

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: JUNE 16, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION OF GRANT SUBMISSION TO U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTIFICATION OF NEW PROGRAM SITE FOR SAFE HAVEN

**ISSUE:** City Council consideration of the Alexandria Community Services Board's (CSB) application for grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a new Safe Haven housing program for homeless men and women with mental illness and/or other disabling conditions, which identifies 115 North Patrick Street as the proposed Safe Haven program site.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council:

- (1) Authorize CSB submission of a grant application to HUD for \$163,824, over a three-year period, for a Safe Haven to serve up to 12 men and women who are homeless, who have a serious mental illness or other disabling condition, and who are unwilling or unable to use available housing services for the homeless;
- (2) Note the grant application's proposed use of the City's 115 North Patrick Street building for development of a four-unit apartment (multi-family dwelling) to house the Safe Haven program. Planning and Zoning Department, General Services, and MH/MR/SA staff analysis indicates that use of this site for a Safe Haven is consistent with current zoning and building use requirements, as well as the CSB's FY 2004-2008 Housing Plan (approved by Council June 24, 2003). 115 North Patrick Street is the current location of the Board's Clubhouse program which will be relocating to 4480 King Street in August 2004. There is no further land use approval required for the use of the 115 North Patrick site for the Safe Haven program, and the site's current building is available for this use if the necessary funding is available. Board policy addresses community notification in the acquisition of group homes. Community notification is not required for the development of apartment units. Nonetheless, the Board intends to notify the civic associations and neighbors of 115 North Patrick Street of plans for the Safe Haven. The Board will also identify staff and Board members responsible for ongoing communication with the community, and will offer to develop a Neighborhood Advisory Committee to coordinate information about the Safe Haven's start-up and operations to ensure a successful

program for the residents and the community. An initial community notification letter is planned to be mailed in late June 2004. Later in 2004, Council will be requested either to accept the HUD Safe Haven grant if the CSB application is accepted or, if no HUD grant is available, to approve a reallocation of CSB General Fund monies to substitute City funds for the HUD grant funds; and

- (3) Authorize an additional 3.5 FTEs for a total of 10.0 FTEs for the Safe Haven program. These include: 7.0 FTE residential counselors to provide operational management, clinical services, and 24-hour supervision of the Safe Haven program; 1.0 FTE Therapist 3; 1.0 FTE Program Director; 0.5 FTE custodian; and 0.5 FTE Account Clerk. Funding for 6.5 FTEs was already approved in the FY 2005 budget. No additional funding is being requested for the remaining 3.5 FTE positions as the CSB will use existing City and State CSB funds to cover the added costs of these positions.

**BACKGROUND:** The Alexandria Community Services Board is requesting HUD grant funding for a new program as part of its annual Continuum of Care submission that includes renewal applications for existing HUD funded Supportive Housing Programs. In response to the needs of Alexandria's homeless population, the City's Homeless Services Coordinating Committee (HSCC) has identified a Safe Haven as its number one priority objective. The City incorporated the HSCC's recommended priority into the FY 2001-2005 Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development and the CSB's FY 2004-2008 Housing Plan. To further the objectives of 1) providing people the opportunity to live productive lives and 2) maintaining appropriate human and social services and service levels with adequate resources, the City's Draft Strategic Plan identifies the action step of securing funding for a Safe Haven and designing and renovating a facility to accommodate the program.

The Safe Haven program is designed to fill a gap in Alexandria's services for homeless people with mental illness and/or other disabling condition, who are on the streets and are unwilling or unable to participate in housing services for homeless individuals. The needs of many of these homeless people frequently cannot be met with traditional outreach and emergency shelter services that serve the general homeless population. A Safe Haven serves as an entry way to the homeless and mental health service systems. Rather than demanding immediate compliance with treatment as a prerequisite to housing, a Safe Haven offers support, through a "Housing First" model, that helps homeless individuals establish trust and eventually engage in needed treatment and services.

