

3

December 17, 2004

**ATTACHMENT 1**

To the Mayor & Town Council, Town Manager, and Chapel Hill Town Departments:


This week when several owners in The Meadows abutting Legion Road mentioned seeing a newspaper article about possibly locating a Homeless Men's Shelter on Legion Road, we looked for the article and composed this letter compiling the various reasons residents in the area, including Turnberry, oppose the Legion Road location for a men's shelter.

The enclosed letter opposing the possible Legion Road site for a Homeless Men's Shelter has one signature from each household which we could reach in a single day.

There are many more who oppose this but who were at work or away on the day we circulated this letter.

We hope this will end the discussion of using town-owned land on Legion Road for a men's shelter.

Sincerely,



Lynne K. Kane, 11 Lark Circle



December 15, 2004

Mayor Kevin Foy and Town Council  
Chapel Hill, NC

re: Legion Road possible Site for Homeless Men's Shelter

To the Mayor and Town Council of Chapel Hill:

We, the undersigned, residents abutting Legion Road, are appalled that anyone would consider building a shelter for homeless men anywhere near private residences. The presence of the Interfaith Council men's shelter near the town parking lot at Rosemary and Church Streets causes many residents to avoid that parking lot in order to avoid wandering males there, and this has been reported to the Council Committee on Downtown Revitalization.

In addition, nearby residents have other reasons to oppose the Legion Road town-owned site as a homeless men's shelter:

1. Though homelessness can affect any of us due to illness or divorce or job loss, many of the homeless are substance-abusers. Substance-abusers are a nuisance, and sometimes a danger, to adults, children, and businesses.
2. There is a charter school, Pace Academy, operating on Legion Road.
3. There is a neat, quiet affordable-housing complex at Legion Road and Scarlett Drive.
4. There are several hotels and business buildings in the area, the Sheraton Hotel and the Europa Building being the closest and largest.
5. While the shelter would benefit by being on the city busline, a resident who takes the bus to and from work has already expressed concern about waiting where homeless males are grouped.
6. Property values would go down for residents, possibly from Ephesus Church Road to the end of Legion Road extension, and for several blocks east, if not also across 15-501 from the Legion Road site. Business property values would also likely go down.
7. The Town cemetery abutting the Legion Road-Scarlett Road houses is becoming full, and the Town will have to find other land to provide further burial plots if this site abutting the south side of the Town cemetery is not available to extend the cemetery. It makes no sense to divide a Town cemetery into several small separated segments.

To summarize, we agree with Rebecca Clark of Crest Drive, as quoted in the Chapel Hill section of the Durham Herald, December 5, 2004 (pp.1&5): "...it [a men's homeless shelter] doesn't need to go in a residential area." There is a suitable third option, near the planned Town Operations Center on Millhouse Road. The Chapel Hill Town Council should not waste time investigating residential sites.

Lynne K. Kane / 11 Lark Circle

Gene & Wally / 14 Lark Circle

Barry Milroy / 12 Lark Circle

10 Lark Cr. Elizabeth O. Wiles

60 Lark Cr. Stan K. Kerkwood

Christ White / 27 Lark Cr.

Peter & Bipalari / 114 TURNBERRY

Mary <sup>Kentlinger</sup> ~~Seaver~~ / 14 Clover Dr.

Susan Libed / 4 Clover Dr.

Ann <sup>White</sup> / 9 Lark Cr.

Sonya Ndiaye / 104 Turnberry

Donald and Letti <sup>15 Lark Circle</sup> / 2751

Walter <sup>30 Lark Circle</sup> / 2751

Gerry <sup>110 Turnberry Lane</sup> / 2751

Laurence <sup>112 Turnberry Lane</sup> / 2751

Ann L. <sup>21 Lark Circle</sup> / 2751

John <sup>37 Lark Circle</sup> / 2751

James <sup>33 CLOVER DR.</sup> / 2751

William <sup>35 Lark Circle</sup> / 2751

Katharine <sup>8 Lark Circle</sup> / 2751

⑥

**Sandy Cook**

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**From:** Carol Abernethy on behalf of Cal Horton  
**Sent:** Monday, January 10, 2005 3:15 PM  
**To:** 'George A. George'  
**Cc:** Bruce Heflin; Cal Horton; Catherine Lazorko; Emily Dickens; Flo Miller; Ralph Karpinos; Sandy Cook; Toni Pendergraph; Bill Strom; Cam Hill; Dorothy Verkerk ; Ed Harrison; 'Edith Wiggins'; 'Jim Ward'; Jim Ward (w) ; Kevin Foy; Mark Kleinschmidt ; Sally Greene (w)  
**Subject:** Citizen Comment RE: Homeless Men's Shelter - Legion Road

A copy of your email message has been forwarded to each Council Member.

*Carol Abernethy  
Exec. Asst., Manager's Office  
Town of Chapel Hill*

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**From:** George A. George [mailto:George-A-George@nc.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 10, 2005 2:48 PM  
**To:** Cal Horton  
**Cc:** Sean Ruehl; Brian Norris; Bill Calore - work; Bill Calore; Fred Lybrand  
**Subject:** Homeless Men's Shelter - Legion Road

Dear Cal Horton,

My neighbors at the Pickard Oaks neighborhood and I ask that you relay to the Town Council and others involved with the proposal to locate the Homeless Men's Shelter beside the Town cemetery on Legion Road our deep concern and protest.

We feel that this is a bad idea, dangerous and certainly offensive to black and white citizens living in the area, as well as to those who rest in the cemetery, their loved survivors and those who plan to join them in the future.

