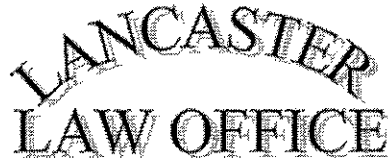


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FEB 03 2016



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CITY CLERK
CITY OF SHORELINE

February 3, 2016

Shoreline City Council Members

BY HAND DELIVERY TO SHORELINE CITY CLERK

RE: Proposals for Accommodating Shoreline's Homeless Citizens

Dear Council Members:

I propose some changes to the Shoreline zoning code and Shoreline policies and priorities. I expect adjustments to these proposals in view of the many objections that will undoubtedly be raised to each. It seems to me unlikely that the City could or should implement all of these proposals simultaneously, though some could helpfully overlap one another.

- A. **Homeless Encampment for Families with Children.** The City should assist the community in siting a permanent homeless encampment for families with school-age children. Families with school-age children should be allowed to remain at that encampment so long as their children attend Shoreline schools and they continue to have need of such an encampment. This site needs a workable school bus pick-up space. Allow citizens to site tiny houses that groups construct at private expense for the benefit of this encampment. Provide platforms for tents and power in the interim period while tiny houses are being fabricated. Over time, transition from Honey Buckets to a communal toilet, shower, laundry, kitchen facility for the encampment, funded privately. Seek a non-profit to supervise the encampment and provide administrative assistance to campers. (This week, elementary and secondary students without a permanent residential location were estimated to exceed 35,000 in Washington State.)

- B. **Homeless Encampment Permits for Organizations and Individual Citizens (without Children).** Streamline the permitting process for homeless encampments without children at churches and at the homes of individuals. Reduce the fees involved to a *de minimis* sum. Create a process that seeks only that information pertinent to a homeless encampment. Allow people to sign up for such encampments preemptively, before the need for siting a camp proves necessary. Make the time period for each temporary encampment six months

(April 1 to September 30, October 1 to March 31), so that no camp is required to move in the middle of the winter rains and snows. Once an applicant has applied and been approved to host a homeless encampment, that approval should remain valid for a period of five years, absent a fundamental change of circumstances. Encourage permitted individuals and organizations to collaborate to support specific camps, creating circles of four permitted locations, so that the encampments have a predictable cycle of local siting year after year. This arrangement means that each site would host a camp only once every eighteen months. It is important to settle the camps in a single municipal area. Presently, camps may scramble from Shoreline, then to Burien, then to Kenmore, then to Seattle. Campers' efforts to find jobs and establish stable relationships do not survive such jolting and repeated dislocations.

- C. **Public Siting.** The City should itself maintain two homeless encampment sites on two public spaces, only one of which is active at any time. These spaces should accommodate encampments of 100 persons. The City should encourage service organizations to build and donate moveable tiny houses for these locations, and should, over time, build bathrooms, showers, and laundry/kitchen facilities for the camp sites. The camp that locates in such a public space should be required to move once yearly, to avoid creating a slum in Shoreline. I propose that the east end of Ronald Bog Park (the arboretum/nature walk), an unused portion of Fircrest, or portions of the Seattle City Light easement located diagonally between 9th NE and NE 185th, and 10th NE and NE 188th, or the north end of Hamlin Park in the open field could be appropriate locations, after successful negotiations with others who have control or influence over those sites. Several other sites have been suggested as well. I would be happy to make suggestions about rules and details of such sitings.

- D. **Permit Tiny Houses.** The City should permit tiny houses to be sited on the City's homeless encampment sites. These moveable shelters, under 200 square feet each, should have power, power venting, and heat, but no plumbing. These tiny shelters are intended to be warmer and more durable and less unsightly than tents and tarps. These tiny houses should be donated by service organizations in Shoreline. After some experimentation, the City might offer a specification for acceptable tiny houses for homeless encampments. The Low Income Housing Institute has fashioned a good first attempt at such a workable and inexpensive tiny house design. The City should also allow individuals who wish to provide homeless shelters to site tiny houses on their parcels for housing homeless persons.