In its June 2003 meetings, City Council directed staff to pursue potential sites for a Safe Haven in the City and specifically to analyze the potential use of 115 North Patrick Street. In November 2003, staff completed a feasibility study, concluding that the 115 North Patrick Street facility could be a suitable location for the proposed Safe Haven facility. The application for funds from HUD Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs is a competitive grant process. A significant rating criterion is the use of supplemental resources, which is demonstrated by a written commitment at the time of the application for buildings, equipment, and services.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### *Analysis of 115 North Patrick Street as Proposed Safe Haven Site*

**Siting:** The Patrick Street site is well-located for a Safe Haven because of its accessibility to public transportation and its proximity to other community resources, such as employment, social services and CSB services. The building is a familiar location for the target population and thus can enhance the success of outreach efforts. The surrounding community generally has been accepting of the population currently participating in the Clubhouse program at the site – a population which, while not homeless, is experiencing similar mental health and substance abuse issues as the intended Safe Haven population. The Board has a policy that details its ongoing housing activities and includes its siting policy which addresses the basis for locating Board housing. In order to prevent saturation of special needs housing in one area of the City, the Board attempts to place future housing in areas with the lowest concentration. For planning purposes, the Board uses eight Board Housing Planning Areas, which are based on a combination of the Small Area Plans used by the City's Department of Planning and Zoning. The priority locations for the Board's next two apartment projects are Area IV and Area V. 115 North Patrick Street is located in Area V, and is one half-block from the boundary of Area IV.

**Zoning and Building Use:** The building at 115 North Patrick Street is located within a commercial downtown (CD) zone which permits multifamily housing by right, and would not require a special use permit (SUP). Zoning requirements for multifamily structures include adequate parking; a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.5; 40% open space; and 25 feet of yard setback. The parking requirement is for 2.2 parking spaces per apartment unit either on the property, adjacent to it, or directly across the street. Four apartment units would require nine spaces. MH/MR/SA is currently allocated nine of the 19 parking spaces in the City-owned lot directly across the street from 115 North Patrick Street. The zoning code requirement for 40% open space on the site would be met with the current back yard space plus a roof deck. Zoning staff have indicated that since the current building is a noncomplying structure, the 25-foot setback requirement would not apply as long as the project does not change the building footprint, which is not anticipated. An architectural study of the building concluded that the existing structure can be adapted to multifamily use. Due to its size, the building lends itself to a four-unit building, and the existing building width, windows, and floor plate would facilitate this transformation. The study found that the FAR for the proposed use at this site would be no greater than the 1.5 allowed, resulting from maximizing the use of the building. General Services also assessed the building during the summer of 2003 and found that the building could be used for a residential facility.

**City Space Planning:** The Department of General Services had been considering the use of 115 North Patrick Street for use by City agencies to reduce potential leasing costs, whether for currently leased space or additional space. If the Patrick Street site is used for the Safe Haven program, there will be a need for City agencies to lease additional office space.

## *Program Model and Staffing*

The Safe Haven will provide an alternative to the high-demand and highly structured traditional shelter and treatment services that have been unsuccessful in serving many homeless people with mental illness and/or other disabling conditions. The program will provide a homelike atmosphere with a strong emphasis on nurturing and support rather than demanding compliance with treatment. While the proposed program is conceptualized as providing permanent housing to participants, with no specified time limit on length of stay, Safe Havens typically are successful in supporting residents in moving on to more independent and permanent housing, such as a CSB independent living program or a Section 8 apartment. Program services will include outreach, residential support, training in activities of daily living, linkage to entitlements and income supports, employment services and training, and supportive services, including comprehensive mental health and substance abuse assessment, treatment and rehabilitation. Services will be made available to all residents and provided when the resident is ready to accept them. Program rules will focus on health and safety, and residents will be prohibited from using illegal drugs or alcohol on the property and from harming others or damaging property. Similar to other CSB residential programs, there will be appropriate consequences for rule violations (e.g., hospitalization, removal from the program). Residents will be expected to pay a negotiated residential fee based on income. No individual will be permitted at the Safe Haven who is assessed to present a risk to himself or others.

