



# City of Harrisonburg, Virginia

## Office of the City Manager

409 South Main Street  
Harrisonburg, VA 22802  
(540) 432-7701 / FAX (540) 432-7778

Eric D. Campbell  
City Manager

TO: Eric Campbell, City Manager  
FROM: Wesley Russ  
DATE: September 17, 2020  
RE: Emergency ordinance to suppress the spread of the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, and the disease it causes, commonly referred to as COVID-19

**Summary:** A proposed emergency ordinance finding that the use of the First Church of the Brethren property at 315 South Dogwood Drive as a temporary shelter for those experiencing homelessness is a necessary and proper means of securing the inhabitants of the city from contagious, infectious or other dangerous diseases, and authorizing the use of the property as a shelter through December 31, 2020.

**Background:** Historically, Open Doors has provided overnight shelter to those experiencing homelessness during the winter by rotating between temporary locations; however, due to social distancing requirements and other concerns related to COVID-19, many locations are not suitable for or able to accommodate Open Doors.

The First Church of the Brethren has offered to allow Open Doors to operate at 315 South Dogwood Drive through the end of the calendar year. Considering the ongoing emergency related to COVID-19, and consistent with the City Charter's authorization for City Council to "secure the inhabitants of the city from contagious, infectious or other dangerous diseases," the proposed emergency ordinance would temporarily supersede any restrictions on the property's use as a shelter.

**Key Issues:** The CDC's *Interim Guidance on Unsheltered Homelessness and Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) for Homeless Service Providers and Local Officials* emphasizes the importance of continuing services to those experiencing homelessness and securing sites for temporary shelter.

**Environmental Impact:** None

**Fiscal Impact:** None

**Prior Actions:** None

**Alternatives:** (a) Adopt and enact the emergency ordinance as presented;  
(b); or Decline to adopt the emergency ordinance.

**Community Engagement:** None

**Recommendation:** Staff recommends approval of the ordinance as presented.



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**Attachments:**

Draft Emergency Ordinance

**Review:**

*The initiating Department Director will place in Legistar, in sequence of transmittal, the names of each department that must initial their review in order for this item to be placed on the City Council agenda. The completion of review only addresses the readiness of the issue for Council consideration. This does not address the recommendation for approval or denial of the issue.*

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