



CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

November 27, 2023, 6pm

Third Floor Music Hall, City Hall

1. Public Comment
2. Discussion and Vote on Task Force Report
3. Next Steps
4. Adjourn



CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS

Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness Final Report

MEMBERS:¹

Co-Chair Kate Forer	Appointed by Mayor
Co-Chair Tom Roohan	Appointed by Mayor
Lindsey Connors	Appointed by Mayor
Jules DeAngelo	Appointed by Mayor
Margaret Fronk	Appointed by Mayor
Dean Devito	Appointed by Mayor
Sherie Grinter	Appointed by Accounts Commissioner Dillon Moran
Kate Haliday	Appointed by Public Works Commissioner Jason Golub
Hannah Hurley	Appointed by Finance Commissioner Minita Sanghvi
Andrea Love-Smith	Appointed by Supervisor Tara Gaston
Stephen Towne	Appointed by Supervisor Mike Veitch

¹ The Commissioner of Public Safety declined to appoint a representative to the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

REPORT

The Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness ("MTFH") was formed on February 9, 2023. The original goals of the MTFH were threefold:

- Determine whether a 24/7, 365, permanent low barrier homeless shelter was needed in Saratoga Springs;
- If the MTFH answered the first question in the affirmative, review possible locations for a low barrier homeless shelter and recommend the best location to the City Council; and
- If the MTFH answered the first question in the affirmative, recommend an agency that could run a low barrier homeless shelter to the City Council.

The eleven members of the MTFH were appointed by the Mayor, Commissioners of Accounts, Finance, Public Works and the two Supervisors² and met ten times from March 2, 2023 to July 20, 2023. All meetings were held in public pursuant to the Open Meetings Law and the videos to each meeting are archived [here](#). At each meeting, the MTFH allocated time for public comment so concerned citizens could address them.

The first meeting of the MTFH was on March 2, 2023, and each member introduced themselves and made a short statement about their background and qualifications. The Co-Chairs introduced the following rules for all meetings, which were accepted by the members:

- Listen to each other without interruption.
- Evaluate the need for a 24/7, 365, permanent low barrier homeless shelter set up for Saratoga with the collaboration of non-profits.
- Respect for other people's perspectives.
- Community and public involvement with clear and transparent communication.
- Educate themselves, and explain clearly for others.
- Will not reinvent the wheel and will look to other work that has already been done in the shelter process.

Please see **Appendix 2** for documentation.

At the March 16, 2023 meeting, the MTFH members had an in-depth discussion about "low barrier shelters." There was a report from MTFH member, Maggie Fronk on the operation of a low barrier shelter in downtown Schenectady. Lindsey Connors shared the Federal Housing Urban Development definition and Hannah Hurley and Sherie Grinter provided additional information based on their respective experiences with the unhoused and their needs. This discussion culminated in a consensus that Saratoga Springs needs a year-round shelter for the unhoused and on a motion, the MTFH voted 9-0 in favor of recommending a year-round shelter to the City Council. Please see **Appendix 3** for documentation.

At the March 30, 2023 meeting, Tina Potter, Saratoga County Commissioner of Social Services explained the County and NYS Funding process for Code Blue. There

² Despite repeated requests, the Commissioner of Public Safety did not appoint a representative to the MTFH.

was additional discussion and debate about the characteristics of a low barrier shelter during the meeting but no final resolution on a definition. Please see **Appendix 4** for documentation.

At the April 20, 2023 meeting, Stephen Towne begins the conversation on a 1,000-foot buffer stating that no permanent shelter be placed by a school, playground, or any other facility near children. The task force also added language to the resolution defining what a low barrier shelter is. Please see **Appendix 5** for documentation.

At the May 4, 2023 meeting, Mayor Kim shares a proposal for a temporary shelter at the former Code Blue site on Adelphi Street. Senior Planner Aneisha Samuels shares zoning requirements for shelters in the City. Rev. Kate Forer states the task force will use a matrix when considering a recommended location. Please see **Appendix 6** for documentation.

At the May 15, 2023 meeting, Aneisha Samuels shares that the City is considering zoning text amendment changes to the UDO meaning it would need to be approved by City Council. She also shares the matrix to make the decision for the location selection. Twenty-six locations are provided by task force members and the public. Please see **Appendix 7** for documentation.

At the June 1, 2023 meeting, Aneisha Samuels provides eleven locations the list was reduced to along with the matrix to evaluate the locations. Three subcommittees are formed, one to look for an agency to run the shelter, one to explore financing options, and one to determine the design and build of the shelter. Stephen Towne makes a motion for the City to move forward with preparing an RFP for the sale of Williams Street. Mayor Kim includes the RFP for a temporary shelter will be discussed at June 6th City Council meeting. Please see **Appendix 8** for documentation.

At the June 8, 2023 meeting, Deputy Mayor Angela Rella shares the bid for shelter services for a temporary shelter will be voted on at a special city council meeting. Rella explains the 1,000-foot buffer was agreed by the Mayor's staff to be added as an amendment to the UDO but needs to be referred by the City and County Planning Board. Stephen Towne shared a document on funding sources, one for acquisition, and the other for operational. He states he put together a list of sources from various state, local, private sources that could be used for future funding. Please see **Appendix 9** for documentation.

