



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Agenda - Final

Judiciary & Administration Committee

Thursday, August 8, 2024

4:30 PM

Council Chambers
City Hall, First Floor

special meeting

This meeting is open for in-person attendance and will also be available through video conferencing. The meeting can be viewed (no participation) by visiting the Legislative Information Center Meetings calendar (<https://cityoflacrosse.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>) - find the scheduled meeting and click on the "In Progress" video link to the far right in the meeting list.

Public comment is limited to agenda items; statements shall be restricted to the subject matter. If you wish to speak on an agenda item, please register in advance:

- Register online at <https://www.cityoflacrosse.org/city-services/meeting-registration>
- Contact the City Clerk's Office no later than 4:00p on the day of the meeting, with the following information: name, municipality of residence, if you are representing an organization or a person other than yourself at the meeting, and if you are speaking in favor, opposition or neutral.
- Sign up in person no less than ten (10) minutes before the start of the meeting.

If attending virtual and you wish to speak, contact the City Clerk's Office and we will provide you with the information necessary to join the meeting. Call 608-789-7510 or email cityclerk@cityoflacrosse.org.

Public hearings shall be limited to 30 minutes when there are opposing viewpoints from the public. In the absence of opposing viewpoints, public hearings are limited to 15 minutes. Individual speakers shall speak no more than three (3) minutes unless waived by the Chair or a majority of the committee.

Members of the public who would like to provide written comments on any agenda may do so by emailing cityclerk@cityoflacrosse.org, using a drop box outside of City Hall or mailing to City Clerk, 400 La Crosse Street, La Crosse WI 54601.

Call To Order

Roll Call

Chris Kahlow, Tamra Dickinson, Mac Kiel, Mackenzie Mindel, Chris Woodard, Jennifer Trost

Agenda Items:

NEW BUSINESS

[24-1075](#)

Resolution removing parcel from "no camping" designation.

Sponsors: Kiel

Short circuited by Council Members Tamra Dickinson, Jennifer Trost, Mac Kiel, Mackenzie Mindel and Rebecca Schwarz 7.31.2024

Adjournment

Notice is further given that members of other governmental bodies may be present at the above scheduled meeting to gather information about a subject over which they have decision-making responsibility.

NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY

Requests from persons with a disability who need assistance to participate in this meeting should call the City Clerk's office at (608) 789-7510 or send an email to ADAcityclerk@cityoflacrosse.org, with as much advance notice as possible.



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

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400 La Crosse Street
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Text File

File Number: 24-1075

Agenda Date: 8/8/2024

Version: 1

Status: Agenda Ready

In Control: Judiciary & Administration Committee

File Type: Resolution

Agenda Number:

Resolution removing parcel from “no camping” designation.

AMENDED RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Section 32-5 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse allows various governing bodies to declare certain properties as not available for camping; and

WHEREAS, Parcel #17-50256-10 was designated as a “no camping” parcel.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of La Crosse that it hereby removes the designation of “no camping” from a portion of Parcel 17-50256-10 known as Houska Park.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City staff is hereby directed to take any and all steps necessary to effectuate this resolution.

Resolution removing parcel from “no camping” designation.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Section 32-5 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse allows various governing bodies to declare certain properties as not available for camping; and

WHEREAS, Parcel #17-50256-10 was designated as a “no camping” parcel.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Common Council of the City of La Crosse that it hereby removes the designation of “no camping” for Parcel 17-50256-10.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City staff is hereby directed to take any and all steps necessary to effectuate this resolution.

SHORT-CIRCUIT BY COUNCIL

24-1075 Resolution removing parcel from "no camping" designation.

Whereas, the attached legislation was not properly submitted and approved pursuant to Council Rule XV; and

Whereas, the Mayor has refused to approve the submission of the attached legislation to the appropriate governmental body/bodies at their next meeting.

We, the undersigned, being duly elected members of the Common Council of the City of La Crosse, do hereby approve the submission of the attached legislation to the **Judiciary & Administration Committee** to be considered by the members thereof at a special meeting to be held on **Thursday, August 8, 2024, at 4:30 p.m.** and to the **August 8th meeting of the Common Council** to be considered by the members thereof at its regular meeting. This approval is given due to the time element necessitating consideration of the attached legislation at the earliest possible date.

	<u>COMMON COUNCIL MEMBERS</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>
1.	<u>Janea Dickinson</u>	<u>1</u>
2.	<u>Jennifer Trout</u>	<u>11</u>
3.	<u>Mac Kul</u>	<u>7</u>
4.	<u>Markenji Burdick</u>	<u>8</u>
5.	<u>Kubeca S P</u>	<u>10</u>

Dated this 31st day of July, 2024.

Filed in the City Clerk's office this 31st day of July, 2024.

Nikki M. Elsen
Nikki M. Elsen, City Clerk

NOTE: Pursuant to Common Council Rules XV and IX.

