

CITY OF SHEBOYGAN

REQUEST FOR CITY PLAN COMMISSION CONSIDERATION

ITEM DESCRIPTION: Conditional use application by Sheboygan County Warming Center to operate a warming center at St. Luke Methodius Church located at 623 Ontario Avenue. UR-12 Zone

REPORT PREPARED BY: Ellise Rose, Associate Planner

REPORT DATE: October 21, 2024

MEETING DATE: October 29, 2024

FISCAL SUMMARY:

Budget Line Item: N/A
Budget Summary: N/A
Budgeted Expenditure: N/A
Budgeted Revenue: N/A

STATUTORY REFERENCE:

Wisconsin Statutes: N/A
Municipal Code: N/A

BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS:

Sheboygan County Warming Center is proposing to operate a warming center at St. Luke Methodius Church located at 623 Ontario Avenue. The applicant states the following about the project:

- The proposed use is to provide temporary, safe shelter for adults (over 18) individuals who may be homeless because of emergencies of any kind, including transients who will be housed on an overnight basis pending availability.
- We are using the Fellowship Hall, Parlor and a room on the first floor (Nursery Room), bathrooms and kitchen.
- This site was selected because of location -this church is located down town and in a high traffic area for homeless. The church has a dwindling congregation and adequate space available.
- Guests are welcome to arrive between 6:00 PM and 8:00 PM. After this time, admission will only be granted with a police referral. Once signed in, guests who leave the premises will not be allowed to re-enter.
- A warm meal and a cot for sleeping will be provided, with lights out by 10:00 PM. Wake-up time is at 6:15 AM, followed by a light breakfast. All guests are expected to depart by 7:30 AM.
- The projected number of residents (based on 2023-2024 season) is between 30-45 guests nightly, 3-4 employees and 3-4 volunteers nightly.
- The square footage is: Men’s area 100’ x 30’ Women’s Area 63’ x 48’.

- At this time there are no renovations.
- Signage will be small yard signs.
- Currently the church houses the Community Café, BabyCare and a food pantry. We feel the Warming Center will fit in perfectly as this location already sees many low-income and homeless individuals in this area.
- We will ensure our guests do not congregate outside more than 15 minutes before posted opening times. In inclement weather this location has an area where the guests can wait inside and should not be loitering around the facility.
- There is undeniable need in our Community for a warming center especially in colder months, to protect vulnerable populations, including those without stable housing.
- Much like the Community Cafe and food pantry, the warming center would be managed in a way that minimizes disruption. We will ensure it remains clean, well-supervised, and orderly.
- A warming center contributes to the overall well-being of the community, reducing health risks associated with extreme cold and providing a safe space for those in need.
- This downtown location is where most of our clientele are located. There is plenty of room inside to accommodate anybody that is outdoors during the cold winter months.
- Supporting the City's Vision for a strong, inclusive community we are creating a strong, inclusive community that addresses the needs of all its residents. By providing temporary shelter to individuals experiencing homelessness, our proposal directly contributes to this goal by offering a safe space for vulnerable populations, promoting human dignity, and fostering community well-being. This aligns with the city's vision of inclusiveness and social support for all members of society.
- We are adding in addressing housing and homelessness issues. The Warming Center is providing safe, affordable housing and addressing homelessness. The temporary shelter helps meet an urgent need for emergency housing, especially in response to unforeseen crises. By offering a short-term solution for those facing homelessness, the project supports the city's housing objectives and complements efforts to prevent chronic homelessness.
- Our proposed shelter operates in collaboration with local authorities (e.g., police referrals after hours), contributing to a safer, more structured response to homelessness. This reduces the likelihood of vulnerable individuals remaining unsheltered overnight, which can reduce risks to both the individuals and the broader community. The alignment with public safety goals is evident in the controlled admittance process, managed operating hours, and provision of basic services like meals and sleeping arrangements.
- We feel we are utilizing existing community resources efficiently by making effective use of existing space within the church, a resource already available in the community. Repurposing underutilized spaces within existing structures is often encouraged by city plans, as it reduces the need for new construction and makes efficient use of community assets. This supports the city's goal of sustainable and resource-conscious development.
- We do not believe neighborhood character will be severely affected. Obviously, it will be a higher traffic area before opening and after closing but we do not believe it will have a big impact.

- We believe that this project is in alignment with the neighborhood and the property. Downtown is where many of the homeless are and instead of having them laying on benches or trying to set up other encampments we are housing them in a dignified manner.

STAFF COMMENTS:

The Plan Commission may want to have the applicant address:

- How the warming center interacts with Church activities?
- During what months will the warming center be operated?

ACTION REQUESTED:

Staff recommends approval of the conditional use permit subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to operation/occupancy of the warming center, the applicant shall obtain an occupancy permit as well as meet all required codes including but not limited to building, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, fire, health, State of Wisconsin, etc. An occupancy permit will be granted only at such time as the applicant has met all requirements.
2. City Development staff will issue a building permit only if the applicant has adequately satisfied all Sheboygan Fire Department issues and/or concerns.
3. The warming center is permitted to operate yearly at St. Luke Methodius Church.
4. This conditional use permit is for the warming center use only. No other temporary use may operate from this facility/site. This use permit is not transferable and any future proposal would require a new conditional use permit to operate from this property.
5. Applicant shall adequately monitor/regulate and maintain this property.
6. In no instance shall the use create a nuisance for neighboring properties (noise, hours of operation, garbage, loitering, etc.).
7. Applicant shall obtain the necessary sign permits prior to installation. If staff has any concerns with proposed signage design, the matter may be brought back to the Plan Commission for their consideration.
8. All new lighting shall be installed per Section 105-932 of the City of Sheboygan Zoning Ordinance. There shall be no spillover light onto adjacent streets and/or properties.
9. Dumpsters shall be screened/enclosed and constructed of like materials and colors of the facility. If using chain link fencing, the applicant shall install Privacy Decorative Slating (PDS) material in order to effectively screen/enclose the dumpsters. Dumpster enclosure shall be completed prior to issuance of an occupancy permit.
10. Outdoor storage of materials, products or equipment shall be prohibited.
11. If there are to be any renovation to the exterior of the facility, the applicant will be required to obtain approval from the Architectural Review Board prior to receiving a building permit for such renovation.
12. If there are any amendments to the approved use and/or site plan, the applicant will be required to submit a new site plan and/or conditional use application reflecting those amendments.

ATTACHMENTS:

Conditional Use Permit Application and required attachments.