At the June 26, 2023 meeting, Aneisha Samuels presents the locations have been narrowed down to five. Task Force members used the matrix to score the five locations. Maggie Fronk shares a draft RFP used to choose an agency to run the future permanent shelter. Please see **Appendix 10** for documentation.

At the July 20, 2023 meeting, Aneisha Samuels shares the results of the matrix regarding the five locations. Out of 700 possible points, with the highest score indicating the preferred location, 153 South Broadway scored 518, 3290 Rt 9/Top Hill scored 448,

Gateway Motel/260 Maple Ave scored 434, North & East Ave scored 362, and Rt 29/Lake Ave scored 297. 153 South Broadway was the preferred location with the highest score but it is not for sale. She then provides a summary of each location for the members to make a final decision. Dean Devito makes a motion that Lake Avenue is the preferred site, first alternate is North Avenue and the second alternate is South Broadway. The Motion carried 5-1 with one abstention. Discussion on RFP, Tom Roohan suggests the motion of the City Council choosing the agency first, motion carries 6-0. Hannah Hurley speaks on the proposed RFP for the agency. Kate Forer makes a motion to recommend the draft RFP to the City Council. Motion carries 6-0. Please see **Appendix 11** for documentation.

Conclusion

After agreeing Saratoga Springs does need a 24/7, 365, permanent low barrier homeless shelter, the Task Force considered twenty-six locations suggested from members of the public and members of the Task Force. Twenty-one locations were eliminated following the establishment of a 1,000ft buffer around schools, leaving five viable options. To analyze these options the Task Force created a location matrix taking into consideration the variables seen under the appendix.

The favored location based on the matrix was 135 South Broadway, however the owner has no interest in selling, leaving the Task Force to consider the other four locations. Lake Avenue became the preferred location because of its lot size with five members for, one member abstaining and one member against.

Next Steps

The City Council should review the recommendations made by the task force listed below.

Recommendation 1: City Council should adopt a resolution affirming that Saratoga Springs needs a 24/7, 365, permanent low barrier homeless shelter for the unhoused

Recommendation 2: City Council should establish a 1000-foot buffer for all educational institutions

*City Council next steps: Completed, UDO amendment, resolution, approved at July 17, 2023 City Council meeting 5-0

Recommendation 3: City Council should start the RFP process for the sale of property at 5 Williams Street (*see June 1 mins*)

Recommendation 4: City Council should approve an agency to run the shelter (*see July 20 mins*)

Recommendation 5: City Council should consider Lake Avenue Location for permanent shelter, first alternate is North Avenue and the second alternate is South Broadway (*see July 20 mins*)

After recommendations are completed the City Council can move forward in creating a 24/7, 365, permanent low barrier homeless shelter at the approved location.

26 original recommended locations

1. 260 Maple Avenue
2. Church Street
3. Finely Street
4. 2356 Route 50
5. 3290 Route 9/Top Hill Motel
6. 3 Aletta
7. East Beekman
8. Federal Street
9. 58 Washington Street
10. 68-72 Washington Street
11. Federal Street- west side of street
12. North side of Congress Street and West side of Federal Street
13. Vacant lots on or around Spa City Diner, Canfield Street, Union Street and Finely Street
14. Corner of Ballston Ave and Finely Street
15. Ballston Avenue
16. East and North Avenue
17. Lake Avenue/NYS Route 29
18. 153 South Broadway
19. Vacant lot across from ESPY, Bank of America building
20. Old brewery across the street from Quality Hardware
21. Former Saratoga County Building on Woodlawn
22. Construct Shelter at the top of Woodlawn garage
23. Near Saratoga Hospital- construct facility at parking lot on Myrtle Street
24. Skidmore Campus
25. Near Pitney Meadows
26. Williams Street

Appendix

1. Creation of Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness
 - a. [Feb. 9 City Council minutes](#)

2. March 2
 - a. [Meeting minutes](#)
3. March 16
 - a. [Meeting minutes](#)
4. March 30
 - a. [Meeting minutes](#)
5. April 20
 - a. [Meeting minutes](#)
 - b. [Low Barrier Shelter definition](#)
 - c. 1000-foot buffer
 - i. [Local Law](#)
 - ii. [Proposed amendment](#)
 - iii. [Planning Board advisory opinion](#)
 - iv. [Resolution](#)
6. May 4
 - a. [Meeting minutes](#)
 - b. Temporary Shelter
 - i. [Award of Bid](#)
 - ii. [Contract](#)
 - iii. [COSF](#)
 - iv. [Exhibit A](#)
 - v. [RISE Bid application](#)
 - c. [Location Exclusion Amended Resolution](#)
 - d. [Zoning Maps](#)
7. May 15
 - a. [Meeting minutes](#)
 - b. [Matrix](#)
8. June 1
 - a. [Meeting minutes](#)
9. June 8
 - a. [Meeting minutes](#)
 - b. [Shelter Funding Plan](#)
10. June 26
 - a. [Meeting minutes](#)
11. July 20
 - a. [Meeting minutes](#)
 - b. [Final five matrix](#)
 - c. [Agency RFP](#)