Craig, Sondra

From: djustin5275 <djustin5275@charter.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 2:04 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: 24-1075 No camping at Houska

Some people who received this message don't often get email from djustin5275@charter.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Good day, as a city of LaCrosse property owner and a tenant of the Municipal boat harbor I truly see it as a mistake to change parcel 17-50256-10 from no camping to camping. To move forward we must move forward not repeat the past. Please come up with a better and permanent resolution.

Dennis Justin
City Parcel owner 17-50365-104
Muni Harbor tenant B27

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Craig, Sondra

From: Ryan Torgerson <ryandrums@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 1:54 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Houska park homeless camp

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To whom it may concern. It is growing very clear to most of us that you have no plan to help the homeless people especially the ones who are suffering from addiction. The fact that it's even being brought up to let them camp at houska park is a complete joke! My family has a boat in the municipal harbor and this aggravates the hell out of me to the extreme. We pay a lot of money to keep our boats in the slip and the last time you allowed the camps we saw theft and vandalism. There is no video protection in the harbor aimed at the boats and paying police to survey the area is a complete waste of our tax payers money. Not to mention when we bring friends and family on boat rides it's a complete embarrassment to our great city and beautiful shoreline. I'm sure the customers enjoying the patio and eating at Pettibone boat club really love looking across the river to a homeless camp that is a complete mess.

Here's my thoughts. If you're gonna allow them to camp at a park how about one of the public lands or unused parks over by the bluff and far away from the downtown area where all the tourist go. Or how about one of the many abandoned unused buildings in town. Like the Kmart building or perhaps the old north side fire station that now sits next to the new fire and police station. At least they could be better monitored and less likely to disturb the tax payers in that area. Not the hotel on French island either! Thats another problem waiting to happen. La crosse can't handle the problem so put them in the town of Campbell. This is the most pathetic plan from this committee. If they can't come up with a logical plan then they all need to resign from the committee.

I have a thought on a solution that I hope I can share at the meeting next week august 8th. It's called "Homeless School" if you would like to hear about my solution feel free to call! 608-738-8185

With hopes
Ryan Torgerson
Sent from my iPhone

Craig, Sondra

From: Dennis Smalley <houseboate@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 1:03 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: questions in regards to item 24-1075

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To whom this may concern,

These questions are in in regards to item 24-1075, removing the no camping restriction at Houska Park:

- Does this mean a full fledged camp like it was before?
- Does the "12 hour stay then have to move" apply?
- Why are you doing this? Purpose?

Dennis & Joyce Smalley
Slip D42 Municipal Harbor
houseboate@gmail.com
Cell - 608-632-1393

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Dennis Smalley
Captain of the "e"

If you always tell the truth, you don't have to remember what you said.

Craig, Sondra

From: Jenna Ferries <jenna.ferries@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 2:51 PM
To: Happel, Douglas
Cc: Elsen, Nikki; Craig, Sondra
Subject: Proposed Overnight Encampment Site at Erickson Park

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Dear Mr. Happel,

May I please submit to you a concern I have with an issue that will be on the upcoming Common Council agenda?

I was shocked to read about the proposal set to go before the La Crosse Common Council on August 8 meant to address overnight shelter needs of the unhoused, in which Erickson Park is named as one of the proposed outdoor sites. While I agree that solutions are necessary, I feel strongly that placement of such an encampment would be highly inappropriate directly adjacent to an elementary school.

It is unfair to generalize about all unhoused individuals contributing to unsafe conditions within such encampments, but among my concerns are issues outlined in the proposal itself including: "ensuring the safety of both the shelter residents and surrounding community can necessitate hiring security personnel," "when homeless persons leave their location and garbage, abandoned property, and hazardous or infectious materials are left behind," "from past experiences of encampment clean up at Cameron Park, Houska Park, Isle la Plume and River Point District, contractors and staff clean sites with heavy machinery and hand-pick to clear out small items such as plastic detritus and needles" and other references being "based on significant past experiences."

I don't know if the Council-person's proposal was based on the possibility of Spence being closed as a school, but obviously that referendum has not yet passed, and if it does, the timeline of a new school being constructed does not coincide with the City's need for an immediate solution for housing needs to be addressed. While I do appreciate that this proposal better addresses what the Salvation Army had previously highlighted as concerns beyond simply placing people in consolidated areas for shelter, such as access to social services, emergency services, security, mental health resources and drug/alcohol counseling, please ensure that your selection of future sites are made without adversely affecting the youngest and most vulnerable in our community!

Thank you,
Jenna Ferries
CC: City Clerk; Deputy City Clerk

Craig, Sondra

From: kevin silha <nofee6@live.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 9:22 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Homeless camping.

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As a citizen of LaCrosse and a boat owner renting a boat slip in Municipal Harbor, I am absolutely against any kind of overnight camping in any public park. How much of our money does the city have to throw at the homeless problem to realize it cannot be solved that way. It is an endless money pit. Hundreds of thousands of dollars wasted on Houska Park, stolen and destroyed property in the Marina. Haven't the Bleeding heart liberals on the city council learned their lesson? No, absolutely not if you allow camping in city parks again.

