



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Roberts and City Councilmembers

FROM: Jessica Simulcik Smith, City Clerk

DATE: January 5, 2016

RE: Documents received at 01/04/16 Council Meeting

CC: Debbie Tarry, City Manager
John Norris, Assistant City Manager

Attached hereto are documents received from the public at your January 4, 2016 City Council Business Meeting.

- 1) Written comment regarding homelessness submitted by Brad Lancaster.

COUNCIL TALK

1.4.16

My name is Brad Lancaster. I live in Shoreline.

I thank the Council for its resolution in support of King County's declaration of emergency regarding homelessness. I want to report the city staff has begun working on these issues. They have acted with me and my spouse, Kim, in good faith. What's more, they have acted intelligently. Intelligence is often in short supply in government bureaucracies. But not in Shoreline.

In the next few weeks, I will be addressing some questions relating to homelessness. Tonight, I want to ask: **Is homelessness the responsibility of Shoreline city government?** Some think it is not. I disagree.

Every community provisions its people. We work together to provide for ourselves, to get what we need. Our Declaration of Independence asserts that governments exist to help people get life, liberty, and happiness. The United States Constitution, in its preamble, states that government exists to promote our general welfare. We debate among ourselves how much provisioning we should do for one another. We rely primarily on our economy to provide most needs. But our economic system is not open to all. Some cannot participate. We recognize this in our school lunch programs and Medicaid and social security and public hospitals and shelters and food banks. The City of Shoreline is one of the groups responsible for homeless citizens. In any of our debates about how much to do for one another, leaving people to face winters outside and alone cannot be one of our decisions.

Some governments act as the handmaidens of rich people. Other governments think they exist only to quash crime and keep trains running. Both wash their hands of the messy business of helping people. Such governments ignore their most fundamental purpose.

The City of Shoreline exists to be a partner to the citizens of Shoreline. This little government should lead us sometimes, follow us sometimes, and puzzle out with us what the good life looks like. Some Shoreliners are homeless. As our partner, the City should take homelessness personally. The City should care, and encourage all Shoreliners to care. The City should put its shoulder, along with ours, to the task of making a place that is warm, clean, and secure for every Shoreliner.

So, is homelessness the responsibility of the City of Shoreline? I hope you will answer, Yes.