Sharing the bus with those of an irregular nature is NOT what our children, university students and we view as a safe practice – This would be a very dangerous daily routine, and not acceptable. The sharp deterioration of property values would be dwarfed by the raw danger introduced into this neighborhood.

We who anticipate some peaceful repose in the future understand that the cemetery has been prudently designed for expansion so that it will be a harmonious blend of those who have lived here in Chapel Hill, participating in and contributing to its gentle history. That land must not be foolishly exploited such that our memories are buffeted by a fractious lack of planning.

1/10/2005

⑦

We would very much appreciate the re-planning of this location proposal, honoring the wishes of those seventeen hundred citizens who ask for consideration and the rejection of this Legion Road proposal.

Thank you,

*George A. George*  
President, Pickard Oaks Homeowners' Association  
919.602.3434

**Sandy Cook**

⑧

**From:** Carol Abernethy on behalf of Cal Horton  
**Sent:** Monday, January 10, 2005 10:14 AM  
**To:** 'Bill Calore'  
**Cc:** Bruce Heflin; Cal Horton; Catherine Lazorko; Emily Dickens; Flo Miller; Ralph Karpinos; Sandy Cook; Toni Pendergraph; Bill Strom; Cam Hill; Dorothy Verkerk ; Ed Harrison; 'Edith Wiggins'; 'Jim Ward'; Jim Ward (w) ; Kevin Foy; Mark Kleinschmidt ; Sally Greene (w)  
**Subject:** Citizen Comment RE: Proposed Homeless Shelter on Legion Road

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Carol Abernethy  
Exec. Asst., Manager's Office  
Town of Chapel Hill

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Bill Calore [mailto:wjcalore2@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 09, 2005 5:34 PM  
**To:** Town Council  
**Cc:** Kevin Foy; Cal Horton  
**Subject:** Proposed Homeless Shelter on Legion Road

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am writing to express my opposition to the IFC's proposal to relocate their Homeless Shelter to Legion Road next to the Cemetary.

As a citizen of Chapel Hill, a parent, a homeowner, and member of the Board of Directors for our Homeowners' Association (Pickard Oaks) I feel that it is entirely inappropriate to place this facility in this location.

First of all, a shelter such as this belongs in a more urban setting, where there are relevant social services, greater police supervision, and less likelihood that the individuals might pose a risk to small children or women who often walk and/or play in close proximity to this area. The proposed site near the Cemetary is entirely inappropriate. It is a relatively remote area that is not easily accessible to down town (there are only two bus lines that run on this road), there are no social services nearby, and it is in close proximity to an unlite, wooded area.

Conversely, the proposed site is:

- a) In close proximity to a number of residential communities;
- b) There are a large number of small children who live and play across from the proposed Shelter;

- ⑨
- c) many people walk along Legion Road to access the Food Lion and other business establishments in the area (often at night) - in fact they just finished installing new sidewalks in recognition of this fact; and
  - d) the location and proximity of a preschool;

For these reasons, and many others, I would hope that the Town Council will understand that the proposed site is not suitable for a homeless shelter, and will look at other alternatives for such a facility.

Kind regards,

William J. Calore







LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Shelter residents have caused problems

I was shocked by Chief of Police Jarvies' statement "the residents of the [West Rosemary] shelter do not present any greater number of problems than any other group of individuals throughout the town" ["Proposal comes under fire," Aug. 28]. It is obvious to me that Mr. Jarvies has not spent much time on Pritchard Avenue. I can attest to numerous problems related to individuals residing in the homeless shelter that directly affect my neighborhood.

In the past three years, I have telephoned police to complain about individuals ringing my doorbell in search of money, using my front yard as toilets in broad daylight, sleeping in my back yard and walking in packs down my street while intoxicated.

How do I know that the individuals described above are residing in the homeless shelter? Driving past the shelter every day for the past three years, I have seen the same individuals who have disrupted my neighborhood loitering outside the shelter. Shouldn't a homeless shelter be a transitional establishment that enables its residents to re-enter society? I do not understand how our shelter, in its current form, accomplishes this goal given the problems I have experienced.

I have followed the debate surrounding moving the homeless shelter to a new location with interest and can relate to the concerns expressed by the residents of the Merritt Mill area. Unless the IFC addresses the issues surrounding their management of the shelter, the problems experienced on Pritchard Avenue will be faced by the residents of any neighborhood close to the homeless shelter in the future.

Scott Cobb  
Chapel Hill

17 Sunday

(13)

I read in the paper today that you will be discussing the Main Shelter Monday night.

I've had a stroke + can barely write. Please please don't put the Shelter on Legion Road!!! I live in Colony Lake between the cemetery & Scarborough I would be forever frightened. I have not opposed other projects near Legion Road. This one I would appreciate my strong opposition & not build anywhere near. Sue Bawden



(14)

**Sandy Cook**

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**From:** Carol Abernethy on behalf of Cal Horton  
**Sent:** Monday, January 10, 2005 10:16 AM  
**To:** 'Carolyn Beatty'  
**Cc:** Bruce Heflin; Cal Horton; Catherine Lazorko; Emily Dickens; Flo Miller; Ralph Karpinos; Sandy Cook; Toni Pendergraph; Bill Strom; Cam Hill; Dorothy Verkerk ; Ed Harrison; 'Edith Wiggins'; 'Jim Ward'; Jim Ward (w) ; Kevin Foy; Mark Kleinschmidt ; Sally Greene (w)  
**Subject:** Citizen Comment RE: IFC proposal

A copy of your email message has been forwarded to each Council Member.