Kevin L Silha
City of LaCrosse resident.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Craig, Sondra

From: crewchief <crewchief@centurytel.net>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 8:09 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Cc: shmybell@centurytel.net
Subject: Item 24-1075 Unsheltered Population

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Council members,

Please do not allow camping for the unsheltered population at Houska Park. The previous experience of allowing them to camp at Houska Park proved that it is not a good solution. Security for the entire Isle La Plume community was not adequate to ensure proper personal and property protections.

Jim Morris
1210 Bennett Street

Craig, Sondra

From: Ann Dummer <aedummer@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 8:08 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Item: 24-1075 Resolution removing parcel from "no camping" designation.

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I am requesting things do NOT change at Houska Park.

I rent out a slip at the La Crosse Municipal Boat Harbor.

It was very scary for us the last time there was camping allowed at the park! The people staying at Houska Park are not predictable. There is no way to know what their intentions are. One morning someone ran from camping site to the rocks by the blue structure. They were screaming at the top of their lungs. Words were slurred so we couldn't make out what he was saying. I couldn't believe he didn't fall in the water. Then all of a sudden he ran back to the campsite. Still screaming at the top of his lungs.

They have no respect for our private property. We had cigarette butts on top and swimming platform of our houseboat only when they were here. Also had tops of beer bottles on the top... we never drink bottles at houseboat. Also, a propane tank went missing. Not sure if homeless, but never happened any other time.

No one knows what the future holds. If for some reason we need to sell, the homeless camping so close to our slip will dramatically decrease the value or eliminate the sale all together. The following happened to a previous slip holder trying to sell his houseboat:

I had a couple who wanted to buy. They just wanted a place to call home on the river. Never intended to even take the boat out. Just sit on the front deck and enjoy the neighbors. Then they drove around the corner and saw the mess. They said they could not feel safe down there. End of the sale.

If La Crosse decides to go ahead with this, then the risk to our property increases immensely. I would like this risk taken out of my rental amount per season. My first thought is \$2,000 per larger boats. Or, say a percentage across the board. I would suggest 60 percent per slip.

Also, if something happens to my houseboat, La Crosse picks up the tab for all charges my insurance doesn't cover.

To be honest, my husband and I were out last weekend and really enjoyed the scenery. The tents destroys the beautiful landscape nature provides. That's the Mississippi I grew up with and would like to continue to enjoy.

Thank you very much for your understanding.

Craig, Sondra

From: Bernie Meinertz <bem1950@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 1:42 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: houska park

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PLEASE DO NOT LET THE HOMELESS BACK INTO OUR BEAUTIFUL PARK! THEY CHASED EVERYBODY AWAY AND DESTROYED THE BEAUTY OF THE PARK. DO NOT ALLO CAMPING IN THIS PARK!

Craig, Sondra

From: Pete Hansen <wingdam3@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, August 2, 2024 7:54 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: homeless - from Pete Hansen

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Good morning,

I am disturbed to see Erickson Park as a possible location for the homeless. Totally unacceptable with Spence and the pool right next door. The ball fields are in nearly daily use as well. I remember the number of needles found at Houska even before it became a homeless camp. Seems to me that the seminary on Mormon Coulee Road would be a perfect location and facility.

Pete Hansen

Craig, Sondra

From: Robert Friet <friet.robert@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 2, 2024 8:26 AM
To: Woodard, Chris; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Re: Houska Park

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I can not understand why the city of La Crosse & the tax payers in the city have to cater to a bunch of **ADDICTS**. Quit calling them "Unsheltered." There may be a couple that have experienced a hard time, But 99% of them are nothing but **ADDICTS** who don't want to conform to society. Why do **ADDICTS** deserve to be catered to? What have they done to earn it? How do they contribute to the rest of the city to get free medical attention once a week? WTF! Wherever you allow them to go; they trash it. The Econolodge, Houska have all been destroyed. They don't respect what the taxpayers give them so why are we catering to them? When will the city figure out that if you don't allow it; maybe they will go away. Why doesn't the city spend some tax dollars on enforcing the law against drugs instead of promoting it? If I have 1 beer & drive my vehicle I would get arrested. Again, WTF?

I remember my childhood having some great family outings at Houska park. Now it is dangerous just being in the neighborhood of that park. When camping was allowed there before, I drove through there once. Scared the hell out of me! I swore I would never do it again. I saw a drug deal going down & they weren't shy about it. They didn't even care that I was driving by.

I am 1 boat owner who pays \$1000.00 a year to the city of La crosse for a slip at Municipal Harbor. Look at the hundreds of boats at the harbor & the revenue the city gets from us. I have my boat on dock A. Whenever I go to take my boat out there will be some riff raff parked in the gravel lot at the end of Hood street next to the main channel. I don't feel safe when I see that. I almost always have my kids & grandkids with me. It doesn't appear that the city cares about us as much as they do about the **ADDICTS**. I am sure you have heard the stories about boats getting broken into, Stuff getting stolen, Needles being left on boats. But yet the city of La Crosse looks the other way & puts the label of "Unsheltered" on them.

