



# TOWN OF YARMOUTH

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August 28, 2023, updated

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Proposed Homeless/Migrant Family Shelter in West Yarmouth

**Contact: Robert Whritenour, Town Administrator [rwhritenour@yarmouth.ma.us](mailto:rwhritenour@yarmouth.ma.us) 508 398-2231, ext. 1271**

**YARMOUTH, MA** - On Wednesday, August 23, 2023, the Massachusetts Governor's Office contacted the Town Administrator of the Town of Yarmouth to inform the Town of a proposed temporary sheltering of homeless, migrant families in 80-100 rooms at the Yarmouth Resort, a motel located at 343 Route 28 as part of a State of Emergency which has been declared in Massachusetts. Under the Emergency Declaration, state laws can override local zoning requirements.

“We have requested additional details on the proposal, including information on the migrant population, the timing of the proposal, as well as expressing the need for adequate time to coordinate with other government agencies to make suitable preparations. We also made known our concerns about the ongoing by-law violations associated at the proposed site,” according to Robert Whritenour, Yarmouth Town Administrator

The Town has asked for assistance from its state legislative delegation and the Barnstable County Emergency Preparedness Office of the Department of Health and Environment to establish a meeting with the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (HLC) in order to obtain more details of this proposal. At the present time, no families have been relocated to the Town of Yarmouth as far as we are aware.

“The Town, and its departments, will stand prepared to offer support and assistance for families receiving relocation assistance” Whritenour said. “We are seeking the full cooperation of state officials in securing more details on their plans so that Town departments can organize a well-managed and appropriate response.”

Town officials are also concerned about press reports indicating that the Yarmouth Resort appears to be forcing existing residents out of their housing in order to make room for migrants. “State officials need to be aware of all the various issues associated with the proposal before any final decisions are made,” Whritenour stated.

Massachusetts is considered a “Right to Shelter” state and the HLC is obligated to find shelter for eligible families. Chapter 23B, Section 30 (A) of the General Laws provides, in part, that,

*“...[T]he department shall administer a program of emergency housing assistance to needy families with children and pregnant women with no other children.*

*The department shall administer the program throughout the commonwealth at locations that are geographically convenient to families who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and shall administer the program in a fair, just and equitable manner.”*

At the present time, more than 80 communities throughout Massachusetts are currently working with the state to support more than 20,000 homeless families currently in crisis.

. By surveying area communities, we are aware of similar placements in our region in the towns of Kingston, Bourne, Eastham, as well as Joint Base Cape Cod. Yarmouth has been the most recent municipality to be notified.

The Town has expressed concerns that code compliance be examined at the facility to ensure a safe and desirable location for the families involved. “Other details to be considered include providing meals, public health services, and transitional assistance as well as any other services that may be required, These are details for which additional information is being requested.

For more information, contact the Office of the Town Administrator at (508) 398-2231 or [rwrittenour@yarmouth.ma.us](mailto:rwrittenour@yarmouth.ma.us).