



BURLINGTON
PARKS
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COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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MEMO

DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING & ZONING

Date: February 3, 2017
To: DRB
From: Jesse Bridges, Director
Marcy Esbjerg, Assistant Director, Community, Housing and Opportunity Programs
RE: Stone House Conditional Use Application
Cc: Scott Gustin

The City is looking to enter into a zero-dollar two-year interim lease with Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) for the City of Burlington-owned Stone House at 311 North Avenue with an option to renew monthly until the City has the funds to historically restore and repurpose the building for City use. The house will be used to house a minimum of 13 homeless or at risk unhoused individuals.

To accommodate this program we are requesting a conditional use of a Community House for the 13 individuals. The house has 15 bedrooms, 3 shared bathrooms and a common kitchen/dining and living room. CVOEO will have full time staff on site as well as additional supervision from regular full time employees. There are eight parking spaces plus one accessible space formally located at the site.

Background: The City of Burlington took ownership of the property on February 18, 2016 with the closing on the former Burlington College land. Previously, the building had been a private home, a group home for the Howard Center and most recently, a dormitory for the former Burlington College. With the abrupt departure and closing of the College, the building was abandoned and subject to vandalism, break-ins and trespassing during the early summer of 2016. Bringing additional use to the property and fortification from our buildings maintenance team helped to cut down on the problems but costly interior and exterior damage had already been done. Additional uses include expanded Community Gardens, repurposing of the garage for Conservation and Bike Path maintenance equipment storage as well as BPD and the BFD use of the property for training

Meanwhile, although Chittenden County has experienced a significant drop in the number of chronic homeless, our shelters remain full; our waiting lists for housing long; our homeless counts still over 330 (Point in Time Count 2016). At a recent Warming Shelter Advisory Board meeting, it was announced that the shelter had guests who possessed housing vouchers but stayed in the shelter because they were unable to secure permanent supportive housing. This is a common story at a few emergency shelters. This creates a bottleneck at the shelters and prevents others from accessing the emergency shelter system.

CVOEO proposes to provide a two year 'sober' home for a minimum of 13 homeless or at risk unhoused individuals and assist the residents towards permanent housing. The budget includes a proposal to hire a full time resident manager (who is or was homeless) to assist with the operations for the house and success for the residents. The residents will be connected to the coordinated entry process for the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance and also the resources of CVOEO for housing financial capability training, employment training and case management services.

Proposed financial partners include UVM Medical Center's Community Investment Committee, United Way of NW Vermont, Vermont Community Foundation and Vermont's Agency of Human Services.



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The City of Burlington would play a key partnership role in providing the housing rent free for the two-year period. In a comparable single room occupancy setting, the fair market rent would be approximately \$8307 per year per person, bringing the potential cumulative donation of the City to be almost \$108,000/year based on the most recent dollar figures. Additional City support comes in the form of rehabilitation from the vandalism amounting to approximately \$25,000-\$30,000.

The proposal to use the Stone House to temporarily house those in need provides critical additional housing for those in need in our area. An additional benefit is that it provides a level of use and security for the building, thereby mitigating additional clean up and repair due to vandalism.

Outcomes for this project:

- Provision of a two year home for 13 homeless or at risk unhoused individuals
- Movement toward permanent housing for 13 individuals
- Support for individual sustainability

Elements of the project

- Monthly program fee to support daily operations for the house
 - If a resident were to participate in Financial Capability training ½ of their program fee would be deposited in a bank account for future use toward permanent housing (Security Deposit/rent)
- Support to make this a sober house
- Full time resident manager to assist with accountability, operations for the house and success for the residents
- Connection to the resources of CVOEO for housing, financial capability training, employment training, case management services
- Connection to other resources as needed

Advantages for the project

- Incorporation into the Chittenden Homeless Alliances Coordinated Entry System
- On the bus line and within walkable distance to downtown services