None of this makes any sense whatsoever!

On Thu, Aug 1, 2024 at 7:07 PM Woodard, Chris <woodardc@cityoflacrosse.org> wrote:

Good evening,

I wanted to share with you that there is a few council members (not myself) who have put forward a resolution to again allow camping at Houska Park. I know previously- there may have been some struggles related to the unsheltered population and municipal harbor. I wanted to give you a heads up and let you have the ability to have your voices heard. If you want, please send an email in regards to item 24-1075 to zzcouncilmembers@cityoflacrosse.org

Thank you,
Chris Woodard
District 9 Council Member

--

Robert Friet
Asst. Manager
J & H Auto Body Shop Inc.
Ph: 608-788-0380
Fax: 608-788-1056
E-mail: bob@jhautobody.com

Craig, Sondra

From: Eric Larson <ericlarson315@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 2, 2024 11:30 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Houska Park - Camping

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Hello,
I do not support the camping at Houska Park.

This park should be kept to daily picnics with families and companies.

Thanks,
Eric Larson

From: Joni Heath <jonikheath@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 2, 2024 12:04 PM
To: ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: Written comment: August 8th meeting....Homeless Encampment(s)

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JoAnn Heath
La Crosse, WI. 54601
Town of Shelby

Re: Consideration at August 8th, 2024 public hearing-unsheltered encampments

Hello:

I am writing in support of the long term plan to end homelessness in our area as outlined by the Pathways Home project.

Homelessness is a complex issue to say the least. Establishing encampments doesn't make sense. The resources needed for an encampment, as outlined by Caden Perry in [The La Crosse Tribune](#), July 31, 2024 edition is significant and could best be used for long term solutions, such as increased shelter space. Can the indoor facilities listed in the above article be renovated with needed upgrades and licensing into longer term shelter space while stable housing solutions are found? Exploring encampments seems to be a step backward.

As a La Crosse County taxpayer, I welcome resources spent on long term solutions to the unsheltered issue. I have faith in those committed individuals working on Pathways Home project's goal of reaching functional zero homelessness. Through support of Pathways Home, we can enjoy living in a community who cares for those in need.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my thoughts.

Sincerely,
JoAnn Heath

From: Jay Thompson <jet10772@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 3, 2024 11:39 AM
To: ZZ Council Members; Woodard, Chris; Kristine Olson
Subject: Houska Park Item 24-1075

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item 24-1075

I am deeply disturbed and disappointed upon hearing about, once again allowing the unsheltered population to camp at Houska Park. This is an ongoing issue for the entire community but directly to my family and property.

I own a boathouse on the other side of the bike trail from Houska Park (H15). This has been in my family for 4 generations and means a great deal to me and my family. I now proudly have an infant daughter that I don't want to be in fear for or put in danger at any time.

I was thrilled to see the bank drive beautifully paved a few years ago. I truly hoped to see more resources spent on developing the park, possibly new playground equipment or pickleball courts to complement the dog park, bike trail and river view. Instead it became a chain linked fence of debauchery. I have a pit in the bottom of my stomach thinking about sacrificing this beautiful property on an unruly, disrespectful, and unlawful "unhoused population". This to me is actually disrespectful to the river culture the La Crosse area claims to take pride in. There has to be another answer besides destroying one of our parks. There are so many abandoned buildings throughout the city and neighboring areas. There has to be another place to allow "camping".

Having the homeless be placed or allowed to be at Houska Park is not the answer for avoiding an eyesore in more populous areas such as downtown or Cameron Park. This is not allowing for the public to use the park and as far as the boathouse owners this is a direct threat of damage and theft of personal property. Every boathouse on that stretch was broken into multiple times when the homeless population was placed in Houska Park. There are multiple police reports documenting this. During the duration of the homeless tent city tenancy, our boathouse was broken into. This particular attack hit particularly close to home because it involved sentimental physical property. The police were called and a report was filed. The window was smashed and the boathouse had been invaded and ransacked. Every drawer was pulled out, dumped and pawed through. Everything was essentially upside down. This is first and foremost a complete invasion of privacy, but there were multiple items missing including a TV, DVD player etc, but there was one thing missing that was immediately noted. My late son's tackle box. This was not an item worth much, but memories of the time we had before he passed away. The police were able to recover this tackle box. It was found in one of the homeless camper's tents. There is no reasonable doubt of its owner, as his fishing license remained tucked into the box.

The real point of that story was that nothing was ever done about it. They couldn't assign blame or arrest anyone concerning the theft because all campers denied any involvement. The tackle box was found next to our BED pillows, cooler, and other items also stolen.

The real issue is that once the homeless are placed in Houska park, or anywhere for that matter, they do not simply go away. For the city or for the residents. This will continue to eat up resources that will do nothing

to solve a long term problem. The city will have to pile money into keeping them there but also to at some point rebuild the park once again.

