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EXCLUSIVE

FEATURED

NEW DETAILS / WARMING SHELTER: The Appeal

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Dec 21, 2017



Appeal Hearing Set: The Lincoln City Planning Commission is scheduled to hear the Warming Shelter appeal at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 16, at Lincoln City Hall, 801 SW Highway 101.

Cssie Ruud / The News Guard

The Lincoln City Warming Shelter is appealing a Dec. 4 decision by Lincoln City Planning and Community Development Director Richard Townsend concerning the operation of the emergency shelter at Taft Hall.

Townsend ruled that the shelter is not a permitted use at Taft Hall.

Warming Shelter President Patrick Alexander outlined the appeal in a letter to Townsend on Friday, Dec. 15.

“In your decision, you indicated that your opinion was predicated in part on your understanding that the number of people operating or using the homeless resource center could be expected to be relatively low given the limited hours and “by appointment only” nature of the center.

The statement that our services are offered “by appointment only” is incorrect (and I must apologize for being the source of this faulty information). In fact, we offer all but one of the services at our homeless resource center on a walk-in basis.”

In his letter, Alexander writes that the center is staffed from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday by a paid contractor and a team of volunteers. During those hours, clients are welcome to drop in to take advantage of a range of services, including free clothing, free toiletries, a sack lunch, water bottle or coffee, job search and resume building, showers and laundry.

Alexander said the only service that requires clients to make an appointment for is resource referral, which aims to determine what the individual’s challenges are as a starting point for directing them towards services.

Services provided

Alexander also stated that between the start of the shelter operations at Taft Hall on Nov. 15, and Dec. 15, the last date for which data were available, the resource center has provided services in 91 cases, providing 42 showers, doing 24 loads of laundry and serving 99 meals. The center has assisted seven clients obtain birth certificates, one client obtain a social security card, and three clients obtain other forms of ID.

“Our emergency weather shelter is open only on occasions when temperatures are forecast to fall below 40 degrees,” Alexander said. “Between Nov. 15, and Dec. 15, the shelter had been open for 12 nights, providing 118 bed-nights of accommodation.

During this time, the shelter served 19 unduplicated individuals; less than half the number served by the resource center.”

Alexander states that the daytime use of the center is to assist the homeless population in finding employment and permanent housing so they can become productive members of the community.

“We don’t have the capacity to provide the seven-day-a-week housing that Family Promise does, so we limit that aspect of our services to times when the life and health of clients is seriously threatened. Thus, the shelter function is subordinate to the Resource Center function, and limited to (the subordinate use of) keeping our clients out of area hospitals while we help them rejoin the housed and employed population.

The contention

“Our contention is that the use of Taft Hall as an emergency weather shelter when temperatures are forecast to drop below 40 degrees is both incidental and subordinate to the primary use of the building as a daytime resource center, and should therefore be permitted as an Accessory Use.”

Read the entire letter from Alexander to Townsend at thenewsguard.com.

What’s next?

The Lincoln City Planning Commission is scheduled to hear the Warming Shelter appeal at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 16, at Lincoln City Hall, 801 SW Highway 101.

Townsend said the planning commission will consider all the evidence including the additional details provided by Alexander in his letter.

“It may be enough for the commission to conclude that the shelter is an accessory to the homeless resource center, therefore allowing it to be permitted,” Townsend said. “If the commission finds that my decision is correct, the shelter would have to come into compliance and stop using it as a warming shelter. There are other avenues, including an amendment to the zoning ordinance that would allow it as a permitted use.”

Townsend said the planning commission’s decision could also be appealed to the Lincoln City Council.

As for issuing any notice of violation because the shelter is not a permitted use, Townsed said, "We have not decided yet what enforcement action we are going to take."

Former Lincoln City Planning Commission Chairman and now Lincoln City Mayor Don Williams owns Taft Hall. Williams signed a lease agreement with the Warming Shelter in October to allow the use of his building for the shelter.

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APPEAL: Warming Shelter wants city planner's decision overturned



NEW DETAILS / DECISION: Emergency shelter still not permitted



UPDATE: Emergency shelter not a permitted use



EMERGENCY SHELTER: Is it a permitted use at Taft Hall?

"Our contention is that the use of Taft Hall as an emergency weather shelter when temperatures are forecast to drop below 40 degrees is both incidental and subordinate to the primary use of the building as a daytime resource center, and should therefore be permitted as an Accessory Use."

Just The Facts

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NEW DETAILS: Warming Shelter responds to Notice of Violation



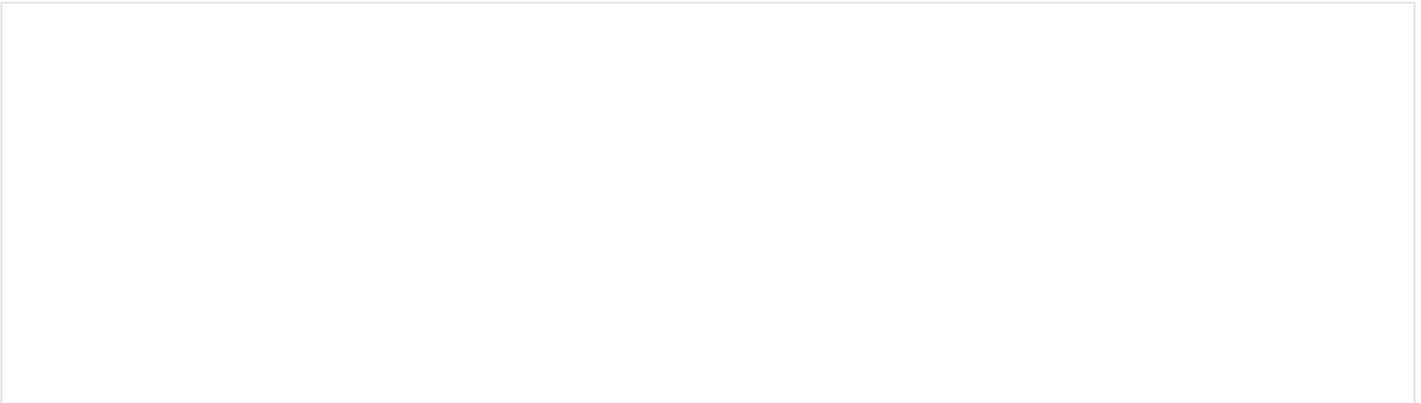
DEVELOPING: Mayor Williams, Warming Shelter respond to Notice of Violation



UPDATE / COUNCIL: Warming Shelter requests zoning amendment



DECISION ISSUED: Emergency overnight shelter





NEW DEVELOPMENTS: Overnight homeless shelter gets another reprieve



NEW DEVELOPMENTS: Warming Shelter discontinues overnight shelter, for now