



CITY OF SILVERTON – HOMELESS/HOUSING TASK FORCE MEETING

Americans with Disabilities Act – *The City of Silverton intends to comply with the A.D.A. The meeting location is accessible to individuals needing special accommodations such as a sign language interpreter, headphones, or other special accommodations for the hearing impaired. To participate, please contact the City at 503-874-2204 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.*

A copy of the full packet is available on the City's website at www.silverton.or.us/agendacenter. In accordance with Governor Brown's Executive Order 20-16 and House Bill 4212 the meeting will be held electronically using the Zoom web conference platform. Please submit written comments to aspeier@silverton.or.us by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 16, 2020. Comments received will be shared with the Homeless/Housing Task Force before the meeting and included in the record.

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89024478751?pwd=aVFWSXZkQUgwTDRwVkZQbGcyN1hOUT09>

Webinar ID: 890 2447 8751

Passcode: 707204

Dial in: 1 (253) 215-8782

Wednesday, September 16, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call**
- II. Approval of Minutes** – Minutes from the meeting held on September 2, 2020
- III. Public Comment** – Items not on this agenda
- IV. Discuss Community Survey**
 - Review and finalize questions
 - Public outreach methods
- V. Schedule Next Meeting**
- VI. Adjournment**

1 CITY OF SILVERTON
2 **HOMELESS/HOUSING TASK FORCE MINUTES**

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4 **September 2, 2020, 6:00 p.m.**

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6 **I. CALL TO ORDER**

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8 Kyle Palmer called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. The task force members and staff were present
9 through the virtual meeting platform Zoom. Mayor Palmer explained the meeting is being held through
10 Zoom due to Governor Brown's Executive Order 20-16.

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Present	Absent	
X		Kyle Palmer
X		Jaime Fuhrman
X		Sara White
X		Helen Thomas (<i>arrived at 7:02 pm</i>)
X		Jess Miller
X		Dana Smith
X		Jennifer Hannan
X		Sarah DeSantis
X		Hilary Dumitrescu
	X	Karolle Hughes
X		Joseph Schmaus

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27 Staff Present:
28 City Manager, Christy Wurster and Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk, Angela Speier

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30 **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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32 Member Miller made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting held on May 27, 2020. Member
33 Dumitrescu seconded the motion. Member DeSantis asked for the minutes to be amended to reflect her
34 not being present at the May 27, 2020 meeting. There was no further discussion and the motion passed
35 as amended 8-0 with member Smith abstaining, because she was not in attendance.

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37 **III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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39 Chair Palmer noted a letter was submitted earlier today by Aaron Huddart (see attachment 1) and shared
40 with the Task Force members. There were no additional public comments.

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42 **IV. WINTER SHELTER REQUEST – SHELTERING SILVERTON**

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44 Member White explained in the packet was a proposal for a winter sanctioned campsite. She explained
45 Sheltering Silverton has decided to change their course and read a prepared letter to the members (see
46 attachment 2). Sheltering Silverton does not think they will be able to acquire and organize the needed
47 resources to successfully implement a managed campsite at this time. She said with the extreme health,
48 safety and economic challenges due to COVID-19 the community must come together with as much
49 creative power as possible to figure out how to continue to serve and support those facing the threat and
50 reality of homelessness. She reviewed a number of questions she would like the Task Force to discuss
51 during the meeting and called for members to help come up with creative solutions.

1 **V. OPEN DISCUSSION/BRAINSTORMING**

2
3 Chair Palmer opened up the discussion for members to help brainstorm ideas for winter sheltering.
4 Member Smith thanked Member White for her comments and said she is heartbroken at the predicament
5 the community finds itself in again. Member White said the funding they received last year to help staff
6 the warming shelter will likely not be available to them this year, so the camping proposal will likely need
7 to be abandoned. She explained Sheltering Silverton is looking at responding to the needs of individuals
8 on a case-by-case basis. They know 25 adults and three children under the age of 10 that are
9 unsheltered in the community. She said by November she expects that number to double or triple. They
10 will be leaning on regional shelter facilities which also have dimensioning capacity. She explained they
11 are unsure how they will host their Resource Center, because it is a small space located in the basement
12 of the Community Center with no windows or ventilation.

13
14 Member Smith asked about the possibility to pull together campers and RVs in one spot and/or
15 driveways. Member White said that is a good short term solution for shelter, but it would require a lot of
16 staff check-ins and she does not think there would be enough community partners to support that type of
17 program this winter.

18
19 Member Miller asked if school gymnasiums would be available as alternate warming shelters since at this
20 point they will not be utilized for their primary purpose. They can also usually be secured from the rest of
21 the building.

