



City Hall
601 4th Avenue E.
Olympia, WA 98501
360-753-8244

City Council

Public Hearing on an Ordinance for Emergency Housing Facilities Hosted by Faith-Based Organizations, Not-for-Profit Organizations or Units of Government

Agenda Date: 7/24/2018
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Title

Public Hearing on an Ordinance for Emergency Housing Facilities Hosted by Faith-Based Organizations, Not-for-Profit Organizations or Units of Government

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The Land Use and Environment Committee considered the proposed amendments to the City's Temporary Encampment regulations on May 17, 2018 and unanimously recommended that City Council move forward with amendments to the Temporary Encampment Regulations as proposed by staff on an emergency basis. The City Council approved the attached ordinance as an emergency ordinance on June 5, 2018. State law requires that the City hold a public hearing with 60 days of adoption of an emergency ordinance.

City Manager Recommendation:

Hold a public hearing as required by law on an ordinance amending the City's Temporary Encampment Regulations as proposed by staff on an emergency basis.

Report

Issue:

Hold a public hearing on the Ordinance for Emergency Housing Facilities Hosted by Faith-Based Organizations, Not-for-Profit Organizations or Units of Government adopted on June 5, 2018.

Staff Contact:

Keith Stahley, Director Community Planning and Development Director 360.753.8227

Presenter(s):

Colin DeForest, Homeless Response Coordinator

Keith Stahley, Director Community Planning and Development Director

Background and Analysis:

The City of Olympia adopted its first Temporary Encampment Regulations in 2008. These

regulations were adopted largely as a response to Camp Quixote's occupation of City-owned property in downtown. These regulations were amended in 2011 to provide for a permanent encampment on County-owned property in Mottman Industrial Park known as Quixote Village. A single temporary encampment hosted by a faith-based organization was also allowed, however, no temporary encampments have been hosted by faith-based organizations since Quixote Village was established.

Emergency Housing Facilities in the form of tiny house villages are now a commonly accepted practice for responding to homelessness with emergency and transitional housing. Both the City of Seattle and the City of Eugene have seen multiple emergency housing facilities established in the past three years. See the attached White Paper for more information about this type of Emergency Housing.

The City of Olympia's existing Temporary Homeless Encampment (THE) regulations are very limiting when it comes to these types of facilities. They only allow one facility on County property and one additional facility that can move from church site to church site in the entire City. Based on the number of unsheltered people living in and around Olympia there appears to be a need for multiple facilities.

Proposed Amendments:

- Change the name of the regulations to Emergency Housing Facility Regulations
- Eliminate the differentiation between types of Emergency Housing Facilities
- Increase the number of Emergency Housing Facilities Allowed
- Allow THEs to be operated by or hosted on faith based, not-for-profit organizations and governmental entities
- Reduce barriers for clients
- Reduce barriers for host organizations

Process

Staff proposes moving this forward and adopting these regulations as interim or emergency regulations. This would allow the regulations to go into effect immediately. City Council must then hold a public hearing within 60 days with the intention of adopting permanent regulations within six months. Permanent regulations will be considered by the Planning Commission in the fall and a recommendation from them will be forwarded to City Council for their consideration prior to December 5, 2018.

Staff is actively working with religious institutions to create opportunities for siting emergency housing facilities on their property. Having regulations in place that allow for the creation of emergency housing facilities would help to facilitate these conversations.

The Land Use and Environment Committee discussed using the emergency ordinance as a way to address the immediate need for additional housing options while allowing time to thoroughly consider how to address issues of safety in and around emergency housing facilities. Staff will involve interested parties and potential stakeholders in discussions around permanent regulations.

Just Housing Comments

Two documents from Just Housing are attached, which provide Just Housing's feedback and perspective on the proposed amendments. Two of their most significant concerns center on the requirement for criminal background screening and they would like to see the ordinance amended to allow not-for-profit organizations to host encampments.

Emergency Ordinance

RCW 35A.13.190 provides that no ordinance shall take effect until five days after the date of publication unless otherwise provided by statute or charter, except that an ordinance designated as a public emergency ordinance for the protection of public health, public safety, public property or the public peace, may be made effective upon adoption. Such an ordinance requires the vote of one more than the majority of the whole membership of the Council. (A majority plus one.)

Neighborhood/Community Interests:

Homelessness is an issue that affects the entire City.

Options:

1. Hold a public hearing as required by law and allow the emergency regulations to remain in place until replaced by permanent regulations by December 5, 2018.
2. Do not hold a public hearing and the emergency ordinance will expire and the regulations in effect prior to the emergency ordinance will remain in effect.

Financial Impact:

None at this point; however, the City may be asked to play a role in managing these facilities and in providing ongoing support services.

Attachments:

1. Ordinance
2. White Paper with links to additional information about approaches to temporary homeless encampments followed in other communities
3. Suggested revisions from representatives of Just Housing