Along with property damage, there is real fear from the people regarding violence and mental instability.

There is also a call and visit from the police regarding a "camper" masturbating openly on a boulder alongside the bike trail with his pants completely removed. The officer stated that the man was mentally ill and was simply told to put his clothes back on and continue with his day. If men such as this are mere feet from where I am sleeping with my 8 month old daughter that is scary and I do consider this unsafe for Any member of the public. This is only one example of offensive and illegal behavior that was tolerated by the homeless last time. This same summer there was an entire police and K9 team searching for a man on the loose with actual swords. Ninja swords.

The city funded food delivery as well as dumpsters, portable bathrooms, water, food delivery and tents or shelter. This cost the city a great deal of resources that were often abused and taken for granted. There were multiple dumpster and port a potty fires at Houska Park that year. Along with disgusting trash of food delivery containers from this service , I cannot even count the number of needles, balloons etc that were discarded in all areas in and around Houska Park.

Houska Park was more or less deemed unusable and fenced off since the unsheltered were placed there.

This is a plea to please reconsider allowing camping at Houska Park to allow it to again be a usable part of the community.

I pay a great deal in park fees, taxes and for upkeep on my boathouse and the bank as well. I would like to be able to enjoy my summer boathouse without fear. I would also like to know that it is well protected when I am not there.

La Crosse has been known to cherish long standing tradition and appreciation of life on the river. Please respect our piece of history and the safety of the community.

Feel free to reach out with any questions or further testimony.

Jay 608-792-8530
Kristine 608-797-2267

Thank you,

Jason E. Thompson
Kristine C. Olson

From: Carol Zehms <czehms2016@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 5, 2024 12:18 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Cc: Dennis Smalley
Subject: Resolution 24-1075

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La Crosse City Council Members,

I write this email in hopes that you will reconsider passing this resolution to allow camping on the Isle Le Plume Island, specifically within the two parks that border the Municipal Harbor. I am a houseboat owner renting slip D28. From the last time the homeless were gathered and encamped in Houska Park, I have experienced unbelievable crimes, displays of disrespect, and felt such insecurity, abuse, and harassment on my own property, my houseboat. I will supply you with a listing of concerns and instances that I personally have experienced when the homeless were camping in Houska Park.

1. I had an LP tank stolen from my gas grill on the front of my houseboat. Chains were secure across each boat entrance.
2. I found used syringes with needles on the front deck of my houseboat.
3. I found used syringes with needles in the grassy areas where we take the dogs to the bathroom and along Hood Street.
4. I witnessed homeless people walking up and down the docks during the day, appearing to "case" what they may return for later. At night I witnessed homeless people walking the docks at 2:30am and 4:30am so incoherent they didn't know where they were when asked.
5. I often witnessed homeless people on the docks in surrounding areas (grassy areas, cement walk-ways, docks), so inebriated and/or high on drugs that they could barely walk. When on the docks this certainly becomes a drowning and/or injury hazzard.
6. When homeless people walk the docks during the night, they are often loud and boisterous. This makes sleeping on the houseboat almost impossible.
7. I witnessed homeless people wandering on and off houseboats and pontoon boats.
8. I cannot walk my dog, especially after dark, for fear I will be confronted by a homeless person. In broad daylight, a homeless person confronted me after I suggested he sit in the shade on an extremely hot day. I was called vile names, towered over physically, and sworn at by this individual. I called 911 to have an officer come to escort the homeless person away from the bathhouse area. I cannot have my dog go to the bathroom on the docks or on my houseboat!
9. I saw homeless people badger marina patrons for the door codes to enter the bathhouse. The bathhouse has been entered by homeless people who stayed inside on the main floor of the facility. Going into the bathhouse was not possible, as their belongings were all over the floors. This meant I could not use the washing/drying machines, toilets, and showers that I paid for with my harbor membership.
10. When walking my dog on Hood Street and within the point park area, I was verbally abused with cursing and extremely foul language. This was just passing by on the opposite side of the street, not provoking the individual in any way. I experienced similar behavior when walking on harbor pathways to the boats and to the parking lot.
11. I experienced homeless people blocking walkways to the bathhouse rolling their carts of belongings in the way of getting the doors open. They watch to see what codes you put in to open the doors.
12. Harbor patrons had cars vandalized and broken into in the parking lot.

13. Harbor patrons' boats in storage in the parking lot and in the back storage area were broken into and actually lived in by homeless people when taken out of the water. They take food, clothing, and supplies from the boats, and often leave used syringes with used needles and broken crack pipes behind.

The Municipal Harbor is not a locked secure location. Anyone can walk down the hill on Hood Street and get to Dock A; Anyone can walk down the landing from the parking lot to get to Dock D; and Anyone can walk past the bath house to any of the four docks in the harbor.

