



City of Richmond

900 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
www.rva.gov/office-city-clerk

Meeting Minutes Education and Human Services Standing Committee

Thursday, November 9, 2023

2:00 PM

Council Chamber, 2nd Floor - City Hall

Committee and Other Council Members in Attendance

The Honorable Stephanie Lynch - Chair
The Honorable Andreas Addison - Member
The Honorable Ann-Frances Lambert - Council Member

Absent

The Honorable Cynthia Newbille - Vice Chair

Staff and Others in Attendance

Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst
Nahdiyah Muhammad, Assistant City Clerk
Janet Palmer, Deputy City Attorney
Candice Reid, City Clerk
RJ Warren, Deputy City Clerk

Call to Order

Chair Stephanie Lynch called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m., and presided.

Chamber Emergency Evacuation Plan Announcement and Citizen Speaker Guidelines

Upon the Chair's request, Assistant City Clerk Nahdiyah Muhammad provided information on the appropriate manner in which the Council Chamber is to be evacuated in the event of an emergency along with citizen speaker guidelines.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comment speakers

Presentation(s)

There were no presentations

Discussion Item(s)

Richmond Public Schools (RPS) and Richmond School Board Updates

Jason Kamras, Richmond Public Schools Superintendent, stated that engagement for an updated Dreams for RPS Strategic Plan will conduct 250 meetings over the next several months. Superintendent Kamras also stated that the bid process for the contract for the renovations to Fox Elementary School would close November 9, 2023, and that the bid contract for the new Richmond High School for the Arts would post next week.

Chair Stephanie Lynch stated appreciation for the continued work of RPS. Chair Lynch stated she would like to see Council members in attendance at upcoming Dreams for RPS meetings, and she requested information regarding upcoming meetings.

730 Building Update

Traci DeShazor, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Human Services, provided the committee with an update regarding the 730 building's use as a temporary location for an inclement weather shelter.

Chair Stephanie Lynch inquired about protocols in place to notify the public regarding the opening of the inclement weather shelter.

DCAO DeShazor stated that Council President, Council members, and Council Chief of Staff are notified when the inclement weather shelter is in operation, so they can get the word out about shelter operations. DCAO DeShazor also stated that the inclement weather shelter is not equipped to assist individuals that have medical needs.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert inquired about the staff that are currently working with the inclement weather shelter.

DCAO DeShazor stated that the shelter is currently being staffed primarily by Humankind and city employees.

Chair Lynch stated thanks to all individuals that assisted in the temporary shelter location.

Paper(s) for Consideration

The following ordinance was considered:

1. [ORD. 2023-325](#) To authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, for and on behalf of the City of Richmond, to execute a Grant Contract between the City of Richmond and The Salvation Army for the purpose of providing funding for the operation of an inclement weather shelter at 1900 Chamberlayne Avenue for the period of time between December 1, 2023, and April 15, 2024. (3rd District)

Patrons: Mayor Stoney, Vice President Nye, President Jones, Ms. Newbille, Ms. Trammell, Mr. Addison and Ms. Robertson

Attachments: [Ord. No. 2023-325](#)

Forwarded to the November 13, 2023 Council meeting with recommendation to approve

Traci DeShazor, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer (DCAO) for Human Services, provided the committee with an introduction regarding ORD. 2023-325.

Stephen Batsche, Executive Director of Program Services, the Salvation Army Central Virginia Area Command, provided the committee with additional information regarding ORD. No. 2023-325.

Public Hearing

Dave Kohler, President of the Chamberlayne Industrial Center Association, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2023-325. Mr. Kohler stated that members of the Chamberlayne Industrial Center were not adequately notified of the city's plans to have a shelter located in the Chamberlayne industrial area.

Alex Lugovoy, Dobin Properties Owner, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2023-325, and stated the city is on the right track in providing a homeless shelter, but it should be located somewhere else. Mr. Lugovoy also stated that having a high concentration of the homeless population in the Chamberlayne district will increase the already high crime rate.

Kaeley Andrews, Real Estate Manager for 1500 Brook Road, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2023-325, and stated that there are concerns for safety and cleanliness in the area, and they will continue to be issues if the shelter is approved.

Audra Scott spoke in opposition to ORD. 2023-325, and stated that the opening of the shelter will violate certain requirements already established. Ms. Scott also stated that there are numerous safety concerns and that the city should have better informed the community.

Lucas Prenzick, Maintenance Manager for New Town Properties, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2023-325, and stated that residents of the community are terminating leases and relocating due to numerous accounts of trash produced by displaced residents.

Matthew Atkinson, ARC 3 Gases Representative, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2023-325, and stated that the crime rate will increase if the shelter is approved.

Carl Vaughn, Founder of Jump Start U2, spoke in opposition to the lack of planning regarding ORD. 2023-325, and stated that his business was asked to relocate for the shelter to open. Mr. Vaughn further stated that he understands people need housing but there needs to be more preparation.

Mike Salmon, Owner of Talley Sign Company, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2023-325, and stated that there were numerous accounts of theft and vandalism to his business due to the increase in crime. Mr. Talley also stated that the shelter will bring an undue burden to residents and business owners within the Chamberlayne community.

Michelle Mosby spoke in opposition to ORD. 2023-325 and stated that there needs to be better communication between the city and businesses located on Chamberlayne.

Nickita Harrison, Director of Community Engagement for Holeman Enterprises, LLC, provided the committee with a statement of opposition to ORD. 2023-325 prepared by Owner Corey Holeman and Courtney Holeman.

