



Legislation Text

File #: 18-804, Version: 1

TO: Mayor and Commissioners
FROM: Michael Coleman, Neighborhood & Community Services Department
THROUGH: Mark R. Lauzier, City Manager
DATE: December 4, 2018

LIVE FRESH SHOWER TRUCK

Recommended Action:

Motion to approve the Live Fresh Shower Truck ("Truck") to be located on the St. Matthews Episcopal Church site for a six-month pilot program.

Background:

After the Caring Kitchen closed, lunches were still being served at churches located throughout the community to the homeless population and those with food insecurities. However, the social services C.R.O.S Ministries provided to this population was eliminated. To close that gap, the Delray Beach Interfaith Committee for Social Services ("Committee") was created and includes many representatives from various churches to address many issues such as Food Stamps (SNAP), housing issues, medical needs, etc. This Committee has also been attending the Homeless Task Force meetings and have helped with several Homeless Connect events hosted at St. Matthews Episcopal Church. The Live Fresh Shower Truck ("Truck") has been at several events and feeding sites and the Committee saw the positive outcomes on human dignity and have been trying to find a permanent location for it to serve Delray Beach.

The Homeless Task Force has also been a supporter of the Truck and the service it provides the homeless population. At their meeting of November 21st, the Task Force unanimously approved the location of the Truck to be parked at St. Matthews Episcopal Church. They have agreed to provide support to the Committee and help find resources for the Truck while it is in operation in Delray Beach.

At first, staff was under the impression that the Truck would be mobile and only parked at St. Matthews Episcopal Church when in use on Fridays. However, when it was found that the request was to park the Truck permanently on the church property, it was determined that a six-month pilot program should be implemented to determine its impact on the surrounding single-family neighborhoods.

The Live Fresh Charity will provide all associated costs for the shower Truck during the pilot program. The Truck will be open on Friday's for 1-2 hours during lunch time. St. Matthews Episcopal Church has been serving lunches to the homeless population as part of the C.R.O.S. Ministries feeding program for 16 months and no issues have been reported to date. They have also been very vigilant about being sure that food is not taken off the property unless being delivered to a homebound person to eliminate any trash and waste problems that impacted the neighborhoods in the past.

Approximately 100 people eat lunch on Friday's at St. Matthews Episcopal Church. However, not all of these people are homeless. It is estimated that approximately 30% or 30 people are identified as being homeless and would need shower services.

On November 16, 2018, a site visit was conducted by representatives from the Neighborhood and Community Services, Development Services and the Utilities Departments and they met with representatives from the Committee, Homeless Task Force and Chris Bentley (Owner of the Live Fresh Truck). Development Services determined that a site plan modification or site improvements would not be required for the pilot program. The Truck is to be placed near the recently-improved alley and away from the single-family home located directly to the east and south of the Church facility. Water service to the Truck will be provided with a connection to the Church. Waste water is to be disposed in adjacent sanitary sewer cleanout located in the adjacent alley.

St. Matthews Episcopal Church is located at the southwest corner of SW 3rd Street and SW 4th Avenue. The Church owns most of the property surrounding the church. To the south of the Church, is a privately-owned vacant lot and a single-family home that the church owns, which is buffered by a chain-link fence. To the west, across the alley they own another single-family home, which fronts on SW 3rd Street. Behind that structure is a privately-owned home, which is buffered from the alley and church lot by a 6' high wood privacy fence. As the church owns most of the surrounding property, there appears to be a minimal impact on adjacent properties, and the Truck will be located in an area to be the least impacting on the single-family homes. If the Truck is approved to be placed permanently at this location, additional screening or landscaping may be required in the future.

The Truck is mobile and the size of a small RV that contains 4 stalls. Access to the stalls is from each side of the Truck (2 stalls on each side). Each stall has a portable shower, toilet and changing room. Toiletries are provided to each client that includes a wash cloth and towel. Volunteers from the Church will provide oversight while the truck is in operation.

The Live Fresh Charity will provide training for the volunteers operating the truck and provide all costs and materials needed during the trial period. The Committee will be providing volunteers to manage the operation of the Truck and will be looking for funding from the faith-based community to support the Truck with on-going services. The Committee has also found a person that will pay for any plumbing necessary for the operation of the Truck.

The upside of having a Shower Truck located in Delray Beach is that it will provide a direct service benefitting the homeless population in our community and helps those that are less fortunate by restoring some of their dignity. One of the challenges of the homeless is finding employment based on personal hygiene issues and the need to take showers and to have fresh clothes. The Truck could provide this opportunity and a shot at getting off the streets. As mentioned above, the Committee will be providing all funding so there is no cost to the City to operate the Truck. The Truck could also be used in emergency situations during a hurricane for all citizens living in Delray Beach. It is anticipated that the impact of the Truck will be minimal due to the short time constraint it will be open (i.e. open only on Fridays for 1-2 hours) and the low volume of people using it. Also, the Truck could help to decrease the number of homeless from taking showers at beach locations.

The downside of the truck being located in a residential neighborhood is the potential of increased foot traffic and crime. There will be a small impact on the single-family residents close to the property and it could be found that they do not want the Truck in their neighborhood. There was not enough

time to survey the surrounding residents prior to the writing of this staff report. This will be one of the items to be conducted during the trial period. There may also be an impact on the development or sale of the vacant property located to the south of the Truck once they find out the Truck is a service being provided to the homeless population.

During the six-month trial period, Neighborhood and Community Services("NCS") will monitor the program. Staff will look at pre- and post-crime rates to determine if there is an impact. They will monitor the impact to see if there is increased foot traffic and trash that impacts the surrounding neighborhoods. NCS will also survey the surrounding residents to get their feedback and feelings on having the Truck located at St. Matthews Episcopal Church.

After the pilot program is completed, NCS will report its findings to the City Commission in June 2019. The Commission will be able to review the data and determine if the Live Fresh Shower Truck should be permanently located at St. Matthews Episcopal Church and what other types of improvements or conditions may need to be made to lessen the impact of the use on the adjacent properties.

Staff is recommending approval of the Live Fresh Shower Truck Pilot program to be located at St. Matthews Episcopal Church for a six-month trial period.

City Attorney Review:

N/A

Funding Source/Financial Impact:

N/A

Timing of Request:

Yes at the request of the City Manager's office.