

Salvation Army Addresses Concerns And Future Of Hope House

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Salvation Army Captain Cassy Grey, Major Adam Moore, and Salvation Army Board Member Travis Widman appeared on C.J. Nasello's Our Daily Show! recently and discussed the proposed new homeless shelter. All three in attendance stressed they were very thankful to be on the show to converse candidly about it.

Some controversy has emerged over the Salvation Army's proposal to construct the new Hope House shelter at the location of the old Booth House and next to the Salvation Army's offices in Alton at 525 Alby Street.

The new Hope House has been pre-designed to have 48 beds, not 48 rooms as had been previously rumored, but the beds could be added or removed from the rooms as needed.

The Salvation Army plans to use funds from HOME/ARPA grants to primarily fund the project, along with Salvation Army funds and requested federal dollars, and other funding.

Grey said the group is committed to being a solution for the homeless in the Alton area and meeting the needs to the best of their abilities that the previous Booth House facility could not meet.

The trio said they appreciated the feedback so far about the proposed plan, both the positive and negative concerns, and said they were not against a location outside of where the old Booth House was once found. Moore said the Salvation Army does own the land there.

Major Moore said they were a little discouraged after the recent Ward 1 meeting where they openly talked about the plan and then received some of the negative feedback. However, Moore said the Salvation Army here belongs to the community and “we want to be an advocate for change and transition, especially for our most marginalized neighbors.”

Grey and the others said the purpose of the new shelter would be to have a great lasting change in anyone who stayed at the center’s lives.

“There will be a high level of accountability in our program,” they said. “We will not take anyone on drugs or alcohol and they will have to prove they are seeking employment. We have other groups we work with for those who come to us with drug or alcohol problems. There will be a 10 p.m. curfew for those housed at the new center. We will work on budgeting and many life skills while they are housed at the new center.”

Widman also issued a positive shout-out to Alton Police Chief Jarrett Ford for his preliminary feedback on the new shelter and said Ford and the police department would be an integral part of this process as it moves forward.

There has been some community discussion about the old Alton Mental Health facility being a possible solution but Grey and Moore said they had already checked and it would not be possible, at this point, to use that facility.

Moore said the Salvation Army is sometimes a mystery to people but their main mission is reaching the needs of “our most marginalized neighbors.”

Widman believes at this point it is important to have dialogue and stressed it is OK to disagree about the location, but he also asked the community to help them find solutions to make a difference for those who need it. If someone is willing to offer a new location, he suggested they contact the Salvation Army. Widman is very active in the Salvation Army as a board member and this project means a great deal to him.

Grey said: "We remain committed to wrapping around our friends and being a solution for homelessness. We want to be good neighbors and are excited about meeting the needs of those who need it to the best of our abilities. The previous facilities weren't able to do that."

For the full discussion between Grey, Widman and Moore and host Nasello, watch his Our Daily Show! video above.