



BLESSING WARRIORS
RVA

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I would like to reference the City of Richmond website at www.richmondgov.com, specifically the Office of Emergency Services section under the Government tab. The Emergency Shelter section there reads “When conditions warrant, local authorities may instruct you to seek shelter in your home or make available an emergency shelter within the City. An emergency shelter is an immediate short-term accommodation for persons threatened by or displaced by an incident. Public emergency shelters provide accommodations for all population groups. They provide a place to sleep, eat, shower, and charge cell phones or medical equipment. A number of facilities have been pre-identified to serve as emergency shelters in the City. The type of event and location will determine what emergency shelters will be opened.

Members, during the last Education and Human Services Standing Committee Meeting on August 6th, Ordinance #2020-170 was discussed and the need for a building designated as an Emergency Shelter was recognized. This comes as a shock to the community as your website clearly speaks on pre-identified shelters already available to the public. Ordinance #2020-170 is simply asking official law to be put on record to support your claim and identify which building is being referenced. This is not a difficult decision to make, it is in fact a matter of life or death. Fortunately, nature has spared us a bit recently, however today the temperature will be over well over 92 degrees with a heat index close to 105. Yet no accommodations have been communicated for use as a cooling center.

I would also like to bring your attention the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care Board meeting minutes dated March 10th and April 21st located on the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care website www.endhomelessnessrva.org, under the Committee tab. Both speak on the need to organize and provide emergency shelter services to the public following their engagement with the homeless encampment and Covid-19 pandemic. Might I remind everyone, the Continuum of Care Network is funded millions to provide shelter and homeless services by its coordinator Homeward which has been in the business of homeless services since 1998, yet no protocol is in place on the topic in over 22 years? Their immediate plan has been to place those without shelter into roach infested, bedbug and crime ridden hotels thru out the city for safety in the event of an emergency. In closing we are providing the Committee with comments from not only 1,227 state of Virginia tax paying residents but also 1,831 tax paying residents of the remaining United States expressing concern over the hesitation being exhibited by this Committee. An electronic copy of all 3,058 signatures in support of an Emergency Shelter is forthcoming.