*Carol Abernethy  
 Exec. Asst., Manager's Office  
 Town of Chapel Hill*

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**From:** Carolyn Beatty [mailto:cbeatty@nc.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 09, 2005 7:10 PM  
**To:** Town Council  
**Subject:** IFC proposal

I am writing as a resident of the Briarcliff neighborhood in opposition of the IFC mens shelter being placed on Legion road. Residential concerns never seem to hold much weight when the concerns of the few are involved so I will not even follow up with that.

My concerns are over the proximity to Ephesus Elementary, the Dance Studio and the Legion Post.

I cannot phathom the thought process of approving an adult male facility of those who are "down on their luck" to an area full of children. The Legion Post is host to Boy Scouts, the Dance Studio full of young girls and teachers in an area that is already tucked away and the school is self explanatory. The Ephesus trail is used frequently by neighborhood children as a route to school as well as places to go on weekends.

These issues do seem to warrant a second look at using this sight. Safety of our children IS a priority and should be seriously figured into this equation.

Carolyn Beatty

Please keep these residents informed about Legion Rd Town land & IFC Plans:

|   |              |  |
|---|--------------|--|
| Lynne Kane, P.O. Box 2552, ChHill 27515-2552                | 919-960-0983 | <a href="mailto:maja544@aol.com">maja544@aol.com</a>                           |
| Jim Huffman, Pres., Meadows HOA, 33 Clover Dr, ChHill 27517 | 960-0131     | <a href="mailto:jhbjh2ah@aol.com">jhbjh2ah@aol.com</a>                         |
| Denise Wolf, 14 Lark Circle, ChHill 27517                   | 933-1679     | <a href="mailto:denise_wolf@bellsouth.net">denise_wolf@bellsouth.net</a>       |
| Katherine Silvasi, 8 Lark Circle, ChHill 27517              | 933-9538     | <a href="mailto:ksilvasi@mindspring.com">ksilvasi@mindspring.com</a>           |
| Michael Nabedrik, 10 Heather Crt, ChHill 27517              | 960-0190     | <a href="mailto:mnabedrik@yahoo.com">mnabedrik@yahoo.com</a>                   |
| Greg Nace, 11 Clover Dr, ChHill, 27517                      | 932-7772     | <a href="mailto:Gana748@yahoo.com">Gana748@yahoo.com</a>                       |
| Ann Krebs, 21 Clover Dr, ChHill, 27517                      | 929-1001     | <a href="mailto:ackrebs@med.unc.edu">ackrebs@med.unc.edu</a>                   |
| Betty Longiotti, 35 Clover Dr, ChHill, 27517                | 929-5322     | <a href="mailto:bettyshand@aol.com">bettyshand@aol.com</a>                     |
| Jessie & Donald McIntyre, 5 Lark Circle, ChHill             | 967-1841     | [none]   |
| Laurice Ferris, 112 Turnberry Lane, ChHill 27517            | 967-2118     | <a href="mailto:lferrisl@nc.rr.com">lferrisl@nc.rr.com</a>                     |
| Peter Difalco, 114 Turnberry Lane, ChHill 27517             | 969-7048     | <a href="mailto:pandzdifalco@aol.com">pandzdifalco@aol.com</a>                 |
| Lynne Nakell, 106 Turnberry Lane, ChHill 27517              | 967-1945     | <a href="mailto:lynne@cedarsofchapelhill.com">lynne@cedarsofchapelhill.com</a> |
| Ulana Stuart, Ephesus Church Rd, ChHill                     | 929-0801     | <a href="mailto:ulana@nc.rr.com">ulana@nc.rr.com</a>                           |
| Alan Pinkelton, 1320 Kings Arms, ChHill 27517               | 967-3190     | <a href="mailto:alan_pinkelton@unc.edu">alan_pinkelton@unc.edu</a>             |
| Sandra & Clarence Jova, 1708 Legion Rd, ChHill              | 969-1431     | <a href="mailto:jovafarm@nc.rr.com">jovafarm@nc.rr.com</a>                     |
| Wiley Betts, Forsyth St. owner, ChHill                      | 942-9054     | <a href="mailto:wilevbetts@yahoo.com">wilevbetts@yahoo.com</a>                 |
| HEREDITH MEILLEUR, 1934 Fountain Ridge Rd                   | 933-5055     | <a href="mailto:mereandlaurent@intep.net">mereandlaurent@intep.net</a>         |

⑩ 7 Sunday

I read in the paper today that you will be discussing the Men's Shelter Monday night.

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Clothes Dr. Flight R  
Said to be location  
11 last candle yesterday  
at top of candle  
3 up  
1/11/78

Four Councils  
Homeless Shelter - Monday

discovery  
Rush

Attention N. Ammerell



Mr. Mayor, members of the Council,

First of all, I would like to thank the Mayor, members of the Council, members of the Chapel Hill community, and the staff and clients for the ability to speak on this important community issue. You've just heard from the residents of the Legion Road area regarding their opposition to IFC's consideration of a site on Legion Rd for relocating its men's homeless shelter. They've presented a list of reasons for their opposition and I'd like to address some of the points they've brought up.

But first, I wanted to talk a little about IFC and what it does. IFC provides a range of services for not only the homeless, but also for many other people in our community facing hard times. Such services include distributing food and rent and utility assistance. They also operate the men's and women's homeless shelters here in Chapel Hill. The Town of Chapel Hill has provided the building that houses the current men's shelter and community kitchen on West Rosemary Street free of charge for IFC's use since 1985. For that support from the Town as well as the support given IFC from so many local churches, individuals, and businesses here in Chapel Hill, we wish to extend our sincerest appreciation and thanks.