[CD.2023.357](#) November 9, 2023 - EHS Letter of Opposition for 2023-321 & 2023-325

Attachments: [20231109 Ord. No. 2023-321 & Ord. No. 2023-325 Letter of Opposition](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Karen Jaramillo, Representative for Sphere Apartments, spoke in opposition to ORD. 2023-325, and stated that the implementation of the shelter will increase crime and vandalism. Ms. Jaramillo stated that Sphere Apartments have already experienced vehicle break-ins.

Willy Fields spoke in support of ORD. 2023-325, and stated that when the homeless population has no where to go, there will be increases of public loitering and that the implementation of the shelter will help decrease that undue burden on the community.

Preston Lloyd, Attorney with Williams Mullen representing the Salvation Army, spoke in support of ORD. 2023-325, and stated that the implementation of the shelter is only one step of a larger plan that the city is working towards.

Mr. Haskins spoke in support of ORD. 2023-325, and stated that he is on the frontline with the homeless population. Mr. Haskins also stated the city must have continued communication with community partners to find a solution for the homeless population and business owners.

Chair Stephanie Lynch stated that the comments provided by Mr. Haskins will be more appropriate for the Housing Resource Center that will be co-located on the Salvation Army site.

Michael Dutz spoke in support of ORD. 2023-325, and stated there will always be individuals within the homeless population that will cause trouble.

Anita Bennett, Chief Executive Officer of Daily Planet Health Services, spoke in support of ORD. 2023-325, and stated the Daily Planet is aware how health care challenges impact the homeless population and that the shelter is needed in the city.

Rhonda Sneed, Blessing Warriors Executive Director, spoke in support of ORD. 2023-325, and stated that none of the individuals that have spoken in opposition have provided any support to the homeless population. Ms. Sneed also stated that there needs to be more compassion towards the homeless population.

Bridgette Whitaker spoke in support of ORD. 2023-325, and stated that there are currently over 2,000 people in the homeless population in need of services. Ms. Whitaker also stated that she feels confident in the Salvation Army providing services to the unhoused during the winter and providing more adequate resources.

Daphney Belotas spoke in support of ORD. 2023-325, and stated that the shelter will provide a safe place for people to go during the inclement weather. Ms. Belotas also stated that she currently lives in Scotts Addition and that the shelter does not deter her from living in the area.

Patty Parks spoke in support of ORD. 2023-325, and stated that the shelter is a great opportunity for the community to thrive.

Tamika Vincent spoke in support of ORD. 2023-325, and stated that she is currently one of the many staff members that supports the inclement weather shelter in the 730 building, and that it is filled to capacity every night the temperature drops below 40 degrees. Ms. Vincent also stated that the inclement weather shelter provided by the Salvation Army will be a great resource for the unhoused.

Cora Hayes spoke in support of ORD. 2023-325, and stated that she has been an advocate for the homeless since 1972. Ms. Hayes stated that the city needs more shelters and mental health services and that anyone could become homeless.

Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert stated that homelessness within the city is a very complex problem, and that she is also a business owner that can sympathize with businesses. Ms. Lambert also stated that Chamberlayne Avenue has always had issues with homelessness and is a food desert. Ms. Lambert further stated that the operator of the inclement weather shelter from last year was not the Salvation Army, and the Salvation Army will be a better neighbor to the Chamberlayne community. Ms. Lambert inquired if there will be a point of contact for the businesses in the community.

Member Andreas Addison stated that there has been a need in the city for an inclement weather shelter for years and that an inclement weather shelter is only in operation during times of extreme weather. Mr. Addison inquired about where the people served by the shelter would go when the extreme weather has passed. Mr. Addison further stated that as a business owner in Scotts Addition, he has experienced events of having to remove human waste from his property. Mr. Addison noted that City Council has had discussions for the last seven years about what to do regarding a shelter in the city.

Councilor Lambert inquired about legislation related to homeless shelters and the city's plans moving forward.

Stephen Harms, Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, stated the legislation is the first step to a permanent solution to homelessness. Mr. Harms further stated that ORD. 2023-325 will implement an inclement weather shelter that will carry the city from December 1, 2023 through April 15, 2023. Mr. Harms also stated that the additional legislation will transfer unused shelter funds appropriated from last year's budget to cover a portion of the cost of the inclement weather shelter supported by the Salvation Army.

Councilor Lambert inquired about next steps once the Housing Resource Center is closed during the weekends and safety concerns of the businesses in the Chamberlayne area.

Mr. Harms stated that there is an urgency to get the inclement weather shelter open due to not having the needed resources to continue shelter operations at the 730 building. Mr. Harms also stated city police and designated security will be part of the solution for security needs in the Chamberlayne area. Mr. Harms further stated that city administration is currently still developing a solution to provide resources for the homeless community.

Chair Lynch stated conversations regarding an inclement weather shelter have been consistent since April of 2023 due to shelter closings. Chair Lynch thanked everyone involved to implement a more permanent inclement weather shelter.

There were no further comments or discussions and Member Andreas Addison moved to forward ORD. 2023-235 to Council with the recommendation to approve, which was seconded and approved: Ayes 2, Addison, Lynch. Noes 0.

Board Vacancies

None

Approval of Minutes

There were no corrections or amendments to the meeting minutes of the Thursday, July 13, 2023, and the committee approved the minutes as presented.

[CD.2023.335](#) October 12, 2023 - Education & Human Services Standing Committee Meeting Minutes

Attachments: [20231012 - EHS Minutes - DRAFT](#)

Staff Report

Joyce Davis, Council Policy Analyst, provided the committee with the meeting staff report.

[CD.2023.347](#) November 9, 2023 - EHS Staff Report

Attachments: [20231109 EHS Staff Report](#)

A copy of the material provided has been filed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.