



July 24, 2024

### **Relocation of Adult Homeless Shelter**

Dear Neighbor,

I'd like to express my appreciation for the responses some of you shared to my letter last week, following our July 10 neighborhood meeting regarding the relocation and expansion process for SHC's Adult Shelter. I have read and replied to every email, and have spoken to those who directly called me and asked to speak with me. I can assure you that I am listening, as your feedback is valuable, and your concerns and frustrations are valid.

I want to reiterate my commitment to ongoing communication with our neighbors and community members, as well as my apology for the lack of an inclusive and effective communications plan during the earlier stages of this process.

With that in mind, I would like to share a few updates and next steps:

As many of you know, the Somerville Zoning Board of Appeals meeting next Wednesday, July 31st will include a public hearing on our shelter relocation and expansion. I will share a community update by the end of next week that reflects on the ZBA meeting's outcome.

SHC and First Church Somerville will jointly host a neighborhood engagement meeting on **Wednesday, August 7 at 6:00 pm** at Community Baptist Church, 31 College Ave. We will post this update on our website (details below). This will be one of more meetings to come; we are committed to keeping communication channels open and transparent.

We heard many of you ask for the ability to provide input and express opinions on how the shelter will work in the neighborhood. We envision the August 7 meeting as a collaborative dialogue – an opportunity for neighbors and community members to ask questions about these topics and others and for us to share updates on key elements of the shelter relocation and expansion, including shelter operations and the hiring of a facilities manager.

We will continue to post updates tied to the relocation and expansion process on our website's home page, [www.shcinc.org](http://www.shcinc.org). You are always welcome to email questions or comments to [info@shcinc.org](mailto:info@shcinc.org), you may also reach out to me directly at 617-623-6111 x 110.



We're committed to answering questions as best we can during the upcoming meetings and/or following up with responses to questions we're unable to answer immediately. I know that this is an important part of our ongoing communications, and we're moving forward with a communication process that will focus on transparency.

I look forward to speaking with and seeing many of you soon.

If you are receiving this letter in the mail, and to expedite our communication with you, please provide your email address to [info@shcinc.org](mailto:info@shcinc.org). Please see below the email communication I shared from last week to all the neighbors who provided an email address at the meeting on July 10th.

If you no longer want to receive updates about this relocation and expansion project, please use the same email address to inform us.

With Thanks,

Michael Libby

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael Libby".

Executive Director  
Somerville Homeless Coalition



## **Neighborhood Meeting Follow-Up Meeting**

**Michael Libby**

**July 17, 2024**

Good evening -

I want to thank you for attending our Neighborhood Meeting last week regarding the relocation and expansion of SHC's Adult Shelter Program; I'm reaching out to everyone who provided their email address that evening. Your continued support of our work and mission is appreciated, and I'm thankful that you shared questions and feedback, expressed your concerns and frustrations, took the time to listen to the panelists/presenters, and participated in a respectful and authentic exchange of ideas and suggestions.

I learned a lot from the community meeting, but I first want to take a brief step back to apologize for not involving neighbors and community members at an earlier stage. The importance you place on being solicited for input and being provided an opportunity to ask questions earlier in the process was clear. I understand the hurt that the neighborhood has experienced because of the lack of an inclusive community process from the beginning. I should have designed and managed a more collaborative process and communicated more effectively, and I take full responsibility.

The July 10th meeting attendees asked excellent questions and offered suggestions regarding a whole host of issues, including our plan for building maintenance, operations, safety considerations, and other neighborhood impact issues. We are formulating responses to questions and concerns that were raised and we will share them with you. We are also mapping out a more comprehensive and inclusive community process going forward, and we will share that with you as well. We'll be working to develop those details next week, and we know that time is of the essence.

I invite you to send me any additional thoughts or concerns for consideration as we continue this process, including suggestions related to SHC's communication with community members. Please email comments/suggestions/questions to [info@shcinc.org](mailto:info@shcinc.org). You may also reach out to me directly at 617-623-6111 x 110.

I want to convey my commitment to communicate with our neighbors and community members in a more timely and transparent manner. I hope that we can continue to work together to honor our shared values around helping the most vulnerable members of our community, while also ensuring that our neighborhood is a great place to live.

Thank you, again, to the many community members who have helped to contribute to SHC's mission over the years. Having the support of our community is essential for the success of our program.