



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council

STAFF

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SUBJECT

First Reading of Ordinance No. 129, 2023, Suspending Certain Provisions of the City's Land Use Code and Building Code to Permit Temporary Use of City Property at 117 North Mason Street as a Seasonal Overflow Homeless Shelter.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to suspend certain provisions of the City's Land Use Code to allow the temporary use of 117 North Mason Street as a men's overflow shelter site from November 1, 2023-April 30, 2024.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance on First Reading.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Program Summary

- The Seasonal Overflow Shelter (SOS) program provides additional shelter capacity during winter months for people experiencing homelessness.
- The City historically contributes coordination and funding support to help reduce or eliminate instances of people being turned away from shelter, and into inclement weather conditions, due to space constraints.

2022-2023 Season

- This same building, 117 North Mason Street, was used for an overflow shelter for men experiencing homelessness for the 2022-2023 winter season.
- The shelter was operated by Fort Collins Rescue Mission from November-April.
- There was capacity to sleep up to 44 men, overnight only, during the winter season.
- Both mid- and post-season feedback was generally neutral to positive, with overall input from neighbors that the shelter did not impact their day-to-day experience in this part of town.

2023-2024 Season

- This year, City staff and shelter providers explored other options and made the decision to once again utilize the City-owned building at 117 North Mason Street for the 2023-2024 season.
- This location was identified as the most viable option due to size, location, and availability.
- The City is intending to enter into a lease with Fort Collins Rescue Mission for the use of the 117 North Mason Street property as a shelter.
- The building will be used as a secondary overflow site when the Rescue Mission's primary location (316 Jefferson Street) is over capacity.
- With the Rescue Mission's future 24/7 shelter facility with expanded capacity estimated to open in 2025, this should be the penultimate season of SOS before this program, as it exists, is no longer needed.

Operations

- The parameters for use of the property will be nearly identical to last winter season, including:
 - The shelter being operated by Fort Collins Rescue Mission with staff present during all open hours (5:00pm – 7:00am)
 - Serving men experiencing homelessness overnight-only
 - Having additional support from a third-party security firm
 - Operating from November 2023 – April 2024
- However, this year, the Rescue Mission aims to expand into the conference room and have space for 70 men per night, as opposed to the 44 hosted last year. This is due to reductions in capacity at the Rescue Mission's main location, leading to a need for additional beds at the overflow site to avoid people being turned away due to space constraints.

Approval Process

- While a homeless shelter is a permitted use under the current zoning for the property (Downtown – Civic), the City's Land Use Code (LUC) requires review by the Planning & Zoning Board and requires development standards that would also be applied to the property as part of the review process.
- The temporary nature of the proposed use of 117 North Mason Street for this season's overflow shelter, combined with the need to finalize operational plans for the SOS season, are the reasons staff is seeking approval to expedite the process of securing an overflow site.
- This item would waive LUC requirements so that additional shelter for people experiencing homelessness can be provided as close to the start of the SOS season, November 1, as possible. Building code requirements essential to protect life and safety for the guests staying in the shelter will *not* be waived.

Opening Date

- The projected opening date is November 1.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The City will donate use of the building to Fort Collins Rescue Mission to operate a temporary overnight homeless shelter from November 2023 – April 2024, with a one-time upfront payment requested to cover the cost of carpet replacement.

The City will utilize its Seasonal Overflow Shelter budget (ARPA funds) to help cover costs related to shelter operations, inclement weather sheltering, and security services. This year's budget is not yet finalized, but the total costs last year were approximately \$280,000, with funds contributed from ARPA, homelessness program dollars (general fund), and United Way of Larimer County.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The following communications have occurred or will occur:

- Hybrid neighborhood meeting on August 30.
- Direct outreach to businesses in nearest proximity to this location, to be conducted by City staff and/or collaborative partners (September and October).
- Mid-season check in with businesses in nearest proximity, to be conducted by City staff and/or collaborative partners.
- Post-season informational letter to nearest businesses and neighbors to inform of shelter closure and seek feedback on the season.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance for Consideration
2. Subrecipient Agreement - Fort Collins Rescue Mission 2022-2023