22
23 Member Dumitrescu also serves as the chair of the Mid-Willamette Valley Homeless Alliance
24 Subcommittee on Winter Warming and explained the funding situation. She said the money that was set
25 aside for this winter has been used for COVID-19 response and a new funding source will likely not be
26 available until the spring. The shelters in Salem are largely volunteer based through a network of
27 churches and are temperature activated. Sheltering Silverton is focusing efforts on trying to help figure
28 out a solution for winter shelter for each of their clients based on their individual needs.

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30 Member Schmaus asked if the City would be willing to allow the Community Center Gym to be used as an
31 emergency shelter in case the temperatures get too low. Chair Palmer said the RVs might be the ideal
32 solution, but staffing could be a problem for that type of program as well as for any churches that might be
33 willing to participate. He further explained this is a problem throughout Oregon and the homeless
34 population is not growing in Silverton due to Sheltering Silverton's efforts to house people and provide a
35 warming shelter for the community. He said the discussion tonight should be focused on how to keep
36 people safe this winter. Discussion ensued on the pros and cons of using RVs on private property as a
37 possible solution this winter. Member White said it will be difficult to obtain safe RVs at the numbers
38 needed and raised liability concerns with them being placed on private property. Members discussed
39 the possibility of hosting individuals at the reservoir if it were to be closed this winter. Member Dumitrescu
40 stressed that any group shelter environment will need significant oversight.

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42 Member DeSantis asked how the Resource Center will be set up and managed this winter. Member
43 White said they have been discussing leveraging some of the left over funding from last year to expand
44 the Resource Center hours. They would like to be open from 8-5 Monday – Friday. This will be a place
45 where people can go to get out of the elements, have a hot cup of coffee and receive case management
46 services. She said the key will be to leverage existing resources related to COVID-19. They have not
47 been able to determine where they will house the Resource Center, because they are currently operating
48 out of the Community Center Parking Lot, but will need to find an indoor location soon. City Manager
49 Christy Wurster explained the limitations for the Community Center Gym due to the City's current staffing
50 levels and not being able to meet the cleaning protocols associated with COVID-19. She explained new
51 OSHA guidelines will also be released shortly which could also impact use at the Community Center.
52 Member Dumitrescu explained there are slightly different FEMA guidelines related to emergency shelters
53 that would likely apply to the use of the Community Center. Member White asked if the City could stop
54 with the displacement of unhoused individuals.
55

1 Chair Palmer asked the members to begin thinking about options, because this is not something that can
2 wait. He stressed anything is on the table for discussion. Member Miller suggested using a survey tool in
3 order to get community input and ideas, similar to the Civic Center survey which had a good response
4 rate. He said it might help people not feel like they are missing out from being able to provide input on a
5 topic once a meeting gets scheduled. Once the topic gets scheduled people tend to give input that is very
6 reactionary. A survey mechanism could help gather ideas in a more organized and tempered manner.
7 Chair Palmer said the questions will need to be well thought out and members discussed the idea of
8 surveying the community to solicit input on sheltering options. Member Dumitrescu made a motion to
9 move forward with a community based survey to seek input on sheltering solutions and how best to
10 manage the homeless population. Member Smith seconded the motion. There was no further discussion
11 and the motion passed unanimously (10-0).
12

13 The next Task Force meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday, September 16 at 6:00 p.m. in order to
14 discuss the survey questions and outreach options. The goal should be to have the survey finalized and
15 out in the community no later than September 30, 2020. Member Dumitrescu said she will reach out to
16 her colleagues in Lane County to see if they have developed a similar survey, which could help get the
17 process started.
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19 **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

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21 Member Smith made a motion to adjourn. Member Miller seconded the motion and Chair Palmer
22 adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.
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24 Respectfully submitted by:

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26
27 /s/Angela Speier, Assistant to the City Manager/City Clerk

Attachment 1

Dear Chairman Palmer and members of Homeless/Housing Task Force,

First of all, thank you all for your time in addressing these issues here in our great town. I spent eight years working on the board of North Willamette Valley Habitat for Humanity. In that time, I learned a lot about the need for affordable housing and the growing issue with Homelessness. It is not a glamorous job to do, but a very needed one.

About a year and a half ago I was able to hear a presentation on Sheltering Silverton, and the work they had been doing on the warming shelter. And the other services they are providing the homeless community in Silverton. And for that, I thank them.

Earlier this week, I found out that your committee would be hearing a proposal for a Sanctioned Winter Camp. This came as quite a surprise to myself and other citizens across the city. I understand the use of Oak Street Church as a warming shelter, is no longer allowed. And that is leaving many homeless out on the street this winter. That is very sad.

So, I clearly see where this idea has come to light. It keeps Sheltering Silverton connected to the homeless community and working toward their goals. And it provides a level of service to the homeless community. And it keeps Silverton feeling good about addressing this issue.

