



Board of County Commissioners

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Press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lewis County, Washington – May 6, 2022

County selects night-by-night shelter location after public input

In a milestone moment for the Lewis County Housing Initiative, Lewis County has selected a location for a night-by-night shelter.

Lewis County has recently taken steps to acquire a property across the street from the east side of Yard Birds currently occupied by Washington State Employee Credit Union. The intention for the new site, or the already owned and adjacently located county property, is likely to become a year-round, night-by-night shelter. The federal and state implications of *Martin v. Boise* and HB 1220 make establishing this type of shelter necessary.

“To ensure local control, it is important that we act on establishing this shelter now,” said Board of County Commissioners Chair Lindsey Pollock, DVM. “Local jurisdictions that don’t make these plans run the risk of having the state make those plans for them, and our shelter should reflect our local values rather than having the state’s will imposed upon us.”

Community members identified goals and concerns during a March public forum on the topic. Those in attendance broadly agreed that selecting the right location was key.

The chosen location is in a non-residential area between the Chehalis and Centralia downtowns, but in neither downtown core, which allows for proximity to services without changing either city’s character. This site is on existing public transportation routes, is easily accessible by emergency services and sits outside of the floodplain.

Lewis County intends to issue a Request for Proposals for the service of running the shelter facilities. Within the proposal, applicants will have to provide specific details about the shelter’s operations and propose strategies for how it will respond to the community’s goals and concerns highlighted from the public forum.

The shelter will likely begin operating at this location in 2023. To see how this step fits into the larger Lewis County Housing Initiative, visit

<https://lewiscountywa.gov/offices/commissioners/housing-initiative/>.

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