

Amy Johnson

From: Lynelle Wilcox <lynelle@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, December 09, 2019 3:32 PM
To: Chuck Bennett; Lynda Rose; Steve Powers; Tami Carpenter; Cara Kaser; Tom Andersen; Brad Nanke; Jackie Leung; Matthew Ausec; Chris Hoy; Vanessa Nordyke; Jim Lewis; Kristin Retherford; Jerry Moore; Kathy Sime; Dan Atchison; CityRecorder
Subject: Testimony for 12/9 City Council meeting: Shelter bed space is RARELY available

On page 5 of the staff report, in the Other Considerations section, the report states that “ Existing shelters report they have space available on most nights.”

As a homeless advocate who often assists people who are trying to get into shelters, that has not been my experience. Most people have needed to call or show up daily and see when a bed is available. A bed is rarely available immediately - it usually takes days or weeks of checking. Yet in case my experience is the exception and not the rule, I called the mens Union Gospel Mission and the women’s Shelter Simonka house. I spoke with Sean at the UGM administration office for data on the men’s mission, and with Dede at Simonka house.

Simonka House has beds for 90 women and children. As of today, they have 70 women and 27 kids staying there. They have space for up to 25 mats, offered on an emergency basis, when weather is 32 degrees or below. Emergency shelter is from 8pm to 8am. They are full on a daily basis. They turn away 150 women each month.

UGM men’s mission has beds for 150. They have space for up to 48 mats, offered nightly in the winter. They’re at capacity almost every evening.

I wasn’t able to reach anyone at Salvation Army, yet I am in the area often and they post bed availability each day in their food bank office window. It is rare that they indicate any openings, yet when they do, it is an opening for one man, or one woman, or one of each. That posting is rare. Usually the numbers reflect no beds available. It often takes weeks for someone to get into Salvation Army.

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As far as warming centers, First Presbyterian has the highest capacity of 87 - 78 mats plus 8 people sitting. It is often filled to capacity.

Church at the Park can take overflow if there are enough volunteers to open that site. They tend to have many people who sleep in their cars and come inside for warmth and hot beverages and rest rooms.

Capitol Park and Friends Church can take overflow when there are enough volunteers to open both sites. I believe they each have a capacity of 56 guests. It is common not to have enough volunteers to open all sites.

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the highest art is the art of living an ordinary life in an extraordinary manner.

and...

with our thoughts, we make the world.

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