



NEWS RELEASE

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HUMAN SERVICES CAMPUS FILES APPEAL OF CITY OF PHOENIX PLANNING COMMISSION VOTE ON ADDING MORE SHELTER BEDS

PHOENIX, Ariz. (Jan. 14, 2021): The Human Services Campus (HSC) has filed an appeal to last week's City of Phoenix Planning Commission vote on adding shelter beds which included 15 commission-developed and approved stipulations that, among other directives, removed a proposed 100-bed low-barrier shelter to be developed by Andre House and put a three-year sunset on an additional 275 beds at Central Arizona Shelter Services (CASS).

"While we were grateful for the vote in favor of adding shelter beds, the added stipulations, which basically conflict with Phoenix city-staff approved stipulations and which were passed without any input or comment from the Human Services Campus, CASS or Andre House, are unacceptable," said HSC Executive Director Amy Schwabenlender. "The stipulations severely hamper our ability to help people experiencing homelessness, hundreds of whom are unsheltered and living on and around the campus."

As a result of the appeal, the Phoenix City Council will hold a public hearing to discuss, rather than to ratify, the Planning Commission's recommendation, said attorney Paul E. Gilbert of the firm Beus Gilbert McGroder, which is representing the Human Services Campus on a *pro bono* basis. The zoning request change to allow the additional 275 beds at CASS, the Andre House shelter and 200 emergency beds for use in extreme weather in the St. Vincent de Paul dining room or the Lodestar Day Resource Center is on the Feb. 3 Phoenix City Council agenda.

Gilbert explained that the Council has a number of options to consider including, but not limited to, accepting the Planning Commission's recommendations, rejecting the recommendation and accepting city staff recommended stipulations, adapting the stipulations as presented or even to continue the decision to a future city council session.

The Human Services Campus filed the original zoning request in January 2019.

"Two of the most problematic stipulations -- eliminating the Andre House shelter and allowing an additional 275 beds for only three years -- are completely counter productive on several levels," Schwabenlender said. "Creating a 100-bed low-barrier shelter aligns with the City of Phoenix recommendations to develop smaller-scale shelters throughout the region, some that may be for specialized populations like seniors, families and veterans. And, there is no point in putting a time limit on

the additional beds, which requires a significant financial investment on CASS' part, when we can't possibly predict what the homeless situation will be in three years."

Schwabenlender also said there appears to be confusion about what a low-barrier shelter is.

"Simply put, a low-barrier shelter eliminates some of the obstacles to admission in traditional shelters like having pets or many possessions," she said. "The bottom line is that low-barrier shelters *screen people in* for services rather than *screening them out* and gives them a safe place to sleep off the streets."

Andre House announced this week that Community Bridges, Inc. will operate and manage the low-barrier shelter, which is proposed for a building to be renovated adjacent to the Andre House soup kitchen at 213 S. 11th Ave. "We are not shelter managers or operators," said Andre House Director Fr. Dan Ponisciak. "Community Bridges is an experienced and highly respected manager of facilities serving people experiencing homelessness, particularly those with complex situations such as behavioral health challenges."

The Feb. 3 Phoenix City Council meeting begins at 2:30 p.m. The formal agenda for the meeting has not been announced.

For information about Andre House, go to www.andrehouseaz.org. For information about Central Arizona Central Services, go to www.cassaz.org. For information about St. Vincent de Paul, go to www.stvincentdepaul.net. For information about the Human Services Campus, go to www.hsc-az.org.

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ABOUT THE HUMAN SERVICES CAMPUS: Founded in 2005, the Human Services Campus is a collaborative force of partner organizations united on one campus to end homelessness. Located just west of downtown Phoenix, 16 independent agencies on the Campus see nearly 1,000 individuals every day, offering a holistic range of client services including: reunification with family and friends; mental, physical and dental health; shelter; employment; meals; legal services and housing. Having all of these resources in one location with intra-agency communications makes it more feasible to provide a customized engagement for each client to help end their homelessness. For more information, visit www.hsc-az.org.

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