
City launches temporary emergency shelter pilot program at Welland Tennis Club

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Welland, ON – The City of Welland is launching a pilot emergency homeless shelter operated on the City’s behalf by the Hope Centre at the Welland Tennis Club at 45 Hooker Street during February and March. The shelter will offer five beds.

The temporary emergency shelter operating on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. is a result of the challenges observed during the inclement weather earlier this month. The first day of operation is Thursday, February 2. A trained social worker will be onsite to ensure the health and safety of everyone. In addition, shelter staff will screen visitors and engage in appropriate diversion practices to assist those in need.

“The availability of this emergency shelter will help people in our community who don’t have access to a safe, warm location for the overnight hours when the temperatures start to decline,” said Councillor Bonnie Fokkens, who, along with Councillor John Chiochio brought forward a notice of motion to implement the shelter. “We are grateful for our partners at the Hope Centre who will oversee the emergency shelter services and ensure health and safety are at the forefront of all operations.”

The City will allot \$9,000 for this initiative through the Corporate Contingency Fund, amended on January 17, 2023. The funding to the Hope Centre is for staffing the shelter with a trained social worker.

The City anticipates additional costs throughout this pilot, with expenses tracked separately and to be included in the pilot evaluation phase.

Also partnering on the pilot project is Beyond the Streets Welland and Holy Trinity Church. Beyond the Streets assists the Welland community with crisis response, hot meals, and street outreach. Beyond the Streets will sweep the area in the mornings after the shelter is operational.

Staff will evaluate the pilot program upon completion to determine a long-term solution. City officials will continue to work with all levels of government to find a positive, sustainable solution.

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For media inquiries, please contact:

Marc MacDonald

Corporate Communications Manager

905-735-1700 x2337

marc.macdonald@welland.ca