



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Roberts and City Councilmembers

FROM: Jessica Simulcik Smith, City Clerk

DATE: February 23, 2016

RE: Documents received at 2/22/16 Council Meeting

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

Attached hereto are documents received from the public at your February 22, 2016 City Council Business Meeting.

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

COUNCIL TALK

2.22.16

My name is Brad Lancaster. I live in Shoreline.

I am identifying ways the Council might change social policy in Shoreline to improve life for homeless people. Before Martin Luther King Day, I asked the Council to authorize a permanent tiny house village for homeless parents with school-age children. I also asked you to fundamentally revise the permitting process for homeless encampments. In that regard, I have begun discussions with a group of students from Seattle University to draft uniform revisions to municipal codes to make them more homeless friendly.

Tonight, I suggest that Shoreline should dedicate two public spaces to homeless encampments. Each should accommodate 100 persons without children. Frankly, it is unlikely that homelessness is going to diminish markedly until the United States restructures itself economically. Manufacturing jobs have fled to cheaper labor markets. The loss of those jobs is rippling downward through the economy, just as the cost of real estate (and rents) rises in urban areas. So, homelessness is going to get worse in Shoreline before it gets better.

The City of Shoreline should shoulder its obligations with regard to Shoreline's homeless persons by dedicating two public spaces to tiny house and tent encampments.

These sites should have the following practices.

First, the encampment sites should welcome placement of tiny houses on trailers constructed by those willing to donate their time and money to building tiny houses. In the interim, the encampment sites should also hold platforms on which campers may pitch tents under nicely arranged tarps (I have a design for that). Over time, we should build common bathrooms, laundry, and kitchen facilities for these public encampments.

Second, only one of the two sites should be in use at any time. Annually, in the spring, the entire camp should move to the alternate location. There is a problem with any encampment. It may, with neglect, become a slum. Living there might stigmatize residents and create marginal apartheid among citizens. The City should require that the tiny house encampments remain clean and well-maintained (by persons who do not work for the City).

Third, this encampment on public ground should self-govern and be treated with respect as another neighborhood of Shoreline.

Several sites have been suggested. Each will require action by the City council and cooperation from other governmental agencies and the public. There may be some fireworks, but homelessness is our problem, not just that of homeless persons. Let's do what we can do.