

## Elsen, Nikki

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**From:** Jay M. Lokken, CEO <jay@ed3solutiongroup.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 5, 2023 1:10 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members  
**Subject:** Support for 23-0673 from the June Council/to amend the camping ordinance

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To: Council Members Chris Kahlow, Mackenzie Mendel, Mayor Reynolds, J & A Committee Members, full council and City Clerk Nikki Elson

From: Jay Lokken and Ken Riley, 950 Cass Street, La Crosse

Date: July 5, 2023

RE: Support for 23-0673 from the June Council/to amend the camping ordinance

The situation in city parks, downtown, parking ramps and connecting neighborhoods has reached a critical situation. As persons living and operating businesses downtown, we are questioning that you support the amendment to the camping ordinance in city parks. We have been involved through the Downtown Neighborhood Association for over three years regarding issues related how to best support unsheltered individuals. One thing I hope we can all agree on, living in a park/parking ramps is not safe and/or in the best interest of the unsheltered, as well as the entire community. Moreover, it is nothing short of an absolute travesty that the school district and individuals are unable to safely utilize parks.

**Homelessness is a national, state and regional issue. The City of La Crosse cannot and should not be wholly responsible for addressing this complex and multi-faceted issue facing the entire region.** La Crosse County has the department that offers the service and we are encouraged by their willingness to assist, but this will take a larger community effort which requires neighboring communities like Onalaska, and Holmen to be engaged. Sadly, neighboring communities have used La Crosse to elevate their homeless issues by saying that is where the services are; that is just an easy copout. We are going to have much more success working together than expecting the people of La Crosse to take on the complex issues alone. Centralizing services in one community unfairly puts the burden, that should be shared regionally on the City of La Crosse. In order for a fair and realistic approach to be realized, this requires the region, combined with area nonprofits, state and national government agencies to address this homelessness collaboratively, with each community taking on a part of the required shared responsibility. As citizen of La Crosse, we are compassionate and want the best for the city and region. We are and will continue to do our share to be part of the solution, but the City of La Crosse cannot shoulder this challenge alone; it is not fair to the tax payers, citizens and businesses for one community to bear the entire burden.

Therefore, it is for these reasons we request that in vote in favor of the amendment.

Best regards,

Jay Lokken and Ken Riley



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