These are all good things. But I see a few issues with this proposal. Granted, I have only been looking at this for just over one day at this point. So please excuse me if I mention something that already has been addressed, and just not been made public or presented to me in anyway, yet. Also, I do not yet have a solution, because again, I've only been thinking about this for less than 30 hours, some of that was sleeping and other time was working.

While the Westfield Property seems to be a perfect location, because of unutilized land and a willing owner and potential partner in the City of Silverton. There are issues with that site. There is the dog park, the skate park, the Senior Center, and of course an elementary school. This is not the kind of thing that most parents would be excited about having next to where their kids spend their day, even though kids may not be spending any time at the physical school building this winter, we just have no idea if that clearance might actually happen.

Let me stop right here and say, I realize that my objections and concerns to this project, are going to make me look like (and some will even call me) the jerk who hates homeless people. And that is simply not true and not the case here. I do hate homelessness, but not the people who are homeless. I have personally and thru non-profit work given money to fight homelessness. I have traveled to several third world countries to provide help, and have personally seen far greater poverty that we see or have in this country. This is not me trying to push away or hide the unserved.

Next I have concerns over the camp itself. In reading thru the proposed summary I am confused by the staffing summary. In one part it says that a camp manager will live on site. Yet when it talks about the Key Personnel it says the site will be staffed up to 8 hours each week day and 4 on Saturday and Sunday. The way that reads, sounds like up to 48 hours in a week. What about the other 120 hours (5 day equivalent) of a week? Will the guests be kicked out each morning and the gate locked? Will these guests be able to live and stay all day and all night? I see where Camp Supervisors will be on site from 9am to 1pm, then from 1pm to 5pm will be the Program Director. If that is the staffing of the 8 hours a

day, what happens after 5pm until 9am the next morning? If the day has burned thru the “staffing hours”, how is order kept overnight, who is in charge in case an issue arises?

Then I have question about the need for a fence. I don’t mean to sound offensive, or that I’m trying to make any historical parallels, but the reality is, history hasn’t been kind when groups of people have been put in a camp inside a fence. Both in the US and other countries. We see it right now where some people are even calling places like this, cages. In today’s amped up political ire, if some people were to see this camp with a fence around it, Silverton may get labeled, unfairly, as caging the homeless. That image alone gives me great pause.

I have concern about the program. I know that Sheltering Silverton has had a level of success in getting some people into some kind of permanent housing. I would assume that is still part of this new model. What I am struggling with, is at least with the warming shelter model, people were able to get out of the cold. This model doesn’t do that. It only relocates their outdoor living for the winter. Maybe provides them with a hot meal, that is unclear, I just know there is a warm tent to eat in. If, however, Sheltering Silverton, or other groups/churches, are providing a hot meal, wouldn’t it just be cheaper and easier to set up a place where the folks can come during the day to get the services from Sheltering Silverton, and also get a hot meal, then go back to whatever sleeping place they have? This would be easier on the staff, the volunteers, and the budget, and the homeless would not have to pack up and move in to the camp then back out in March. I am just not understanding how relocating them for half the year actually is a benefit.

I am concerned at the speed at which this is trying to be done at. I realize winter is coming and that puts a certain urgency to this. However, it also makes it feel like time ran out on planning and this was thrown together to meet the winter deadlines for planning and training. I know this has been worked on for months, but I for one, haven’t seen it out in the public until just this week.

My final point is, I am concerned about the government involvement in the project. I realize the current involvement by the City of Silverton, is providing the land. Even that little bit, creates a concern for me. What kind of exposure might that present for the city? I know much could be answered thru a very well crafted MOU, but without, the lines look blurry. Also, I am of the belief that government (of any size) should only be doing those things that only governments can do. Meaning, if some other person or group and provide a service, then government should not be doing that and should leave it to those people or groups. That would apply here. Clearly helping the homeless CAN be addressed by another group, so government should NOT be involved. I would much rather see some church, private citizen, or group provide this service, in this case, the land.

In closing, I just want to be very clear. I really appreciate what Sheltering Silverton is doing in our community. It is not easy work, and has been made even more challenging this year, both with COVID and the loss of the use of Oak Street Church. I am NOT completely against them doing something, to help. But this proposal is simply not anything I am in favor of. I am asking the Homeless/Housing Task Force to take this proposal and pass on sending it to City Council and use it as a starting point to find another option to help the homeless this winter.

Thank you,
Aaron L Huddart



Attachment 2

Sarah White
Silverton, Oregon
September 2, 2020

**SUBJECT: Statement on Behalf of Sheltering Silverton Regarding a
Sanctioned Winter
Campsite on City of Silverton Property**

The Honorable Kyle Palmer
Chair, Homeless/Housing Task Force
Silverton, Oregon

Dear Chair Palmer,

In 2016, ordinary citizens came together to provide shelter for members of our community who were homeless. With community support, Sheltering Silverton operated a winter warming shelter for men, women and children looking for a safe place to spend the night over the last four years. We have expanded our services and hours with the help of an army of volunteers and donors. Though much of our funding for the past few years has come from the Mid Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, the channel whereby State and Federal warming funds are distributed to smaller communities, we could not have functioned without those local angels who have cooked meals, served as shelter hosts, and provided assistance in our Resource Center. The community has generously donated funds that provide direct client support in the form of rent and deposit assistance, vital documents, payment of medical fees, and relocation assistance.

