

From: [Pamela Cross](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: Backyard Encampments
Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2017 12:56:25 PM

Please remove Backyard Encampments from Resolution 379. If removed, we can concentrate on Encampments located on church or commercial or vacant property and actually move ahead with the original intention of reducing barriers, and facilitating churches and other non-profits to provide temporary and safe shelter.

(The following text was prepared on my iPhone so please forgive the formatting)

There is nothing good that can come from a backyard encampment (BYE). The host, the homeless, and the neighbors will all suffer.

The biggest loser in all of this will be the homeowner who generously offers backyard space for a temporary but legal site.

There is no handbook on how to set up a BYE. No step by step instructions or guidance.

A TUP, as proposed, will list a handful of requirements such as fire extinguishers, length of stay (now at 90 days with additional 90 days option), designated smoking area, adequate sanitary facilities (port-a-potty).

Still under consideration are extending the stay to 1-year and allowing the BYE to butt up against the fence shared by the homeowner and the neighbor.

There is no agency to help manage the BYE. This is another unsettled issue. Without a managing agency, the homeowner will be responsible for obtaining the port-a-potty, finding and bringing in food, clothing, personal hygiene items, blankets and so forth. This can become a full time job.

The homeowner will have to locate nearby showering facilities that can be accessed by the homeless. Or they can offer their own bathroom for this.

Social services and medical services will not be delivered to the site (they have inadequate personnel to locate small groups throughout the city).

Mr and Mrs Lancaster hosted a BYE (illegally) but this was a camp of the homeless that had been together a long time and had formed a non-profit organization under the guidance and help of Mr and Mrs Lancaster. This group CUWS has their own set of rules and runs itself.

In my time following this issue I have been unable to find out if there are any other cohesive self-run camps like CUWS but have not found any except for the large Tent Cities in Seattle (100+ members).

Should the guests agree to leave when the TUP expires, the homeless go back to the church lots or to illegal camps - they are no closer to housing than they were when they moved in.

The homeowner now has a backyard potentially full of trash, damaged landscaping due to the tents and daily use, neighbors who probably no longer speak to them due the odors from multiple smokers, port-a-potties, and the noise of conversations long into the night.

I've only touched on a few things. I don't mention the total lack of privacy the homeowner will suffer from. Walk out the door or look out the window and the yard is full of people.

On a personal note, I'm not fond of having family stay with me for extended periods of time. I could not sponsor a group of strangers for months at a time.

I left out: how is the homeowner supposed to locate and vet homeless people before inviting them to live in their backyards?

And the big issue of liability: homeowners insurance is not designed to cover this type of situation so the insurance policy will probably be cancelled or non-renewed (confirmed by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner).

Thank you.
Pam Cross