

Hello, I am Joyce McPhetres, President of the Board of Tedford Housing.

Tedford Housing has been providing pathways from homelessness to home in Brunswick and Midcoast Maine for 30 years. We operate two emergency housing facilities on Federal Street for families and Cumberland Street for individual adults. We operate the facilities professionally, with respect for our neighbors, and the values of the Brunswick community. We also operate three affordable housing properties in Brunswick, on the corner of Everett and Middle Streets and Bath, along with homeless prevention services and support services for students in the three area school districts who are homeless.

To quickly review...Tedford Housing began this journey in recognition that the current emergency housing facilities capacity is inadequate to meet the need.

We can only provide shelter assistance to approximately 10% of families and 19% of individuals who request help.

The two buildings are over 100 years old and do not fit with current thinking and design for emergency housing facilities and programming.

We conducted our own research, visiting similar programs and engaged Planning Decisions to further understand the “market” in the southern Midcoast.

To meet the growing needs of the community and to satisfy the tenets specified in the Brunswick Comprehensive Plan of address affordable housing and issues of community members being homeless, Tedford put forward our plan to create the **Tedford Housing Resource Center**.

The vision is “To build a facility that combines adequate emergency housing beds with key onsite services and linkages to community resources. A comprehensive approach that will result in the reduced risk of homelessness in the Brunswick area community, a faster return to housing stability for youth, adults and families, healthier households and increased self-sufficiency.”

The communities and the Town of Brunswick do recognize the need and do recognize that the community and partners have a responsibility to create a system of services and facilities to provide “...refuge and a bridge between homelessness to residency in a suitable fixed location.”

A model of a homeless service system with services integrated with housing provides a much more productive pathway from homelessness to home, addressing its root causes.

Inappropriate and fear based profiling and creating a “class of people” is not doing justice to real people with real challenges. Homeless is a temporary condition and does not define the person or the family. A mental health illness or a substance abuse disorder does not define the person or a class of people.

We appreciated the opportunity to work with the Shelter Task Force on their charge to update the zoning ordinance to define “homeless shelters” and thank the task force members and town staff for their diligence and reception of community input.

As the council and planning board proceed through its work, our hope is that the a balanced conversation will create reasonable standards which will responsibly facilitate the development of sheltering facilities and recognize that programs such as Oasis, The Gathering Place and Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program are not burdens for the community but are valuable resources and assets for assisting the community to helping real people with real needs.

We stand ready to work with the Council and the Planning Board, the community and partners to address the issues of providing pathways from homelessness to home.

Thank you