Together, we made a difference. On any given night of our duration shelter last winter, we housed between 15 and 30 unsheltered individuals, totaling 97 unique individuals over the course of the winter. The vast majority of those seeking shelter within the walls of Oak Street Church were OUR people: they grew up swimming in our creek, they graduated from our schools, they worked in the kitchens of our restaurants, they sent their children to school alongside yours and mine. This

included families with children, seniors, people with disabilities or terminal health conditions, veterans, and survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence. In addition to reliable shelter, we were also able to help 58 of these individuals move into safe, permanent housing last year alone. Since our inception we have helped over 100 individuals connect to housing. Our town's simple act of extending care to our neighbors has decreased homelessness here and kept the effects of a national problem from ballooning in our town.

This year, in the midst of the COVID pandemic, we have analyzed State guidelines for operating an indoor warming shelter, and we have determined that maintaining the required safeguards would be nearly impossible for our organization, given our limited financial, staffing, and facilities resources. We simply cannot do what we have done over the past four years. History reveals that the lack of reliable shelter leads to more homeless individuals camping in dispersed and hidden sites throughout the city and results in numerous hazards to both health and safety. Without a long-term solution, these hazards often entail fire, human waste, garbage, rapid transmission of disease, homeless individuals becoming the victims of crimes like rape, human trafficking, and murder, as well as inefficient and outsized demand on police and other public resources.

After considering different scenarios, our organization looked to other communities facing these challenges. An approach that has successfully mitigated most of these hazards in Eugene, Corvallis, Portland, and Seattle is to create managed campsites with restrooms, dumpsters, handwashing stations, a community mess tent, and staff supervision. In talking with our city staff and elected officials about a similar proposal here, we are not convinced that Sheltering Silverton could acquire and organize the needed resources to successfully implement this initiative in a way that would keep our neighbors, staff and volunteers safe; even if the city were to identify a suitable piece of land for this campsite. We also recognize that a proposal for a sanctioned campground might create a significant amount of anxiety for members of our community in a time that we find ourselves already so divided. With the short amount of time available to execute any plan before it gets cold, we do not believe there is sufficient

opportunity to engage the community in this necessary and difficult conversation. Our experience with past conversations has led to people who are already suffering and struggling feeling unwelcome and dehumanized by opponents of programs that support the unsheltered.

As we process Homelessness Prevention Assistance requests from people affected by COVID-19-related loss of income, we understand how quickly the humanitarian crisis of homelessness could spill out into our streets. Now more than ever, we need a competent community response to this crisis. In the end, the challenge of homelessness in Silverton is only as insurmountable as our unwillingness to help. Our organization cannot do this alone. In addition to the ongoing support, resources, and leadership of the broader community and the City of Silverton, we need to know what further commitments will be made to address the additional challenges. We invite this Task Force and our city's leadership to struggle alongside our organization to provide safety and shelter for people experiencing homelessness in Silverton.

Caring for vulnerable neighbors who are experiencing hard times is a celebrated tradition in Silverton. With the extreme health, safety and economic challenges we now face from the COVID pandemic, our community must come together with as much creative power as possible to figure out how we can continue to serve and support those facing the threat and reality of homelessness. Up to this point, no one has found an inexpensive, easy solution. We must therefore partner together, and share in the costs and risks. It is how we have come this far, and how we will continue to strengthen our beloved Silverton.

Here are some of our questions: Can we provide hotel rooms for our homeless neighbors who are vulnerable or testing positive for COVID-19? What affordable housing is available for short term leases that may provide shelter and stability for several single adults? Where are there safe places for someone to park an RV or car in order to sleep through the night beyond the three spots in the Community Center Parking lot? When cold weather arrives, where can we house our Resource

Center in a way that can accommodate up to thirty people safely throughout the day?

Many of the members of this Task Force are or have been directly associated with Sheltering Silverton. We have worked diligently, using private funding and resources, to address a problem that truly is a City issue. We stand ready to support our community in implementing a plan that can address this problem. We all are facing many difficult challenges, but we believe that every person in this community has an inherent right to food, shelter, and safety. Our organization will continue to expend our best efforts to make sure our neighbors have access to those essentials. We hope this body can begin the necessary work of creating a plan to present to our City Council that addresses the needs of our unhoused neighbors.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarah White

Program Director, Sheltering Silverton

Homeless/Housing Task Force Member