The proposed program model calls for around-the-clock coverage seven days per week with two direct-service staff per shift. While the initial staffing proposal on which the FY 2005 supplemental budget request was based called for fewer staff, further research into best practice models and clarification from the architect about the likely physical layout of the program at Patrick Street suggests that adequate supervision and service delivery requires that two direct service staff be working on each of three daily shifts. The FY 2005 approved budget includes funding for 6.5 FTEs. Once the program is operational, an additional 3.5 FTEs will be funded through other monies in the Department's budget, including increased FY 2005 State funds (\$62,711) which will become part of the Department's ongoing base budget and a projected increase in Medicaid fees from other Board programs (\$69,425). In addition, \$31,921 in funds budgeted in FY05 for start-up costs for furniture and equipment can be reallocated in future years for other ongoing expenditures, once the program becomes fully operational.

Safe Haven staff will include a Program Director who is responsible for overall program operations and management and staff supervision; a half-time Account Clerk responsible for purchasing, billing, processing resident entitlements, and monitoring required documentation and reporting; a licensed clinical therapist responsible for clinical assessment, planning, and treatment for residents and clinical consultation with staff; a half-time custodian responsible for daily cleaning and light building and grounds maintenance; and seven residential counselor positions to provide supervision, support, engagement, and training in activities of daily living to the residents.

During daytime and evening hours, the direct service staff at Safe Haven will comprise two

residential counselors or one residential counselor and one clinical therapist. The overnight hours will be staffed by one residential counselor and a clinical staff member from the Department's existing Emergency Services program. Since the CSB is required to provide 24 hour availability of Emergency Mental Health Services, locating the overnight Emergency Services staff at 115 North Patrick Street will allow for coverage of both Emergency Services and the Safe Haven.

It should be noted that the CSB intends to implement the Safe Haven program even if the three-year \$163,824 HUD grant is not awarded. This would necessitate the City's approval of reallocation of additional existing Departmental funds.

*Proposed Estimated Timeline:*

- Late June 2004: Community notification letter mailed to Civic Associations and neighbors of 115 North Patrick Street regarding Safe Haven program and siting
- Early July 2004: Begin Community meetings about Safe Haven program  
Initiate recruitment and hiring of Safe Haven project director
- July 27, 2004: Submit HUD grant application
- August 2004: Relocation of Clubhouse program from 115 N. Patrick Street to 4480 King Street
- December 2004: HUD grant award letters are sent and grant agreements signed.  
Council decision on HUD grant (if any) and on allocation of capital funds for 115 N. Patrick Street
- March 2006: Begin recruitment, hiring, and training of Safe Haven staff
- June 2006: Opening of Safe Haven facility

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The ongoing operating budget for the Safe Haven, once fully operational, totals \$527,190 annually (\$462,685 for personnel costs and \$64,505 for operating costs). Revenue to fund the project, on an annual basis, is as follows:

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	\$ 54,608
Consumer fees	16,200
Medicaid	281,780
State	62,711
City	<u>111,891</u>
Total	\$ 527,190

It should be noted that the original proposed budget for the Safe Haven was \$422,891 (\$298,628 for personnel costs and \$124,263 for operating costs) and did not include any State revenue. The CSB has agreed that if grant or fee revenues do not meet the budget in FY 2005 or subsequent fiscal years, the Board will reallocate its existing base budget resources to finance any shortfall.

Funding in the sum of \$795,000, was initially placed in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) in FY 2004 to be used for renovation of 115 North Patrick into City offices. It is now proposed that these funds be reprogrammed for renovating the same building, but for a Safe Haven use.

**ATTACHMENT:** None. The grant application may be reviewed in City Hall, Office of Management and Budget, Room 3630, on or after July 27, 2004.