- E. **Accessory Dwelling Unit Provisions.** Remove section C and D from the Accessory Dwelling Unit provisions (SMC 20.40.210, which read: "Either the primary residence or the accessory dwelling unit shall be occupied by an owner of the property or an immediate family member of the property owner. Immediate family includes parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, children, and grandchildren. Accessory dwelling unit shall be converted to another permitted

use or shall be removed, if one of the dwelling units ceases to be occupied by the owner as specified above.”) Remove also the (pointless) obligation to make family-use-only run with the land by recording a special deed. In the alternative, revise the code to expressly permit non-family member use of ADUs for rent-free housing of homeless persons by persons who wish to make such a use of their ADUs.

- F. **Open Homes.** The City should encourage Shoreliners to make extra rooms and unused basements in their homes available to homeless persons, at no rent. Any homeless person who wishes such housing, and any homeowner who wishes to house homeless persons, should be deeply screened by the homeless encampment supervisory non-profit. Training for both parties should be provided. A dispute resolution process should be put in place before the program commences. Current commission of crimes should bar people from this program, though I would recommend allowing people who have served their time and are compliant with their terms of probation. This approach alone might house all of Shoreline’s homeless persons. I presently consider addressing Shoreline’s faith communities to test response to this proposal.
- G. **Homeless Coordinator.** Encourage a non-profit to supervise the homeless encampments, organize service providers, and offer administrative support for all homeless encampments in Shoreline. Greater Seattle Cares might also consider expanding their scope to include such supervision. If both decline, I would be open to commencing a non-profit for this dedicated purpose.
- H. **Public Assistance Coordinator.** Assign a City staff person to coordinate provision of public services to homeless persons, possibly through Rob Beem’s office. The public response to needy persons is a bewildering thicket of uncoordinated enterprises. Many homeless persons lack the administrative skills to navigate this complex system (if it can be called a system at all). Reduce applications for public assistance to one application, one time for all services. Make the system one aimed at serving, not torturing, homeless persons.
- I. **Create a Flexible Housing Fund.** Create a fund, to which the public may contribute, the purpose of which is to supplement short term needs of Shoreline residents who may become homeless. Coordinate this fund with the efforts of HopeLink, which works to the same ends with financially distressed housed persons. (This concept has been recommended by Kirkland’s Homelessness Task Force.)
- J. **Create a Homeless Works Program.** Identify work that may be performed (in parks or on streets or other public parcels) by homeless persons. Send a van around, marked appropriately, to seek homeless persons who want to make a day’s wages. Make the work day six hours, with a one hour lunch break (provide lunch). Pay the workers in cash at day’s end. Solicit panhandling individuals to join this work force. Such a program would address the chronic need of

homeless, unemployed people for spending cash for buses, medications, and life's many sundries, and might suppress panhandling. (This sort of program is under way in Albuquerque, New Mexico.)

- K. **Homelessness Advisory Committee.** Form a public committee to address homelessness. Invite the key players. Assign a staff person to shepherd fruitful proposals to the staff and council. If the United States goes through another recession, as is predicted, the homelessness problem in Shoreline may explode. We need citizens who are focused on this problem so its dimensions and the City's responses are coordinated.
- L. **Shoreline Code Revisions.** Scour discriminatory provisions from the Shoreline zoning code that may disparage, disenfranchise, or exclude homeless persons. I believe the Council has already asked staff to investigate this matter.
- M. **State Statutory Revisions.** Ask the State legislature to scour anti-homeless provisions from the Revised Code of Washington (for example, RCW 35.22.280 (34) and RCW 9.66.010).
- N. **City's Annual Goals.** Put the terms stated in the December 14, 2015, Resolution of the Council on the action agenda and annual goals of the City for 2016.
- O. **Publicize Successes.** As Shoreline grows in its ability to address this cultural problem, propagate successes to other municipalities. Someone could write a book.

Some of these fixes are easy and cheap, some not so easy or so cheap. I believe there is great concern among Shoreliners for the well-being of homeless persons. There may well be significant funds available to be contributed to effect these changes. A certain sense of responsibility well-met also awaits Shoreline if it is able to make itself a place where all citizens are welcome, cared for, and integrated, even those who are broke. Homeless persons deserve respect and hospitality.

I thank you for your courtesies in this matter, and look forward to your deliberation concerning these matters.

Respectfully,



Brad Lancaster