With all of these instances to consider, having the homeless population living/camping in the park areas around Houska Park is extremely dangerous physically and emotionally to patrons who pay to use this area AND is extremely dangerous to young people who are learning appropriate social behavior as they grow up. The actions taken by the homeless campers cost boat owners money to replace items, gas, and LP tanks. I use the marina as my "vacation get away." I don't feel safe even on my own boat. I feel the need to have a handgun in order to protect myself. This is not what most people do when they go on vacation. The marina often has transient boaters who travel the Mississippi River dock in the marina. This is not the way to advertise La Crosse to our tourists and visitors. Putting the homeless people on the Isle of Le Plume park areas is not the answer; it's a copout to simply "hide" the problem from the city center.

Sincerely asking for you reconsideration to passing Resolution 24-1075,

Carol Bernau
Municipal Harbor Patron
Dock D 28

Craig, Sondra

From: Mary Ness <maryness106@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:06 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Cc: Earl Wutt; Mary Ness
Subject: Item 24-1075

Some people who received this message don't often get email from maryness106@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To: La Crosse City Council Members
Re: Opening up Houska Park to camping and Homeless 24-1075

Coming up with solutions for homeless is very complex. Your task to explore options is a challenge.

We are property owners on Alexander St. just off the bike/walking trail near Green Island Park. We have the following concerns and questions regarding opening up the large area of Houska Park for camping.

- Houska Park is beautiful prime river property meant for usage and enjoyment for all and opening up camping makes it's usage for a select group of homeless.
- What set up and monitoring plan will be in place *prior* to opening up the park to ensure safe/appropriate use and addresses sanitation issues? What will be different than past usage?
 - Will there be designated campsites set up and a limited number of people using the site?
 - Might there be registration of campers as in other campgrounds?
 - Limited length of stay?
- Does opening a large area to homeless encourage more homeless coming into our community?
- Does housing in a large area bring a population that influences and increases drug usage and additional illegal and unsafe behaviors?
- Past camping in Houska made it an impossibility to use the park for any other purpose and a "challenge" to sometimes walk past it.
- Past camping there made it a "challenge" to use the bike/walking path, dog park, and even spilled over into day usage of Green Island Park.

Sincerely,
Mary Ness and Earl Wutt

Craig, Sondra

From: Dean <playintraffic@centurylink.net>
Sent: Monday, August 5, 2024 1:15 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Houska Park item 24-1075

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Hello, my name is Dean Herlitzke, I live and I own three properties close to Houska Park for the past 36 years. I understand the city wants to open the park back up for camping AGAIN! This is so disappointing to think the city is ready to try this failed experiment again. My neighborhood did not feel safe during the time the unsheltered/homeless were living in the park. The problems spilled over to my neighborhood to the point I didn't feel safe walking my dog anymore. Also, I understand there were around 30 people needing shelter until the city opened up the park for camping and that number exploded to over 130. Why open up that park for camping now that the taxpayers have spent money cleaning up needles and having the topsoil hauled away because it was unsafe. If you want to ruin another neighborhood and park, why don't you go to Pettibone park for your camping plan, you are going to need a larger park in the future as more people move here to take advantage of LaCrosse taxpayers. Sad, used to love this area and now I'm actually contemplating selling and moving out of the city. Dean Herlitzke

Craig, Sondra

From: Carol Zehms <czehms2016@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 5, 2024 8:00 PM
To: Neumann, Mark; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Re: Resolution 24-1075

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Mark,

This is a situation of safety. How would you feel walking up your front door step or on a street being called a c*** and a b**** because I won't move out of his way or give him the code to get into my bathroom? As an 58 year old woman, having to deal with any of these individuals is unacceptable, and I feel unsafe! This is taped on the 911 call I made to the La Crosse Police Department.

After reading all of the attachments and my personal thoughts and experiences, I do not think allowing any camping on city property is at all acceptable. We as a city have fulfilled our responsibility and need to cut ties with those who reject the services we already supply to them free of charge. In fact, I believe we should not provide free services without consequences or responsibility for getting said services. Teaching accountability and acceptable behavior is as far as I would go, and that is gracious of the City of La Crosse.

Thank you for reading my message and asking your questions!

Carol Bernau
Municipal Harbor
Dock D28

Sent from Gmail Mobile

On Mon, Aug 5, 2024 at 12:24 PM Neumann, Mark <neumannm@cityoflacrosse.org> wrote:

Hello Carol,

Would you be willing to describe to me your support for or lack thereof for a global prohibition for camping on all City owned land.

This prohibition would make it unlawful to camp on any property owned by the City including parks, parking ramps, marshland and all other properties.

Would you be supportive of this prohibition or have reservations for its application to all city owned land?

Thank you,

From: Carol Zehms <czehms2016@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 5, 2024 12:18 PM
To: ZZ Council Members <zzcouncilmembers@cityoflacrosse.org>
Cc: Dennis Smalley <houseboate@gmail.com>
Subject: Resolution 24-1075

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La Crosse City Council Members,

I write this email in hopes that you will reconsider passing this resolution to allow camping on the Isle Le Plume Island, specifically within the two parks that border the Municipal Harbor. I am a houseboat owner renting slip D28. From the last time the homeless were gathered and encamped in Houska Park, I have experienced unbelievable crimes, displays of disrespect, and felt such insecurity, abuse, and harassment on my own property, my houseboat. I will supply you with a listing of concerns and instances that I personally have experienced when the homeless were camping in Houska Park.