Many people might not realize why the services that IFC provides are important. However, there are many people in our society who at one time or another have to deal with hard times. Chances are that many people here tonight know someone—a friend, a relative, a neighbor, a coworker—who has either had a need for services provided by such agencies as IFC or will at some point in the future have such a need. Perhaps even someone sitting here tonight might one day face unforeseen circumstances that would require them to seek such assistance. I think we should all feel fortunate to live in a humane society where there is such a safety net available for those who might need it.

In the case of the homeless, IFC is trying to assist a population that is facing the worst of possible circumstances. Why are these people homeless? According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, there are many causes. These include poverty, eroding work opportunities, a changing economy that leaves many people who lack education or skills behind, cuts to public assistance and other social programs, lack of affordable housing, lack of affordable health care, domestic violence, mental illness and lack of available treatment options, substance abuse and lack of treatment options, and many other factors.

Last week I was having a conversation with Maggie, a lady who devotes a tremendous amount of time and energy in working with IFC clients and listening to their stories. An important point that she brought up was that there is really no such thing as a typical homeless person or a typical poor person. In many cases, people are dealing with things such as depression or the loss of hope. In other cases, the causes are economic. In still others, perhaps it is a family tragedy or domestic violence. Some are dealing with addiction. And some have simply had to face a whole lot of very rotten luck in their lives. These things happen. Most of the homeless certainly never expected to find themselves in that kind of situation.

So who are the homeless? They could be anyone, including maybe one day you or someone you know. There is an old saying that goes, "I'll show you a young man with so many reasons why; there but for fortune go you or I". The homeless are often those who simply have not had a lot of advantages that others have had or who those who have had to deal with circumstances that most of us cannot even begin to imagine.

But whoever these people are and whatever their stories, IFC and agencies like that provide a valuable safety net without which life would be a whole lot worse.

(a)

Many people do not understand what IFC does or that without them, a lot of people would be hard pressed simply to meet the challenges of daily survival: where their next meal is coming from or where they go to get out of the rain or the cold. The people who do not think IFC matters are often the ones who have no idea what its like to be cold or hungry or exhausted with no place to sleep.

The people who would be served by a relocated shelter are those who are the most vulnerable in our society, the people without much in the way of opportunity or hope or a voice to speak for them; the people too consumed with day to day survival to have the luxury of drawing up petitions to make their views heard. But these people are human beings and members of the Chapel Hill community. This Council represents these people as well. And so this Council cannot and should not, as many would suggest, simply forget about this issue.

The issue of some IFC clients being substance abusers has been brought up. Yes, it is true that many of the people IFC works with are facing addiction issues. It is also true that many are not. It is also true that substance abuse is not a problem that is confined to the homeless. You can take ANY segment of society and it will be true that some of them are substance abusers, regardless

of whether or not that is readily apparent. In the August 10, 2004 Chapel Hill News, there was an article about the town being soft on substance abuse among teens. One woman in the article was quoted as talking about the casual attitudes of parents, police and teachers toward this problem as leading to teenagers buying and selling at school, drinking alcohol in class from water bottles, and smoking pot during their lunch breaks. This is only one example. Other examples such as closet alcoholics in middle class families, drug and alcohol abuse among college students, and rampant cocaine use on Wall Street have been so extensively documented that I am not able to fully cover them here for lack of time.

Much as we, as a society, might try to be in denial about substance abuse, it is not a problem that belongs to the homeless; it is a problem that confronts everyone. Perhaps it is true that substance abusers are a "nuisance"; however, being homeless does not in itself make one an addict or dangerous. On the other side of the coin, economic affluence does not in itself mean that someone is not an addict or dangerous. And I would like to stress the point that substance abuse is not, in my opinion, a valid moral reason to allow people to starve or freeze on the streets when the resources exist to help them. Even those

who are dealing with substance abuse are much better off in a shelter where they are able to have positive influences around them than to simply be left on the street. I would also submit that if you believe that substance abusers are unstable and dangerous, it logically stands to reason that having nowhere for them to go other than wandering the streets of our community merely increases the danger.

The other objections raised in the petition basically are that there are other things in the neighborhood around the Legion Road property. That is true, but that is going to be true no matter what site is looked at. And as IFC Director Chris Moran has pointed out, any site that you consider will be opposed by someone. This has already been demonstrated by the fact that IFC also faced vehement opposition to another site they had considered off Merritt Mill Road. A site on Millhouse Road has been proposed by the petitioners, but considering that there is a Park and Ride Lot not far from that area, I wonder how long it would be before someone decided there was a "safety consideration" there as well.

And yet, the shelter has to go somewhere. The current facilities are inadequate, even for the relatively limited services that IFC is able to provide now. There is talk around IFC of possibly taking a new approach and trying to

move these individuals toward self-sufficiency instead of merely providing temporary solutions. But none of these ideas are going to work as long as the shelter is confined to its current location. Some might prefer that a shelter be placed out in the middle of nowhere, but this is no solution, since it leaves shelter residents with no public transit option with which they can access jobs and needed services. I cannot see any place where a shelter could be placed where there would not be residents or businesses anywhere near it. Nor have I heard any opponents of IFC's plans mention such a site. If such a place exists, I'm sure that Chris Moran would be happy to be told about it so that IFC can consider it.

And so my question here tonight is how we, as a community, are going to address the issues of poverty and homelessness. These issues are not strictly issues that belong to IFC; they are community issues and need to be dealt with as such. I find it disappointing that the only time homelessness is addressed as a community is when we talk about how much of a nuisance homeless people are. I find it disappointing that, to my knowledge, neither Chris Moran nor anyone else at IFC was contacted by any of the Legion Road residents here tonight to discuss their concerns and try to reach a workable solution. This seems

to be the general pattern whenever IFC even looks at a site for relocating the shelter. As a footnote, I find it interesting that the presence of a charter school and low-income housing in the Legion Road area are cited as reasons for opposing the relocation of the shelter. According to an article in Sunday's Durham Herald-Sun, these projects were also opposed by residents when they were first being considered.

