

**TOWN OF FAIRFAX
STAFF REPORT**

To: Mayor, Members of the Town Council

**From: Michael Rock, Town Manager
Jim Moore, Director of Planning & Building Services**

Date: December 2, 2009

Subject: A Report to the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax regarding temporary homeless shelter services for women operating one night per week from December 9, 2009 thru March 24, 2010 at Saint Rita's and Christ Lutheran Church.

DISCUSSION

Saint Rita's and Christ Lutheran Church intend to each provide emergency homeless shelter for up to thirty homeless women at each location one night per week from December 9, 2009 thru March 24, 2010.

These two churches will be part of a 15 church County-wide effort to help house the homeless this winter; a program supported by the Ritter Center in San Rafael. Each of the guests will be pre-screened and then transported from the Ritter Center – returning to the Center early the next morning. Professional staff will be on hand each night of operation, as well as volunteers and staff from each church.

Town staff recognizes the dire need to house the homeless of Marin County, particularly during winter months. Likewise, staff recognizes that the underlying mission of religious institutions is to provide for the needy – especially during emergencies. Furthermore, staff recognizes that being homeless in the public commons during winter months presents a severe threat to the health and safety of homeless persons and therefore constitutes an “emergency” situation.

Neither the Town's Zoning Ordinance nor Building Code address temporary emergency homeless shelters and, beginning next year, the State of California will be requiring that General Plan's include locations where homeless shelters are allowed.

Each of the two churches running these two homeless shelters during the winter months have occupancy permits that allow many more people to assemble in each location than the number of those who would be housed in this temporary winter homeless shelter program run one night a week. The churches will have to comply with all permit conditions and applicable laws in providing these services.