

Craig, Sondra

From: Mark Schimpf <mschimpf01@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 8, 2023 10:48 AM
To: ZZ Council Members; ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: Opposition to Item 23-0673

Some people who received this message don't often get email from mschimpf01@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

***** CAUTION:** This email originated from an external sender. **DO NOT** click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. *******

Hello,

My name is Mark Schimpf and I live at 1223 Adams Street.

I spent the better part of 7 years working with our homeless neighbors in various roles, and I have the privilege of knowing many of them on a personal level.

I would like to state my opposition to the proposed amendments to Ordinance 32-5 regarding camping on City property. Camping in parks by our unhoused neighbors is already an act for which they can receive a ticket, effectively criminalizing basic acts of survival. That alone should be a mark of shame for our City.

I'm not here to marginalize or minimize the disruption and costs related to having so many people sleeping in parks and other public areas. However, what are the proposed alternatives? There are no shelter beds available in La Crosse. Sleeping outside is the only option for them. Increased enforcement of camping bans will drive people to more desperate situations and locations. Camping is already illegal, yet people have kept camping despite the tickets, so I would propose this ordinance is already an ineffective mechanism to begin with. Sharpening the language of it doesn't change that.

What are the actual alternatives that the Council has in mind here? Where should people go?

This is a challenging situation for our entire community, but let's not mince words. The real victims in this situation are our neighbors who are living and dying while sleeping outside in parks, parking ramps, and sidewalks in unsanitary conditions with poor access to the most basic services like clean water, clean and dry clothing, bathrooms, showers, and food. They're not debris to be rounded up and thrown away, they're people. We need to center our discourse, public and otherwise, around the inherent worth and personhood of our homeless neighbors.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

--

Mark Schimpf