

# City Of Edwardsville Officials Suspend Citation Issued Over Operation of Overnight Warming Location

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EDWARDSVILLE – Mayor Art Risavy announced on Tuesday, January 16, that he has directed City staff to suspend a citation issued to First Baptist Church, 534 St. Louis Street, as part of a zoning matter related to an overnight warming location for the unhoused.

As part of the action, an upcoming municipal court appearance also is being canceled. “It was never our intent to prevent it from operating, particularly at a time of such dangerous weather conditions. The city’s concern was only that the facility was safe for the people staying there and volunteering there,” Mayor Risavy said. “Our hope now is to continue a conversation with First Baptist Church so we can be part of the solution for those who are unhoused or in dire circumstances.”

The City had been asking First Baptist Church to apply for a special use permit that City officials said would be necessary for the operation of the overnight warming center at 534 St. Louis Street, which is within the MU-1 Downtown Mixed Use zoning district.

The City has said a special use permit would be applicable for any hotel, overnight warming location, adult or child day care facilities or other such uses that are not specifically included in this zoning district, and helps to ensure appropriate life safety measures and operations are in place.

A special use permit request entails a public hearing before the Zoning Board of Appeals, where applicants share details for their plans and members of the public can comment. The Zoning Board of Appeals would issue a recommendation that then would be subject to City Council approval.

“I want to reassure you that the City Council members and I know there is a need for these types of services for our most vulnerable citizens. I have been working with urgency to try to resolve our issues of concern with the shelter at First Baptist Church,” Mayor Risavy said. The City has a long history of support for social service efforts and organizations that benefit the Edwardsville community. The City provides annual support for the Glen-Ed Pantry and the Main Street Community Center. The City also works closely with the YMCA, the Main Street Community Center, the Edwardsville Public Library and the City’s public safety departments to provide daytime warming shelters along with many other services.

“We are incredibly thankful for our churches, for our dedicated volunteers, and for our compassionate and giving community,” Mayor Risavy said. “The elected officials and I share the desire to positively impact the lives of those in need and we are committed to proving that.”