1. I had an LP tank stolen from my gas grill on the front of my houseboat. Chains were secure across each boat entrance.
2. I found used syringes with needles on the front deck of my houseboat.
3. I found used syringes with needles in the grassy areas where we take the dogs to the bathroom and along Hood Street.
4. I witnessed homeless people walking up and down the docks during the day, appearing to "case" what they may return for later. At night I witnessed homeless people walking the docks at 2:30am and 4:30am so incoherent they didn't know where they were when asked.
5. I often witnessed homeless people on the docks in surrounding areas (grassy areas, cement walk-ways, docks), so inebriated and/or high on drugs that they could barely walk. When on the docks this certainly becomes a drowning and/or injury hazzard.
6. When homeless people walk the docks during the night, they are often loud and boisterous. This makes sleeping on the houseboat almost impossible.

7. I witnessed homeless people wandering on and off houseboats and pontoon boats.

8. I cannot walk my dog, especially after dark, for fear I will be confronted by a homeless person. In broad daylight, a homeless person confronted me after I suggested he sit in the shade on an extremely hot day. I was called vile names, towered over physically, and sworn at by this individual. I called 911 to have an officer come to escort the homeless person away from the bathhouse area. I cannot have my dog go to the bathroom on the docks or on my houseboat!

9. I saw homeless people badger marina patrons for the door codes to enter the bathhouse. The bathhouse has been entered by homeless people who stayed inside on the main floor of the facility. Going into the bathhouse was not possible, as their belongings were all over the floors. This meant I could not use the washing/drying machines, toilets, and showers that I paid for with my harbor membership.

10. When walking my dog on Hood Street and within the point park area, I was verbally abused with cursing and extremely foul language. This was just passing by on the opposite side of the street, not provoking the individual in any way. I experienced similar behavior when walking on harbor pathways to the boats and to the parking lot.

11. I experienced homeless people blocking walkways to the bathhouse rolling their carts of belongings in the way of getting the doors open. They watch to see what codes you put in to open the doors.

12. Harbor patrons had cars vandalized and broken into in the parking lot.

13. Harbor patrons' boats in storage in the parking lot and in the back storage area were broken into and actually lived in by homeless people when taken out of the water. They take food, clothing, and supplies from the boats, and often leave used syringes with used needles and broken crack pipes behind.

The Municipal Harbor is not a locked secure location. Anyone can walk down the hill on Hood Street and get to Dock A; Anyone can walk down the landing from the parking lot to get to Dock D; and Anyone can walk past the bath house to any of the four docks in the harbor.

With all of these instances to consider, having the homeless population living/camping in the park areas around Houska Park is extremely dangerous physically and emotionally to patrons who pay to use this area AND is extremely dangerous to young people who are learning appropriate social behavior as they grow up. The actions taken by the homeless campers cost boat owners money to replace items, gas, and LP tanks. I use the marina as my "vacation get away." I don't feel safe even on my own boat. I feel the need to have a handgun in order to protect myself. This is not what most people do when they go on vacation. The marina often has transient boaters who travel the Mississippi River dock in the marina. This is not the way to advertise La Crosse to our tourists and visitors. Putting the homeless people on the Isle of Le Plume park areas is not the answer; it's a copout to simply "hide" the problem from the city center.

Sincerely asking for your reconsideration to passing Resolution 24-1075,

Carol Bernau

Municipal Harbor Patron

Dock D 28

Craig, Sondra

From: Amanda Jackson <amhjackson@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 10:48 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Camping at Isla La Plume/Houska Park

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Good Morning,

I would like to encourage the Council to consider voting no on the proposed resolution to allow camping on Isla La Plume. After the significant amount of time, money and effort that went into cleaning up this area after the last encampment to restore Houska park, I find it bewildering that this is even before the Council again. This seems like a knee jerk reaction and an out of sign out of mind mentality, if you allow camping at Houska park, the homeless encampments will be generally out of the public sight, and you feel that is better for everyone. There are so many flaws in that mentality. Furthermore, the last time that the City of La Crosse allowed camping at Houska Park it caused significant damage to Houska park, it increased the size of the homeless encampment and caused damage to boats and unsafe conditions (used needles in and around the parking areas, dock and in the water) at the nearby Municipal Harbor. The sheer volume of destruction and debris left in Houska park after last summer and the amount of time and resources it took to restore it to the condition it is now, is beyond impressive by the Parks Dept. Not to mention the increased use of the baseball fields down there since the camping ban has gone into effect. Let that area continue to serve as a park and waterway welcoming point into the City.

Beyond the general concern to allow camping in an area where it has already proved unsuccessful, this seems like a deviation from the well-established Pathways to Home plan. What kind of message does this resolution send La Crosse County as they diligently work on a sustainable long-term plan that the City approved, when the City of La Crosse continues to deviate with these various short-term plans, none of which have proven effective to date. As a La Crosse resident, it is beyond frustrating to watch. Please take a step back, work with the County and come up with a better option.

