

Hope Heals Foundation

501(c)(3)

606 Falmouth Street - Suite A
Warrenton VA. 20186
hopehealsfreestore@gmail.com

August 22, 2023

Ms. Lyndie Paul
townmanager@warrentonva.gov

Dear Ms. Paul,

We are interested in submitting our concept for future affordable housing for the underhoused in the town of Warrenton in response to the RFI on Affordable Housing released by the Town of Warrenton..

1. **Name of Submitting Organization:** Hope Heals Freestore : 501(c)(3) - 606 Falmouth Street - Suite A, Warrenton VA 20186
2. **Point of Contact:** Wally & Pat Smith - 540-347-7808; wallyandpat@verizon.net
3. **Organization Overview:** Mission Statement

Hope Heals Foundation is organized exclusively for charitable purposes. These purposes include:

- Distribution of household goods at no charge
- Distribution of clothing for adults and children at no charge
- Distribution of food items at no charge
- To expand into providing affordable permanent and transitional housing for individuals that are underhoused in our community

Hope Heals Foundation Mission Statement:

At Hope Heals Community Freestore our dream is a community built on relationships based on mutual aid and cooperation. Our mission is to provide an uplifting and empowering place where people can freely give and receive clothing and other essential items for the purpose of meeting the needs of our community and connecting people. Our hearts are to see lives forever changed through not only the giving of clothing and household items, but also through mentorship, relationship, and love. Love is free. Love is a gift. Love changes everything.

The Hope Heals Freestore (hopehealsfreestore.com) has been distributing free clothing, linens, baby gear & toys (during the Toy Giveaway at Christmas) in Warrenton for over 3 years and serves approx. 25,000 people each year from Warrenton and the surrounding area. During our hours of operation, we connect with people who are currently unsheltered, living in their cars or the woods or spending the majority of their nominal, and often fixed income staying in one of 4 motels we have in Warrenton or just outside of town (Rip Van Winkle Motel, Jefferson Motel, Red Roof Inn or Fauquier Motel just outside of town).

4. History in Warrenton: Among the long term volunteers at Hope Heals Foundation we have decades of experience serving the underhoused in Warrenton. Here are a few examples:

-Wally and Pat Smith, who from 1994 - 2008 owned and operated the Upper Room housing ministry at 61 Main Street for men coming out of jail, the shelter and the woods. Up to 6 men at a time were in a program to learn basic life-skills such as: hygiene, shopping/cooking/nutrition, finances, etc. Many apprenticed and received a stipend in God's Handiwork; a ministry led by men in our community that did home repairs for members of our community that needed affordable help.

-Wally and Pat Smith also owned and operated a 3 floor townhouse for families in need of shelter. The same program to learn essential life skills was implemented.

-Multiple families who served beside the Fauquier Community Coalition by organizing and implementing multiple critical home repair projects for those who cannot afford it.

-A family who served beside Christ In Action to respond to the 2017 tornado damage in Warrenton to help residential property owners who couldn't otherwise afford the repairs.

-Wally Smith is the Warrenton Police Chaplain, and organizes the Pastor/Police Coalition quarterly and is Senior Hospital Chaplain.

5. Concept: Develop a Tiny Home Village (Hope Heals Village or HHV)

The HHV concept involves creating a community of tiny homes within the town of Warrenton. The tiny homes would be designed to provide affordable housing options for various segments of the population, including the homeless, low-income individuals and families, seniors, and veterans. The village would be designed to promote a sense of community and provide necessary amenities such as communal spaces, gardens, and recreational areas. The tiny homes would be built using sustainable and cost-effective materials to keep construction and maintenance costs low. The village could be located on a plot of land owned by the Town of Warrenton, potentially utilizing the land contributions mentioned in the RFI.

We are eager to start **Hope Heals Village (HHV)** for the underhoused in Warrenton. After extensive and continuous research across the U.S. we believe that a gated tiny home village community and program with 2 sizes of cabins (96 sq. ft and 399 sq. ft) is a highly effective solution with a proven track record in other communities. It's proven that by giving a person a roof over their head and a secure place to sleep, their bodies are no longer in survival mode and they are able to thrive. Dignity is the solution to poverty and community is the solution to homelessness. Currently most are living in isolation.

The residents living in the HHV would have 3 months to 3 years to be in the transitional neighborhoods, and help to secure permanent housing. Potential residents would be required to sign a misconduct contract before moving into the Village that would mean inappropriate behavior would lead to removal.