We believe that a community discussion regarding the issue of homelessness where everyone, including IFC staff and clients, could participate and be heard and contribute ideas toward finding a solution would be a far more constructive approach than simple knee-jerk obstructionism or attacking IFC for what they do at every opportunity. Chris Moran and the rest of the staff of IFC are more than willing to sit down to try to work with anyone who is interested in participating in the process.

As an issue that affects the whole community, the discussion of homelessness cannot be shaped just by residents of one or a few neighborhoods. Everyone needs to work together to find a solution we can all live with--and this includes IFC staff and clients and members of the community. We all have a stake in the outcome, so we should all participate in the process.



I want to stress that nothing has been decided concerning whether or not to relocate the shelter to Legion Road. IFC at this point is simply doing preliminary work. Perhaps Legion Road will prove to be a suitable site and perhaps it will not; it's impossible to say at this point. But regardless of what decision is made about the Legion Road site, relocation of the shelter and the broader problem of addressing homelessness will still be with us. And so I would like to invite the residents here tonight to join the discussions going on and work with IFC in finding real solutions to the problems that concern all of us.

I'd like to thank the members of the Council for their time and consideration, the staff and clients from IFC who came here tonight and the residents of Legion Road and the rest of Chapel Hill for working with us in helping to improve the community and the lives of our most desperate citizens.

December 17, 2004

To the Mayor & Town Council, Town Manager, and Chapel Hill Town Departments:

This week when several owners in The Meadows abutting Legion Road mentioned seeing a newspaper article about possibly locating a Homeless Men's Shelter on Legion Road, we looked for the article and composed this letter compiling the various reasons residents in the area, including Turnberry, oppose the Legion Road location for a men's shelter.

The enclosed letter opposing the possible Legion Road site for a Homeless Men's Shelter has one signature from each household which we could reach in a single day.

There are many more who oppose this but who were at work or away on the day we circulated this letter.

We hope this will end the discussion of using town-owned land on Legion Road for a men's shelter.

Sincerely,

  
Lynne K. Kane, 11 Lark Circle

December 15, 2004

Mayor Kevin Foy and Town Council  
Chapel Hill, NC

re: Legion Road possible Site for Homeless Men's Shelter

To the Mayor and Town Council of Chapel Hill:

We, the undersigned, residents abutting Legion Road, are appalled that anyone would consider building a shelter for homeless men anywhere near private residences. The presence of the Interfaith Council men's shelter near the town parking lot at Rosemary and Church Streets causes many residents to avoid that parking lot in order to avoid wandering males there, and this has been reported to the Council Committee on Downtown Revitalization.

In addition, nearby residents have other reasons to oppose the Legion Road town-owned site as a homeless men's shelter:

1. Though homelessness can affect any of us due to illness or divorce or job loss, many of the homeless are substance-abusers. Substance-abusers are a nuisance, and sometimes a danger, to adults, children, and businesses.
2. There is a charter school, Pace Academy, operating on Legion Road.
3. There is a neat, quiet affordable-housing complex at Legion Road and Scarlett Drive.
4. There are several hotels and business buildings in the area, the Sheraton Hotel and the Europa Building being the closest and largest.
5. While the shelter would benefit by being on the city busline, a resident who takes the bus to and from work has already expressed concern about waiting where homeless males are grouped.
6. Property values would go down for residents, possibly from Ephesus Church Road to the end of Legion Road extension, and for several blocks east, if not also across 15-501 from the Legion Road site. Business property values would also likely go down.
7. The Town cemetery abutting the Legion Road-Scarlett Road houses is becoming full, and the Town will have to find other land to provide further burial plots if this site abutting the south side of the Town cemetery is not available to extend the cemetery. It makes no sense to divide a Town cemetery into several small separated segments.

To summarize, we agree with Rebecca Clark of Crest Drive, as quoted in the Chapel Hill section of the Durham Herald, December 5, 2004 (pp. 1&5): "...it [a men's homeless shelter] doesn't need to go in a residential area." There is a suitable third option, near the planned Town Operations Center on Millhouse Road. The Chapel Hill Town Council should not waste time investigating residential sites.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <u>Lynne K. Kane / 11 Duke Circle</u>               | <u>Scarya N. Hays Turnberry 104</u>                  |
| <u>James S. Way / 14 Lark Circle</u>                | <u>Jackie and Jeff Hays 147 Lark Circle CH 27511</u> |
| <u>Andy Murray 12 Lark Circle</u>                   | <u>Walter Turnberry 30 Lark Circle CH 27511</u>      |
| <u>10 Lark Cr. Elizabeth Wiles</u>                  | <u>Jerry Turnberry 110 Turnberry Lane</u>            |
| <u>60 Lark Cr. Tom Richardson</u>                   | <u>Laurie Turnberry 112 Turnberry Lane CH</u>        |
| <u>Christ White 27 Lark Cr.</u>                     | <u>Ann C. White 21 Lark Cr. CH</u>                   |
| <u>Peter P. Bishop 114 TURNBERRY</u>                | <u>John P. - 37 Lark Cr., CH.</u>                    |
| <u>Mary S. <sup>(Kiplinger)</sup> 14 Clover Dr.</u> | <u>James J. Hays 33 CLOVER DR.</u>                   |
| <u>Susan Beck 4 Clover Dr.</u>                      | <u>William J. Hays 35 Lark Cr. CH</u>                |
| <u>Donna W. 9 Lark Cr.</u>                          | <u>Katharine Hays 8 Lark Circle</u>                  |

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## Causes of homelessness:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Low paying jobs
- Substance abuse and lack of needed services
- Mental illness and lack of needed services
- Domestic violence
- Unemployment
- Poverty
- Prison release
- Change/cuts in public assistance

U.S. Conference of Mayors. A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities. a 27-city survey. December 2001.



