

## **Updated 11/18: Park Ridge finally OKs rules to operate shelters for homeless**

[Recommend \(2\)](#)

[Comments](#)

November 18, 2008

By **JENNIFER JOHNSON** [jjohnson@pioneerlocal.com](mailto:jjohnson@pioneerlocal.com)

After 10 months of contentious opposition and debate, the Park Ridge City Council this week adopted a set of regulations for temporary, overnight homeless shelters -- should any seek to open within the city.

The council voted 5-2 Monday night to add temporary, overnight shelters to the city's Zoning Ordinance as special uses with specific requirements and regulations.

This means that any agency seeking to operate a shelter must apply for a special use permit, meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, and receive approval from both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council.

There are currently no proposals to open any shelters in the city.

Plans by the Park Ridge Ministerial Association to partner with Journeys from PADS to HOPE and operate a Public Action to Deliver Shelter (PADS) site at a local church fell through when Journeys declined to participate, objecting to the city's involvement in the regulation of what supporters have called a church ministry.

The requirements and regulations adopted by the council are the same set that received preliminary approval in October. Monday's vote for adoption was 5-2, with 5th Ward Alderman Robert Ryan and 6th Ward Alderman Tom Carey voting against. First Ward Alderman David Schmidt voted in favor, but later said he actually intended to vote against the ordinance.

### **Final rules**

The approved ordinance regarding shelters establishes the following provisions:

- \* Shelters are permitted as special uses in all residential districts, commercial districts except for Uptown and special purpose districts.
- \* Shelters will be allowed to open within 500 feet of a grammar school, daycare or nursery school, but operations must cease within 60 minutes of the operation of the school or daycare.
- \* Shelters cannot be located in any hotel, motel, hospital, nursing home, rooming house, assisted living facility, community residence, single-family home, or multi-family residence.
- \* A maximum of two shelter licenses will be issued at any one time.
- \* No more than one shelter may be located in any single ward of the city or within 1,000 feet from another shelter.
- \* The maximum number of occupants, including staff, will be determined by square footage.
- \* Shelters cannot operate for more than 12 hours per day and more than one night per week.
- \* No shelters can operate between May 1 and Sept. 30.
- \* The application for the special use permit must be made by both the owner of the premises and any other entity providing "significant programming support." The owner and other entities must also obtain a license to operate the shelter.

\* Each shelter must have minimum impact on the neighborhood in terms of noise, traffic congestion and pedestrian hazards.

\* Parking requirements must be met.

\* The shelter must comply with all federal, state and local requirements, including health, safety and building codes.

## **Shelter licenses**

The City Council also adopted licensing requirements by a vote of 6-1, with Ryan casting the only dissenting vote.

Anyone seeking to operate a temporary, overnight shelter must obtain a license which will be valid for one year. The director of community development will make a recommendation as to whether a license should be issued for a shelter, and the City Council will vote to accept or reject this recommendation.

In May of each year, the city manager will be required to submit a written report to the City Council on the number of shelters operating in the city, their location, and whether any police calls or complaints originated from them.

The application for the license must include the shelter location, name of the individual responsible for supervision, the maximum number of individuals to be housed there, and an operation plan which must include policies for admission criteria, including health screening, background checks, provision for identification, procedures for terminating an individual's stay in the shelter, and procedures for limiting the stay.

Also required is a plan describing how the shelter's applicant will communicate with the local community, neighborhood, business owners and neighbors on a regular basis, and how issues and concerns will be addressed.

Rules to prevent loitering, and plans for food preparation must also be submitted.

The annual fee for a shelter license is set at \$50.

The license regulations for temporary, overnight shelters include the following:

\* Shelters must provide separate sleeping areas for men, women, and for parents with children.

\* Medical care may not be offered as a regular service, but seasonal vaccines, non-prescription drugs such as aspirin, emergency care and routine blood pressure or "similar non-invasive testing" are allowed.

\* At least two individuals assuring compliance with all rules concerning the shelter's operation must be present for up to 20 guests.

\* No smoking is allowed.

\* Buildings where shelters are housed must contain the appropriate number of smoke detectors, as well as fire extinguishers, automatic sprinkler systems and fire alarms.

\* At least one restroom must be provided for every 20 occupants.

\* Each shelter must have an evacuation diagram.

\* Food may only be served by the operator of a food service establishment that has received a city permit.

\* Licensees shall not knowingly allow guests to bring weapons, alcohol or non-prescribed drugs into the shelters.

\* Personal belongings cannot be stored in the shelter when it is not operating.

Ryan and 3rd Ward Alderman Don Bach motioned to make several changes to the licensing and shelter regulations, but none were approved by the full council.

Bach proposed restricting the operation of shelters to Friday and Saturday nights only so that they would not interfere with school days.

Ryan proposed establishing areas where guests' vehicles would be permitted and changing language so only the owner of the building and operator of the shelter would be required to apply for a license and special use permit.