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The **Community VOICE**

November 5, 2021

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Sebastopol City Council looks to relocate RV dwellers on Morris Street

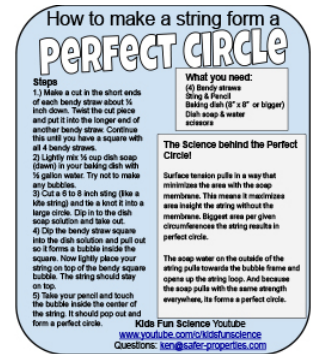
By: Albert Gregory

November 5, 2021

The Committee for the Unhoused presented its report to the Sebastopol City Council Tuesday night, primarily regarding the relocation of RV dwellers on Morris Street and discuss a proposed location to establish a temporary Shelter Village.

The Committee for the Unhoused, which consists of Mayor Una Glass and Councilmember Diana Rich, is a temporary ad-hoc committee designated to assess the needs and impact of currently unhoused people in Sebastopol and provide support, guidance, and interface with West County Community Services, according to Glass.

They were also tasked with coming up with a preliminary proposal to address any needs and impacts, not within WCCS' contract and identify liaison opportunities that will provide Sebastopol with information regarding unhoused, Glass said.



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The committee's priority was to find a viable alternative to relocate the RV dwellers on Morris Street.

“The sense of compassion that I personally, and I think the rest of the city council, is feeling, is a sense of compassion for everyone in the community. We tend to talk about the difficult living environment for those who live in RVs and vehicles on Morris, and those are important, valid challenges and a situation that requires compassion,” Rich said. “But I think it’s important for all of us to understand that the situation requires compassion for the community too. We are all being affected.”

The Sonoma County’s Continuum of Care, a collaborative effort representing the homeless service and care system, offered the unsheltered advocate Sonoma Applied Village Services funding of over \$300,000 to support a Shelter Village. The deadline to accept that contract for SAVS is Dec. 8, according to Rich. The council may hold a special meeting sometime between now and that Dec. 8 deadline to determine how to proceed.

At an emergency city council meeting on Oct. 27, the councilmembers voted to relocate the RV dwellers to a temporary village run by SAVS.

Sebastopol is contributing the property and some site preparation. Still, the bulk of the responsibility to manage the site comes from SAVS and that grant from the COC, according to Mayor Una Glass. The proposed space is behind Wischemann Hall near the Youth Annex.

“We needed it to be close to service; we needed it to be a half-acre to an acre, water needed to be available and electricity also. We are looking at porta-potties and shower buildings so sewer could be dealt with. It needed to be fence-able, it needed to not be very adjacent to many residential homes, and it needed to not be in active use by the public,” Rich said.

The temporary village could house 20 vehicles and 35 people. They hope to move people there by Jan. 15, SAVS President Adrienne Lauby said at the emergency meeting.

“We have been meeting with stakeholders and have been meeting with SAVS to see if this is a viable thing to do,” Glass said. “SAVS is working with stakeholders to gather the input from the people who would be impacted and whose lives would be changed by this project. That includes the community center, local neighbors, the businesses in the area.”

Another Committee for the Unhoused task was to establish a town hall meeting where many of these issues could be discussed, which Glass said would likely occur in late January or February next year.

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