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## Why Are People Homeless?



### NCH Fact Sheet #1

Published by the National Coalition for the Homeless, September 2002

*([click here](#) to download in printable format)*

Two trends are largely responsible for the rise in homelessness over the past 20-25 years: a growing shortage of affordable rental housing and a simultaneous increase in poverty. Below is an overview of current poverty and housing statistics, as well as additional factors contributing to homelessness. A list of resources for further study is also provided.

### POVERTY

Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked. Poor people are frequently unable to pay for housing, food, child care, health care, and education. Difficult choices must be made when limited resources cover only some of these necessities. Often it is housing, which absorbs a high proportion of income, that must be dropped. Being poor means being an illness, an accident, or a paycheck away from living on the streets.

In 2000, 11.3% of the U.S. population, or 31.1 million people, lived in poverty (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). While the number of poor people has decreased a bit in recent years, the number of people living in extreme poverty has increased. In 2000, 39% of all people living in poverty had incomes of less than half the poverty level. This statistic remains unchanged from the 1999 level. Forty percent of persons living in poverty are children; in fact, the 2000 poverty rate of 16.2% for children is significantly higher than the poverty rate for any other age group.

Two factors help account for increasing poverty: eroding employment opportunities for large segments of the workforce, and the declining value and availability of public assistance.

#### Eroding Work Opportunities

Media reports of a growing economy and low unemployment mask a number of important reasons why homelessness persists, and, in some areas of the country, is worsening. These reasons include stagnant or falling incomes and less secure jobs which offer fewer benefits.

While the last few years have seen growth in real wages at all levels, these increases have not been enough to counteract a long pattern of stagnant and declining wages. Low-wage workers have been particularly hard hit by wage trends and have been left behind as the disparity between rich and poor has mushroomed. To compound the problem, the real value of the minimum wage in 1997 was 18.1% less than in 1979 (Mishel, Bernstein, and Schmitt, 1999). Although incomes appear to be rising, this growth is largely due to more hours worked - which in turn can be attributed to welfare

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reform and the tight labor markets. Factors contributing to wage declines include a steep drop in the number and bargaining power of unionized workers; erosion in the value of the minimum wage; a decline in manufacturing jobs and the corresponding expansion of lower-paying service-sector employment; globalization; and increased nonstandard work, such as temporary and part-time employment (Mishel, Bernstein, and Schmitt, 1999).

Declining wages, in turn, have put housing out of reach for many workers: in every state, more than the minimum wage is required to afford a one- or two-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent.<sup>(1)</sup> In fact, in the median state a minimum-wage worker would have to work 89 hours each week to afford a two-bedroom apartment at 30% of his or her income, which is the federal definition of affordable housing (National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2001). Currently, 5 million rental households have "worst case housing needs," which means that they pay more than half their incomes for rent, living in severely substandard housing, or both. The primary source of income for 80% of these households is earnings from jobs. In 1998, this was the case for only 40% of households with worst case housing needs. This represents a 40% increase in working households with worst case housing needs from 1995 to 1999 (U.S. Housing and Urban Development, 2001).

The connection between impoverished workers and homelessness can be seen in homeless shelters, many of which house significant numbers of full-time wage earners. A survey of 27 U.S. cities found that over one in four people in homeless situations are employed, a significant increase from 1998 (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2000). In a number of cities not surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors - as well as in many states - the percentage is even higher (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1997).

The future of job growth does not appear promising for many workers: a 1998 study estimated that 46% of the jobs with the most growth between 1994 and 2005 pay less than \$16,000 a year; these jobs will not lift families out of poverty (National Priorities Project, 1998).<sup>(2)</sup> Moreover, 74% of these jobs pay below a livable wage (\$32,185 for a family of four).

Thus, for many Americans, work provides no escape from poverty. The benefits of economic growth have not been equally distributed; instead, they have been concentrated at the top of income and wealth distributions. A rising tide does not lift all boats, and in the United States today, many boats are struggling to stay afloat.

### **Decline in Public Assistance**

The declining value and availability of public assistance is another source of increasing poverty and homelessness. Until its repeal in August 1996, the largest cash assistance program for poor families with children was the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. Between 1970 and 1994, the typical state's AFDC benefits for a family of three fell 47%, after adjusting for inflation (Greenberg and Baumohl, 1996). The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (the federal welfare reform law) repealed the AFDC program and replaced it with a block grant program called Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Current TANF benefits and Food Stamps combined are below the poverty level in every state; in fact, the median TANF benefit for a family of three is approximately one-third of the poverty level. Thus, contrary to popular opinion, welfare does not provide relief from

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poverty.

