live here and we are surrounded by Library Park which is our gem and I think you can tell from our collective experience is we are protective because we have so many forces around us. It's great to say these things. We all want to help but the thing is we can't predict what will happen to that gem of ours when it is cold outside and people are waiting to get in and there's these hours of darkness before 10. What is the mechanism if things go in the wrong direction? You can't predict it. You are asking us to go on faith but what if something happens?

**Response (Social Sustainability):** I don't know if I have the perfect answer and it's only an emergency ordinance for this year and they will be far less likely to do this next year if it doesn't work.

**Question (Citizen):** We have seen what happens to Jefferson Park when you put homeless services next to it. Will we do the same thing here?

**Response (Social Sustainability):** That is fair and we are trying to figure this out too so this is a one-time only thing but I have asked if Catholic Charities can work with us to develop a longer term plan so we don't do this emergency ordinance again. We have been working on this for months and this hasn't been easy. That is the assurance I can give you. I also think it is fair to say that we can't guarantee peace

and harmony with this shelter or not. This conversation about winter housing for the women here is a different conversation.

**Comment (Citizen):** I would like to be able to assume the program can be tweaked as the program goes along. I think that is a fair assumption to make. The thing about complaints I have heard have to do with issues are not related to this issue.

**Comment (Citizen):** I just wanted to caution people to say we as opposed to I. I am hearing about all of these experiences that I have not had. I don't know why but it is not a collective opinion.

**Comment (Citizen):** It's where you live.

**Response (Neighborhood Services):** We're documenting this meeting for this reason and I have heard about the request to quantify and check in during the term so I think these are all things that have not been considered before and we can consider these suggestions and Guy can visit this at any point. Maybe we can look at these options once Council reviews it and do a check-in with the neighborhood. That is why we have these meetings.

**Response (Neighborhood Services):** How many want check-ins? (a few hands are raised)

**Comment (Citizen):** When I asked to help I am frustrated because this proposal is being shoved down my throat and I work for these people and I mentor a formerly homeless woman but it is a frustration because I never remember having a meeting like this after in my 12 years of living here.

**Question (Citizen):** The question I have is how many people who have opinions about this issue aren't in this room right now?

**Response (Social Sustainability):** We sent 615 letters, posted in the newspaper, posted online and told people to spread the word so I hope people heard about it.

**Comment (Citizen):** We will have 20 women here and if they abuse privilege to be here then the onus is on them to behave well.

**Comment (Citizen):** But if they lose that privilege, they will end up in the Library and I think that is what a lot of people are concerned about.

**Comment (Citizen):** But if we don't open it up they are out there for sure.

**Comment (Citizen):** I just feel this neighborhood bears the burden of all of the population and Fort Collins is not a small town. I know it is convenient but I feel like the issues they face are inconvenient but all of Fort Collins should bear the weight of this issue. They should go to another part of town where this isn't an issue.

**Response (Social Sustainability):** It's not impossible to move people but I think there are some other neighborhoods that could make the argument that they are bearing the weight of this issue the most. I also think this is an urban core issue that other areas that are less urban don't have to deal with.

**Comment (Citizen):** I get other areas have these issues but they are probably zoned to handle them. I wouldn't have chosen to live in a neighborhood that can have homeless shelters.

**Response (Social Sustainability):** But the boundaries are right next to you. So if it was a different shelter in the Downtown zone district it would still be close.

**Comment (Citizen):** I have a comment and it's based around when someone asked how they can help to a City employee and the reaction from the employee was silence. To me that is disappointing. An obvious way to help is to identify the different organizations that are trying to provide homeless services and that are where you can give time and money. There are quite a few non-profits that are working hard to solve this issue but resources are limited because we don't get donations to grow. We need the whole community to donate that direction but the answer from the City should have been to donate to organizations that are doing something.

**Response (Social Sustainability):** I said that earlier tonight. Don't forget the Murphy Center and United Way have a lot of good ideas on how to help as well.

