

ORDINANCE NO

BILL NO. 8 - 2020

February 5, 2020

AN ORDINANCE

Establishing a Commission on Homelessness to advise the Mayor and Council on issues impacting the homeless or near homeless populations.

Whereas according to Title 42, Chapter 119, Subchapter I, of The United States Code homeless is defined as an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill); an institution that provides a temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized; or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; and

Whereas, according to the Eastern Continuum Coordinated Entry from January 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019 there were a total of 2,249 individuals identified homeless or at-risk of being homeless in Lehigh and Northampton County of which 1,426 or 63% identified Allentown as their previous night's residence; and

Whereas homelessness and homeless prevention is a priority for the City of Allentown;

Whereas the City of Allentown is committed to preventing homelessness, ending chronic homelessness and decreasing situational homelessness;

Therefore, be it resolved that the City of Allentown shall hereby establish a Commission on Homelessness comprised of but not limited or exclusive to City Administration, City staff, City Council member(s), public safety officers, the Allentown Coordinating Committee, the Regional Homeless Advisory Board, nonprofits and faith-based organizations, hospitals and other stakeholders.

Establishing Article 180C, to advise the Mayor and Council on issues impacting the homeless or near homeless population.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ALLENTOWN

SECTION ONE That Article 180C be added to Part I of the Administrative Code and read as follows

**ARTICLE 180C
HOMELESS COMMISSION**

180C.01 Purpose

180C.02 Establishment and Composition of the Board

180C.03 Powers and Duties

180C.04 Annual Report

180C.01 Purpose

The purpose of the Commission to advise the Mayor and Council and to make recommendations on issues relating to the homeless and near homeless populations in the City.

180C.02 ESTABLISHMENT AND COMPOSITION

The Commission on Homeless shall consist of 15 members appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council. Members shall include representatives from government, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, hospitals and other stakeholders involved in advocacy and service for the homeless or near homeless. The Mayor shall appoint the Chairperson of the board with the approval of council. One member of council shall serve as a non-voting liaison. The Mayor shall designate staff support for the Commission.

Duly appointed members shall serve a term of four (4) years, except that initial appointments shall be so staggered that the terms of the membership shall expire each year. On the initial appointments two members shall serve for four years, two for three years, one for two years and one member for one year.

The board shall meet monthly or on an as needed basis - having at least ten meetings a year with additional meetings as determined by the board. All meetings shall be advertised and open to the public.

The Board shall develop and approve their by-laws which shall be approved by Council by resolution.

180C.03 POWERS AND DUTIES

The Board shall serve as an advisory body. It shall be tasked with offering recommendations and suggestions on the following:

Educating the public about homelessness and ways in which we can help people in need.

Providing policy-based advocacy on behalf of the homeless to appropriate agencies.

Making recommendations aimed at ending and preventing homelessness

Facilitating communications, networking and referrals within the community to deal with the issues of homelessness.

Providing a representation or a "voice" for homeless in the community.

Seeking to ensuring the immediate needs of those experiencing homelessness are met and their civil rights are respected and protected.

The Board shall provide these recommendations to Allentown City Council and the Administration on a regular basis, at least annually as part of the annual report and presentation (see below, Section 177,05)

180C.04 ANNUAL REPORT AND PRESENTATION

The Board shall prepare a written report of the year's activities, a (1) one-year plan and long-term goals and scenarios. The report shall be given to the Mayor and shall be presented to Allentown City Council at an appropriate committee meeting no later than the second meeting in March.

SECTION TWO: That this Ordinance will take effect ten (10) days after final passage.

SECTION THREE: That all Ordinances inconsistent with the above provisions are repealed to the extent of their inconsistency.