Welfare caseloads have dropped sharply since the passage and implementation of welfare reform legislation. However, declining welfare rolls simply mean that fewer people are receiving benefits -- not that they are employed or doing better financially. Early findings suggest that although more families are moving from welfare to work, many of them are faring poorly due to low wages and inadequate work supports. Only a small fraction of welfare recipients' new jobs pay above-poverty wages; most of the new jobs pay far below the poverty line (Children's Defense Fund and the National Coalition for the Homeless, 1998). These statistics from the Institute for Children and Poverty are particularly revealing:

In the Institute for Children and Poverty study, 37% of homeless families had their welfare benefits reduced or cut in the last year. More strikingly, in Bucks County and Philadelphia, PA, and Seattle, WA, more than 50% had their benefits reduced or cut... Among those who lost their benefits, 20% said they became homeless as a direct result. Additionally, a second study of six states found that between 1997 and 1998, 25% of families who had stopped receiving welfare in the last six months doubled-up on housing to save money, and 23% moved because they could not pay rent. (Institute for Children and Poverty, 2001).

Moreover, extreme poverty is growing more common for children, especially those in female-headed and working families. This increase can be traced directly to the declining number of children lifted above one-half of the poverty line by government cash assistance for the poor (Children's Defense Fund and the National Coalition for the Homeless, 1998).

As a result of loss of benefits, low wages, and unstable employment, many families leaving welfare struggle to get medical care, food, and housing. Many lose health insurance, despite continued Medicaid eligibility: a recent study found that 675,000 people lost health insurance in 1997 as a result of the federal welfare reform legislation, including 400,000 children (Families USA, 1999). Moreover, over 725,000 workers, laid off from their jobs due to the recession this past year, lost their health insurance. (Families USA, 2001).

In addition, housing is rarely affordable for families leaving welfare for low wages, yet subsidized housing is so limited that fewer than one in four TANF families nationwide lives in public housing or receives a housing voucher to help them rent a private unit. For most families leaving the rolls, housing subsidies are not an option. In some communities, former welfare families appear to be experiencing homelessness in increasing numbers (Children's Defense Fund and the National Coalition for the Homeless, 1998).

In addition to the reduction in the value and availability of welfare benefits for families, recent policy changes have reduced or eliminated public assistance for poor single individuals. Several states have cut or eliminated General Assistance (GA) benefits for single impoverished people, despite evidence that the availability of GA reduces the prevalence of homelessness (Greenberg and Baumohl, 1996).

People with disabilities, too, must struggle to obtain and maintain stable housing. In 1998, on a national average, a person receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits had to spend 69% of his or her SSI monthly income to rent a one-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent; in more than 125 housing market areas, the cost of a one-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent was more than a person's total monthly SSI income (Technical Assistance Collaborative & the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force, 1999).

Presently, most states have not replaced the old welfare system with an alternative that enables families and individuals to obtain above-poverty employment and to sustain themselves when work is not available or possible.

## HOUSING

A lack of affordable housing and the limited scale of housing assistance programs have contributed to the current housing crisis and to homelessness.

The gap between the number of affordable housing units and the number of people needing them has created a housing crisis for poor people. Between 1973 and 1993, 2.2 million low-rent units disappeared from the market. These units were either abandoned, converted into condominiums or expensive apartments, or became unaffordable because of cost increases. Between 1991 and 1995, median rental costs paid by low-income renters rose 21%; at the same time, the number of low-income renters increased. Over these years, despite an improving economy, the affordable housing gap grew by one million (Daskal, 1998). Between 1970 and 1995, the gap between the number of low-income renters and the amount of affordable housing units skyrocketed from a nonexistent gap to a shortage of 4.4 million affordable housing units - the largest shortfall on record (Institute for Children and Poverty, 2001).

More recently, the strong economy has caused rents to soar, putting housing out of reach for the poorest Americans. Between 1995 and 1997, rents increased faster than income for the 20% of American households with the lowest incomes (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999). This same study found that the number of housing units that rent for less than \$300, adjusted for inflation, declined from 6.8 million in 1996 to 5.5 million in 1998, a 19 percent drop of 1.3 million units. The loss of affordable housing puts even greater numbers of people at risk of homelessness.

The lack of affordable housing has led to high rent burdens (rents which absorb a high proportion of income), overcrowding, and substandard housing. These phenomena, in turn, have not only forced many people to become homeless; they have put a large and growing number of people at risk of becoming homeless. A recent Housing and Urban Development (HUD) study found that 4.9 million unassisted, very low-income households - this is 10.9 million people, 3.6 million of whom are children -- had "worst case needs" for housing assistance in 1999 (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2001).<sup>(3)</sup> Although this figure seems to be a decrease from 1997, it is misleading since, in the same two-year span, "the number of units affordable to extremely low-income renters dropped between 1997 and 1999 at an accelerated rate, and shortages of housing both affordable and available to these renters actually worsened (HUD Report on Worst Case Housing Needs, 1999).



Housing assistance can make the difference between stable housing, precarious housing, or no housing at all. However, the demand for assisted housing clearly exceeds the supply: only about one-third of poor renter households receive a housing subsidy from the federal, state, or a local government (Daskal, 1998). The limited level of housing assistance means that most poor families and individuals seeking housing assistance are placed on long waiting lists. From 1996-1998, the time households spent on waiting lists for HUD housing assistance grew dramatically. For the largest public housing authorities, a family's average time on a waiting list rose from 22 to 33 months from 1996 to 1998 - a 50% increase (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1999). The average waiting period for a Section 8 rental assistance voucher rose from 26 months to 28 months between 1996 and 1998.(4)

Excessive waiting lists for public housing mean that people must remain in shelters or inadequate housing arrangements longer. For instance, in the mid-1990s in New York, families stayed in a shelter an average of five months before moving on to permanent housing. Today, the average stay is nearly a year (Santos, 2002). Consequently, there is less shelter space available for other homeless people, who must find shelter elsewhere or live on the streets.

