



**BETHESDA EPISCOPAL CHURCH PROPOSES
PERMANENT HOME FOR CODE BLUE, OTHER PROGRAMS
APRIL 2, 2018**

Bethesda Episcopal Church announced today it has asked Shelters of Saratoga, Saratoga County and the City of Saratoga Springs to explore the feasibility of meeting the need for a permanent location for Code Blue and other needed services at the site of Bethesda's proposed New Parish House and Community Center on Washington Street in downtown Saratoga Springs.

"We have the space, and God has called us to serve those in need," said The Very Reverend Marshall J. Vang, Interim Rector. "The need for Code Blue to have a safe, permanent location is in the forefront of the community's agenda at this time. We believe our proposal and our location will address this need in a way that can unite the community."

Bethesda's central, downtown location could also provide space for a satellite office of the Saratoga County Department of Social Services. DSS departed from space in the county's Woodlawn Avenue building several years ago, and local officials have expressed support for relocating DSS in the downtown area.

Shelters of Saratoga has proposed building a new building on Walworth Street. Although the proposal has received a favorable vote from the city's Zoning Board of Appeals, neighbors have brought suit in State Supreme Court to overturn the ZBA. Bethesda's plans have received all necessary regulatory approvals from the city, and would be allowed under Federal law as well.

"Our only need at this point is additional capital fundraising," said Darren Miller, Bethesda Senior Warden. "Our hope is that Bethesda's Community Center, in keeping with our core mission, can provide a safe, central location that can unite the community, and provide the needed space without further regulatory or court delays. In addition, we can provide space for programs and enhancements not available at Shelters's proposed Walworth Street site."

A letter from Vang and Miller to the Shelters Board requests an opportunity to discuss whether Bethesda's location and new facility would meet all of the Code Blue and other needs. The letter was also sent to Mayor Meg Kelly, members of the City Council, Saratoga County supervisors, as well as community leaders.

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Gordon Boyd, Building Committee, 518-441-8815

BETHESDA EPISCOPAL CHURCH **NEW PARISH HOUSE FACT SHEET**

Location and History

Bethesda's desire to serve the community stems from our Scriptural tradition stretching back millennia, the very Judeo-Christian values we continue to uphold in the 21st Century. Bethesda has been at its present location on Washington Street since 1842. The parish recently sold three properties, including two on Washington Street, and is applying the proceeds, along with other funds, toward the new Parish House and Community Center.

A Welcoming, Dignified Environment

Our parish is a welcoming, inclusive and caring community. We are confident that members of the parish would become volunteers and financial supporters of the program. In addition to Shelters' own space, their program would have scheduled access to the catering kitchen and dining hall. The new building's design offers dignity and grace for all who enter, as it complements the church's neo-Gothic style and historic aspect.

A Destination Serving the Community

Bethesda's complex in a safe, central downtown location would provide individuals in need with a place to be that is off the street, yet not a great distance from Broadway. Our community has been challenged in recent years to meet the legitimate desires of merchants, visitors and property owners, balanced with the rights of individuals to be in public right of way. Bethesda is not near an elementary school or single family residences.

Safety and Security

Bethesda's facility is designed to afford all concerned an operating environment that emphasizes safety and security. Participants in programs at our facility will be able to arrive at our building and courtyard without queueing on the sidewalk, and enter a facility that will have both human and technical means of providing security and privacy at all times. These elements will be expressly provided in any lease or operating agreement.

Space Available

More space is available at Bethesda than Shelters has presently proposed on Walworth Street for Code Blue. In addition, the space would be available year-round for supportive programs and services, not just on an emergency cold-weather basis. There would be space for lavatories, laundry, kitchenette and staff.

Added Programs

We have had preliminary conversations with Saratoga County about making Bethesda the location for a Department of Social Services satellite office. We also have a 75-year relationship with Alcoholics Anonymous and anticipate that AA's peer-focused approach would be of value to many of the individuals served by Shelters and Code Blue. A major community supporter of our proposal has expressed interest in establishing a job-readiness program at Bethesda.

Status of Development

Bethesda's new building is planned to comprise nearly 20,000 square feet, including a full catering kitchen, dining hall, parish offices and space for organizations compatible with Bethesda's mission. It has received approval from the city Planning Board. A final round of capital fundraising is required prior to executing a mortgage and breaking ground.

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