Amenities in the Village will include: a community center in the middle of the Village for administrative offices/mental health appointments/first aid, large kitchen/dining area with doors that open up to outside dining where meals are eaten together, room for ping pong, board games, library books, etc.

There will be paid positions available in the Village such as yard work, child care, maintenance, etc. for those that are unable to find a job in town because they don't have proper identification (we will have a group of people to help get their ID's restored) or the physical means.

Depending on the size of the tiny home, residents will pay \$200.00 - \$400.00 for rent, electricity, Wi-Fi, etc. Our team at HHV will help manage their finances to facilitate savings for their future. The reduced cost in living, coupled with the life skills training program and potential employment at the Village helps prepare our community's citizens for stable employment, future long term housing, and financial fortitude.

Hope Heals Village will be governed by vetted members of our community with a proven track record of responsibility and a desire to serve the underhoused in Warrenton. They will vote together on approving HHV applicants based on a standard application process. An extensive background check will be done for people applying to live in the community. There will be a playground for children, community garden, restroom/bath/laundry house for some neighborhoods (clusters) that don't have indoor facilities.

6. Constituency: Targeted Housing Segments

Hope Heals Village will cater to multiple housing constituencies, including the homeless, those on disability, low-income individuals and families, seniors, and veterans. By providing a range of housing options within the village, it would be possible to address the diverse needs of these different groups.

7. Dependencies: Critical Factors for Implementation

- Zoning Changes: The Town of Warrenton may need to consider creating zoning overlays or revising existing zoning regulations to accommodate the development of the tiny home village.
- Financing: The concept would require financing from various sources, including private investment, grants, capital campaigns (which have already started), local churches, and potentially utilizing the initial investment funding designated by the Town of Warrenton.
- Infrastructure: Adequate infrastructure, such as water and sewer connections and electricity, would need to be in place to support the tiny home village.

8. Outcomes and Benefits:

- Increased Affordable Housing: The tiny home village would provide affordable housing options for individuals and families who may otherwise struggle to find suitable housing in Warrenton.
- Community Development: The village would foster a sense of community and provide opportunities for social interaction and support among residents.
- Sustainable and Cost-Effective: Tiny homes are often more energy-efficient and require fewer resources to build and maintain, making them a sustainable and cost-effective housing solution.

We have several village models that we are investigating. In late August our team will be touring Community First Village in Austin, TX, one of the largest tiny house village/communities in the U.S. with over 500 homes. We are also studying a program called Eden Village in Springfield, MO.

Our team has been researching housing/programs like this throughout the nation to find out what they do to succeed and serve the underhoused. For suggestions, please refer to: edenvillageusa.org and Community First! Village (mlf.org - Mobile Loaves & Fishes)

Hope Heals Village will be a safe, supportive place where residents can overcome trauma, begin to address the issues that led to financial distress or homelessness, and build their support network. Having a place to call your own gives:

- A sense of belonging, safety, security, personhood, and ownership
- Improves the psyche; not living in danger out in public
- Fulfills the longing for social interaction and acceptance
- Camaraderie with people who have experiences with similar issues of homelessness and financial distress
- Mental health/medical services
- Offers shared dinners, social events, gatherings, and more.

9. Financing:

The financing for the tiny home village will be a combination of private investment, grants from organizations focused on affordable housing, and potentially utilizing the initial investment funding designated by the Town of Warrenton.

Our capital campaign will include reaching out to the 80 - 106 churches in Warrenton and Fauquier County, and beyond by passing out cards with a list of needs including: community developers/designers, excavators, carpenters, decorators, donations, etc.

Also pointing them to a website that we will create where they can find the information about the project. The grant writer on our team will go in search of funds available from such places as: Grants.gov, PATH Foundation, HHS.gov, and many more. Many of the generous supporters of Hope Heal Freestore are eager to help with our desperately needed Hope Heals Village. We would also hope to enlist the aid of The Fauquier Times to get the word out to our town and county residents.

Divorce, domestic abuse, losing a job, and mental illness can be just some of the reasons for losing housing. Loss of family, home and community are catastrophic and often a reason for homelessness and financial distress. This sends people down a path they are unable to get out of by themselves. But together as a community we can provide love, acceptance and an opportunity to rise out of destitution. Everyone has value no matter who they are. Thank you so much for your time and consideration in this matter.

“The greatest disease in the West is not contracting leprosy or the result of being strangled by an umbilical cord, it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. America can cure or treat many physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is love.” -Alan Graham, founder of Mobile Loaves and Fishes and Community First Village