A housing trend with a particularly severe impact on homelessness is the loss of single room occupancy (SRO) housing. In the past, SRO housing served to house many poor individuals, including poor persons suffering from mental illness or substance abuse. From 1970 to the mid-1980s, an estimated one million SRO units were demolished (Dolbeare, 1996). The demolition of SRO housing was most notable in large cities: between 1970-1982, New York City lost 87% of its \$200 per month or less SRO stock; Chicago experienced the total elimination of cubicle hotels; and by 1985, Los Angeles had lost more than half of its downtown SRO housing (Koegel, et al, 1996). From 1975 to 1988, San Francisco lost 43% of its stock of low-cost residential hotels; from 1970 to 1986, Portland, Oregon lost 59% of its residential hotels; and from 1971 to 1981, Denver lost 64% of its SRO hotels (Wright and Rubin, 1997). Thus the destruction of SRO housing is a major factor in the growth of homelessness in many cities.

Finally, it should be noted that the largest federal housing assistance program is the entitlement to deduct mortgage interest from income for tax purposes. In fact, for every one dollar spent on low income housing programs, the federal treasury loses four dollars to housing-related tax expenditures, 75% of which benefit households in the top fifth of income distribution (Dolbeare, 1996). Moreover, in 1994 the top fifth of households received 61% of all federal housing benefits (tax and direct), while the bottom fifth received only 18%. Thus, federal housing policy has not responded to the needs of low-income households, while disproportionately benefitting the wealthiest Americans.

## OTHER FACTORS

Particularly within the context of poverty and the lack of affordable housing, certain additional factors may push people into homelessness. Other major factors which can contribute to homelessness include the following:

**Lack of Affordable Health Care:** For families and individuals struggling to pay the rent, a serious illness or disability can start a downward spiral into homelessness, beginning with a lost job, depletion of savings to pay for care, and eventual eviction. In

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2000, approximately 38.7 million Americans had no health care insurance (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998b). Nearly a third of persons living in poverty had no health insurance of any kind. The coverage held by many others would not carry them through a catastrophic illness.

**Domestic Violence:** Battered women who live in poverty are often forced to choose between abusive relationships and homelessness. In a study of 777 homeless parents (the majority of whom were mothers) in ten U.S. cities, 22% said they had left their last place of residence because of domestic violence (Homes for the Homeless, 1998). In additions, 34% of cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1998). Studying the entire country, though, reveals that the problem is even more serious. Nationally, approximately half of all women and children experiencing homelessness are fleeing domestic violence (Zorza, 1991; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 2001).

**Mental Illness:** Approximately 22% of the single adult homeless population suffers from some form of severe and persistent mental illness (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2001). Despite the disproportionate number of severely mentally ill people among the homeless population, increases in homelessness are not attributable to the release of severely mentally ill people from institutions. Most patients were released from mental hospitals in the 1950s and 1960s, yet vast increases in homelessness did not occur until the 1980s, when incomes and housing options for those living on the margins began to diminish rapidly. According to the Federal Task Force on Homelessness and Severe Mental Illness, only 5-7% of homeless persons with mental illness need to be institutionalized; most can live in the community with the appropriate supportive housing options (Federal Task Force on Homelessness and Severe Mental Illness, 1992). However, many mentally ill homeless people are unable to obtain access to supportive housing and/or other treatment services. The mental health support services most needed include case management, housing, and treatment.

**Addiction Disorders:** The relationship between addiction and homelessness is complex and controversial. While rates of alcohol and drug abuse are disproportionately high among the homeless population, the increase in homelessness over the past two decades cannot be explained by addiction alone. Many people who are addicted to alcohol and drugs never become homeless, but people who are poor and addicted are clearly at increased risk of homelessness. During the 1980s, competition for increasingly scarce low-income housing grew so intense that those with disabilities such as addiction and mental illness were more likely to lose out and find themselves on the streets. The loss of SRO housing, a source of stability for many poor people suffering from addiction and/or mental illness, was a major factor in increased homelessness in many communities.

Addiction does increase the risk of displacement for the precariously housed; in the absence of appropriate treatment, it may doom one's chances of getting housing once on the streets. Homeless people often face insurmountable barriers to obtaining health care, including addictive disorder treatment services and recovery supports. The following are among the obstacles to treatment for homeless persons: lack of health insurance; lack of documentation; waiting lists; scheduling difficulties; daily contact requirements; lack of transportation; ineffective treatment methods; lack of supportive services; and

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cultural insensitivity. An in-depth study of 13 communities across the nation revealed service gaps in every community in at least one stage of the treatment and recovery continuum for homeless people (National Coalition for the Homeless, 1998).

## CONCLUSION

Homelessness results from a complex set of circumstances which require people to choose between food, shelter, and other basic needs. Only a concerted effort to ensure jobs that pay a living wage, adequate support for those who cannot work, affordable housing, and access to health care will bring an end to homelessness.

## FOOTNOTES

1. FMRs are the monthly amounts "needed to rent privately owned, decent, safe, and sanitary rental housing of a modest (nonluxury) nature with suitable amenities." Federal Register. HUD determines FMRs for localities in all 50 states. [Back].

2. The poverty line for a family of three is \$12,750; for a family of four, the poverty line is \$16,813. See <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty.html> for details. [Back].

3. "Worst case needs" refers to those renters with incomes below 50% of the area median income who are involuntarily displaced, pay more than half of their income for rent and utilities, or live in substandard housing. [Back].

4. The Section 8 Program is a federal housing assistance program that provides housing subsidies for families and individuals to live in existing rental housing or in designated housing projects. [Back].

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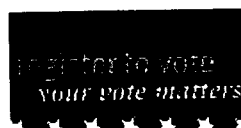
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