**STAFF:**

L. Michael Gilmore, Ph.D., Executive Director, MH/MR/SA

Carol Layer, LCSW, Acting Director, Extended Care Services Division, MH/MR/SA

Jane Hassell, Fiscal Officer III, MH/MR/SA

Sandy Murphy, Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget

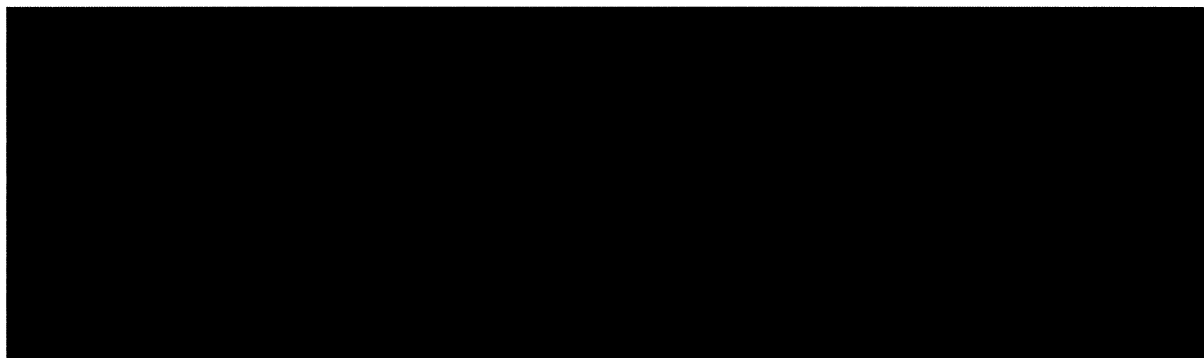


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Subject: City of Alexandria Website Contact Us - EMail for Mayor, Vice-Mayor  
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Time: [Mon Jun 21, 2004 16:42:24] IP Address: [68.86.10.88]

Response requested: **First Name:** Bruce**Last Name:** Thompson**Street Address:** 902 Peele Place**City:** Alexandria**State:** VA**Zip:** 22304**Phone:** 703-751-7943**Email Address:** bthomp7@juno.com**Comments:** Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:  
At tomorrow's meeting, you will consider  
accepting  
a grant to adapt the current Club-House building  
on  
Patrick Street as a Safe Haven shelter for the  
mentally ill.  
Please accept the grant, and build the Safe  
Haven.  
It is necessary, worth the cost, and in the best  
possible  
location. My son will probably be helped there.

My family and I have been Alexandria residents since 1977. Our son, Jacob, was stricken with schizophrenia in 1989, at age 16. Previously, he'd been a normal kid, attending Polk, Hammond, and T.C.Williams; participating in rec-association soccer and little-league baseball. Although he graduated from TCW, and despite treatment by psychiatrists, hospitals, and re-habilitation programs, his condition steadily worsened. In a pattern typical of many people who have this horrible disease, he has since suffered a deteriorating cycle of wandering, substance-abuse, and treatment under the unfailingly excellent care of Alexandria Mental Health Center. Need for the Safe Haven results from a gap in coverage between involuntary care by legal commitment and voluntary care. In this area, judges are unable to commit a psychotic defendant who is not clearly dangerous to himself or others. Shelters like ACS and Carpenters, residential programs, and his family, however, require (as they must) voluntary participation and minimal ability to be constrained by rules and schedules. Many times, Jacob has come to the end of legal commitment, accepted voluntary treatment, but been unable to continue because of the disassociative and paranoid nature of his disease. He then has lived on the streets of Alexandria, anxiously monitored by family, friends and caseworkers, until his condition worsened to the point that he was once again in danger. He is in this situation again, on the street, today. His case is common. Safe Haven would provide shelter for those who are too ill to tolerate another residence, but not dangerous enough to be committed to a hospital. In the central,



well-known  
Patrick Street location, it would provide a safe  
place in  
which professionals could treat severely ill  
psychotics like  
my son, who are not criminals, but who refuse  
other care.  
Please accept the grant.  
Sincerely, Bruce Thompson, 902 Peele Place