## LETTERS FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Sue,

I own both real estate and a business at the corner of Mountain and Mathews, one block from the Community of Christ Church. I received your notices of the meeting on November 10th regarding the homeless women's shelter for the winter. While I will not be able to attend the session on the 10th, I want you to know that I am in favor of such a proposal. Craig Campbell 262 E. Mountain Ave

Thanks for your support of Farmers Insurance and the Campbell Agency. As always, have a safe day.

- Craig Campbell ([ccampbell1@farmersagent.com](mailto:ccampbell1@farmersagent.com))

---

Hi Sue –

I received your “Neighborhood Meeting Invitation” to discuss the Seasonal Women’s Shelter at the Community of Christ (CC) recently. I won’t be able to attend the meeting due to other commitments, but I wanted to let you know that I STRONGLY support this proposal.

In addition to living in the neighborhood, I attend the Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship (FCMF). As you are probably aware, the FCMF both participates in the Faith Family Hospitality (FFH) program as a host congregation, and houses the FFH Day Shelter 4- 5 days per week. The Community of Christ is a supporting congregation – they typically provide volunteers to prepare a meal and stay overnight once per week when it’s our turn to host.

I think it’s great that the Community of Christ has offered to house the Seasonal Women’s Shelter. Clearly, the CC and the FCMF have already established a precedent for sheltering homeless people in this neighborhood. I am proud to live in an area and attend a church that welcomes those who are in need of shelter and support. The CC is offering to fill a very important need in our City. So – I am hopeful that the City will approve the exemption to the Land Use code required to house the Seasonal Women’s Shelter at the Community of Christ.

Sincerely,  
Kevin Cross

300 Peterson Street  
Fort Collins, CO 80524  
Ph. 970-484-3141

---

Dear Sue,

I am writing because I understand you have been tasked with gauging community support for more shelter opportunities for homeless women in our particular corner of Ft Collins. I am so delighted that Christ Community Church has decided to offer their space and time to create opportunities for shelter for women this winter. I know this shelter space is critically needed in our community. I greatly appreciate the time and effort you are investing to engage neighborhood stakeholders in a dialogue about the impact of this provision of shelter. What a wonderful opportunity for Fort Collins to demonstrate its commitment to the most vulnerable of its citizens, those who have experienced the constellation of family and financial events that have shut them out of the housing market in Ft Collins.

Sadly representatives of the city of Ft Collins (law enforcement) were involved in shameful acts toward its homeless and many suffered exposure and the confiscation of their few possessions the night before the hail storm last spring. It is an unhappy fact that in this prosperous city people die of exposure each winter. My hope is that the residents and business community can become proud of the opportunities and real solutions it creates to tackle the complex problems of our most vulnerable members which must include stopgap measures such as these as well as long term solutions.

Sincerely,

Annie Scott  
Elder, Ft Collins Mennonite Fellowship

---

Dear Sue,

I was so pleased to learn that the City is considering changing zoning regulations so the Community of Christ Church (220 E. Oak Street) can operate a women-only overflow shelter during the winter months.

As a member of Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship, I volunteer with Faith Family Hospitality whenever homeless families are staying in our church.

The stories they tell are heart-breaking.

Given the limited number of beds for women in our two local shelters, the probability of homeless women being on the street is high. Compound that with the fact that women "living in the rough" are in greater danger than men in the same situation. Then add in the low winter temperatures that can often result in hypothermia and frostbite for those without a place to sleep.

To me, it only makes sense to have a winter overflow shelter for women!

Even though I cannot attend the neighborhood meeting on Monday evening, I want you to know that I support the re-zoning 100%. I rest easier knowing that homeless women who cannot find a bed in our shelters, will be able to find safe refuge in the Community of Christ Church overflow shelter.

Sincerely,  
Martha Roden

**Phone calls in support**

- Eliza Carney
- Ronnie Berg

**Phone calls in opposition**

- Julie Goodwin