



Office of the City Manager

December 1, 2016

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: *Dee* Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager
Subject: Update on the Berkeley Emergency Storm Shelter

I wanted to give you an update on the Berkeley Emergency Storm Shelter (BESS), which is designed to open on an as need basis on particularly cold or rainy nights during the winter months.

For the past several years, BESS had primarily been at the First Congregational Church of Berkeley, and other locations were sometimes used as alternates. A recent fire there made the space unavailable.

City staff and the Dorothy Day House have identified various options and have negotiated with First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley to be the primary location for the BESS. All Souls Episcopal Parish has also agreed to host the BESS on nights when church activities do not interfere with BESS operations. We will also make the City-owned North Berkeley Senior Center and Frances Albrier Community Center available to host the BESS.

Last week Friday, November 25, the Berkeley Emergency Storm Shelter (BESS) opened at the North Berkeley Senior Center, commencing the City's Winter Shelter program for the 2017 fiscal year. Twenty homeless people were sheltered out of the rain and cold on Friday night. BESS also opened on Saturday night, November 26 at the North Berkeley Senior Center, serving 34 people.

The BESS shelter opens as early as 7:00 pm and as late as 11:00 pm, with opening time decided by the availability of church or City-owned space. The shelter is closed each morning by 6:30 a.m. BESS guests, who must be 18 or older, are generally 80-90% single males with most being 25-55 years old. Families are also able to access the BESS. There are no bathing facilities and no meals are provided. When the BESS is due to open, DDH sends information via email to over 130 agencies, churches, emergency rooms, and the Berkeley police and fire departments.

Information on other County-wide winter shelter resources can be found at:
http://www.achch.org/uploads/7/2/5/4/72547769/alameda_county_winter_shelter_resources_2016-2017.pdf .

This season marks the BESS's fourteenth year of operation. BESS is managed by Dorothy Day House (DDH) and provides overnight shelter on a first-come, first-served basis for up to 45 nights during the winter season with a maximum capacity of 65 people each night. The BESS shelter opens if rain or temperatures at or below 40 degrees are expected overnight. The decision to open the shelter is made each morning before noon.

cc: Jovan Grogan, Deputy City Manager
Paul Buddenhagen, Director, Health, Housing & Community Services
Scott Ferris, Director, Parks, Recreation & Waterfront
Ann-Marie Hogan, City Auditor
Mark Numainville, City Clerk
Matthai Chakko, Assistant to the City Manager