

# City of Cambridge

Department of Public Works  
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## Board of Appeals Minutes September 25, 2018

The Board of Zoning Appeals for the City of Cambridge met at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 25, 2018 in the City Council Chambers located at 305 Gay Street, Cambridge, Maryland.

**Board Members in Attendance:** Ted Brooks, Chairman and William Clyde, Vice-Chair, Dormaim Green, Robin Sample and William Bishop.

**Other representatives in Attendance:** Patrick Thomas, City Attorney; Patricia Escher, City Planner, Herve Hamon, Planner I.

Comm. Brooks opened the meeting and there were no amendments to the agenda. He then issued a welcome, explained the order of the proceedings, and swore in those wishing to testify.

### Approval of Minutes:

Approval of the minutes was moved to the end of the session.

### Regular Business:

#### **BoA #2018-003, Special Exception for Seasonal Housing at Salvation Army Site, 114 Washington Ave.**

The Planning Commission heard this application at their August 7<sup>th</sup> hearing and is recommending approval of the temporary use for the winter season of 2018 thru 2021. The shelters will be in place and in use starting December 1<sup>st</sup> and removed by March 31 annually.

The application is for (3) three temporary Homeless Shelters to be used during the next three winter seasons. Two trailers would be for residents, one for a family for 6 to 8 family members, one trailer being used as a shelter with 8 to 10 beds for female persons and the other one for serving meals.

The Cold Weather Shelter organization has been located at the Wesleyan Church at the corner of Race and Washington Streets for (6) six years. The church is no longer able to accommodate this use on their site. The applicant came to the City last year and secured an Special Exception Permit for last year for four (4) residential trailers. The applicant has provided a narrative about their work in Cambridge and have demonstrated that there is a great need for this type of facility. They have shown that their mission goes beyond sheltering and they provide assistance to help the residents to live a more productive and complete life. This is necessary use in the City of Cambridge.

The Planning Commission believes that the proposed mobile units can be accommodated on the site as this is a temporary use. The Salvation Army has indicated that they would like to make this a permanent use, then they will have to come back to the City and provide units that meet this City's dwelling unit requirements. The units will be hooked up to City water and sewer and are being located on the existing parking lot, so there will be no ground disturbance or storm water requirements.

Staff noted that Comm. Clyde had pointed out language in the code regarding necessary licensure prior to the application being received. Staff did not get the licensure based on the assumption that it is a cold weather shelter and already have what is needed. The applicant is prepared to speak to State licensure requirements for shelters. If there are no licensure requirements, then the UDC needs to be amended as it is incorrect as written. If licensure is found to be a requirement it will be added as a condition for the applicant to submit the licenses before moving forward.

The Planning Commission recommends approval with the following condition:

- This is an approval for three temporary shelters for a total of up to 18 beds to be located on site from December 1 and removed by March 31 for three (3) consecutive years ending in March of 2021.
- The use shall comply with the conditions set forth in the UDC.

William Crabson, Lt. Colonel, Director of Salvation Army Services, provided testimony on licensure and compliance. He advised since the shelter does not accept juvenile residents unless they are part of a family no special licensure or staffing is required. They meet all zoning and Fire Marshall requirements and they do not operate a kitchen so there are no health department requirements. The permanent shelter on their site has been operational for two decades and received block grants, state shelter funds and federal funding and met all necessary requirements. They believe they are in complete compliance, but if something has been overlooked it will be addressed.

The Commission asked for further description of the shelter. The permanent shelter was described as having 26 beds to accommodate men, women and families with separate dorms and bathrooms. Meals are provided by volunteers and donated from groups so there is no meal preparation. The Salvation Army has a two-week program and if there is a need to stay longer the resident must participate in the program to help locate employment and housing opportunities. The Cold Weather Shelter mission provides that anyone needing shelter in the coldest month will receive it. There is no barrier or program participation expected. The Cold Weather Shelter and Salvation Army have similar missions, but program requirements are different. Since the Salvation Army site has zoning to accommodate homeless services they invited the Cold Weather Shelter to their site collaboratively. The Cold Weather Shelter population normally is in the mid- 40's in addition to the dozen or so at the Salvation Army permanent shelter. They felt the 3 trailers will adequately serve the population that may show up on any given evening and it has been a good collaboration between the two agencies. Plans for the shelter moving forward have not been solidified, but the County has made application through a community development block grant for additional funding to support for additional staff, site planning and a program manager that will be assigned to the Salvation Army for the next two years. The outcome on funding will not be known until April 1, 2019.

Col. Crabson was asked by the Commission to provide further clarification on the shelter capacity and how the beds are assigned. The Cold Weather Shelter has an 18 bed capacity and the Salvation Army permanent shelter has 26 bed capacity. It is not a fixed population, but the agencies prepare for the maximum. The permanent shelter has 16 beds for men, 5 for women and 5 for the family room. The Cold Weather Shelter trailers will have a priority for families but there might be adjustments to the accommodations between shelters depending upon the requirements so that men and women would have separate accommodations.

The Commission asked about food preparation and Col. Crabson advised for cold weather shelters food service is brought in every night by volunteers. In the mobile homes, cooking would not be allowed. Table chairs and microwaves will be in the third trailer for dining.

Referrals can be made by to the cold weather shelters by calling the Salvation Army office during business hours. The shelter operates from six o'clock in the evening to eight o'clock in the morning. Hours may be adjusted to match the weather.

Alan Nelson, Board Chairman of the Salvation Army, provided testimony in favor of the application and the positive influence in the community that the collaboration has provided. He became familiar with the emergency Cold Weather Shelter during his work with the Chamber of Commerce. The shelters work together to best serve the needs of the homeless community.

There was a motion made by Comm. Clyde to close the meeting and seconded by Comm. Green.

Motion made by Comm. Clyde to approve the special exception for the temporary homeless shelter located at the Salvation Army property on Washington Street consisting of three temporary trailers to be installed by December 1 and removed by March 31 approved for 3 years ending in 2021 and based on the testimony and evidence presented here and subject to following restrictions:

- No shelter shall be located within 500' of a public playground or public school.
- All shelters shall provide, as a part of the special exception application, proof that all necessary governmental requirements and licenses have been obtained prior to the application being reviewed by the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals.

**Approval of Minutes:**

October 24, 2017 minutes were approved as amended.

November 28, 2017 minutes were approved.

July 24, 2018 minutes were approved.

Pat Escher introduced Herve Hamon, Assistant Planner 1, and advised that Herve will be taking over the staffing responsibilities for the Board of Appeals unless there is appeal of her decision.


**Motion to adjourn**

Comm. Brooks asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Comm. Clyde seconded the motion. All approved and carried.

Next meeting will be on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Escher, City Planner

Signature:   
Ted Brooks  
Chairman, Board of Appeals

Date: 11/27/18