Sincerely,

Amanda Jackson
District 8 Resident

Craig, Sondra

From: Amy Sanwick <amyannsawick@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 11:04 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Houska

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Hello,
I'll keep this short as I'm sure there's a ton of emails.
Having houska be a homeless encampment again seems to be a hide it, out of sight out of mind.

The homeless are visible now affecting many areas.
There isn't a good answer. But it seems putting money into a park that was already a definite failure as an encampment seems a futile effort and a waste of funds.

We used to use the dog park. We stopped because it wasn't safe.

The plan to help a group for their safety jeopardizes the safety of others.

We are slip owners. I have young daughters
They couldn't go to the bathroom alone at the marina during the first encampment time. We made efforts to not be at the marina after dark as it wasn't safe.

They couldn't take the dog to the park because of safety.

Can you accept the threat to others in the effort to move homeless to houska once again? I understand we are boat owners we have means ect. But safety in our city areas should be foremost in every council members minds and putting homeless all mushed together in a spot that's not visible, hidden away as a problem solved isn't a solution. I wish I had one.

I fear for my own person, my daughters and their friends.... I fear for my boat neighbors who live on their boats. It's like putting a homeless campground in aspen valley. Or oak park or any other neighborhood with an accessible park. To protect the one you put the other at considerable risk. It's a sad situation. La crosse is fighting to be a tourist spot. A place for bikers and use of the river..... the view of lacrosse from the bridge from Minnesota would be this motley of garbage and disorder. The trails through there no longer accessible or safe.

I hope there is a better solution. But to do something that has already failed doesn't seem to be the right choice. I hope we can find a solution that can protect the homeless as well as keep the city areas safe for residents and visitors.

Thank you for your time.

Amy Sanwick 608.397.3785

Craig, Sondra

From: Sara Severson <sara.severson608@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 10:06 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Upcoming meeting meeting RE: homeless population

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Hello,

I am writing to all of you to share how I, and countless other citizens of La Crosse are concerned and opposed to allowing the homeless population to camp in parks and/ or fund housing the homeless population. There are so many tax paying citizens that are struggling to survive in this economy. We are struggling to put groceries in our fridge, pay our very high utility bills, put gas in the car so that we can go to work and continue scraping by. The funding being discussed is truly a slap in the face to the tax paying citizens who need your help. Additionally, when the homeless population was allowed to camp in houska, they trashed it. They did not even appreciate it. When they were placed in the last hotel that the city provided, they trashed that too. Why do you continue to help someone more than they are willing to help themselves? That is not helpful, it is enabling their behavior. Additionally, there are numerous in the homeless population here in la crosse that are from other states. Why arent you focusing on helping those who fund you? Please know, the vast majority of la crosse citizens oppose this. If this goes through, we know that you are representing yourselves and not the citizens and businesses in this city. Do the right thing and work for the citizens that live, work, own businesses and pay taxes here. We love this city. Don't change that.

Sara Severson
Rebecca Schwarz's district

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Craig, Sondra

From: dbljentz@charter.net
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:27 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: RE: Houdka 24-1075

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Sorry... From Bruce Jentz, 103 Alexander street, 608.792.0165

From: <dbljentz@charter.net>
To: <zzcouncilmembers@cityoflacrosse.org>
Sent: August 6, 2024 at 11:19 AM MDT
Subject: Houdka 24-1075

Hey, this is a joke, right. It took 3 years to come up with a plan to ruin our park for a second time..Really???? I am saddened by this obvious leadership void. As a 30 year resident of this Houska neighborhood I have tried to get a sidewalk on Miller street so that the Augusta Housing people don't have walk in the street. There has never been a resolution much less, a short circuit.

i have built or remodeled 38 property taxed parcels in this city...I have never re- rented to someone who wrecked a place. Logic is being defied. Please stop this.

Craig, Sondra

From: Jenny Aberger <jaaberger@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 12:29 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Cc: Dennis Smalley; Aberger Frank
Subject: Homeless campground at Houska

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To all city council members,

My husband and I have had a boat slip at Municipal for a very long time. I am writing to you not only as someone who rents a boat slip, but as a proud citizen of La Crosse for over 40 years. The transformation of our downtown over these 40 years has been breathtaking. We now have a gorgeous waterfront city of which I am extremely proud. We have also become a port of call for Viking Cruises. I think in no small part due to the development of a beautifully enticing waterfront. The homeless situation nationwide is a tremendously sad and devastating problem that our cities must confront. I am assuming part of the rationale to relocate the encampment at Houska is that the location is seemingly somewhat hidden. But it is not. It is directly on our now beautiful downtown waterfront. It is one of the last things to be seen before docking. Not only does Viking stop here, but so do many other vessels bringing tourism and money to our community. To cruise by the homeless encampment right before docking at Riverside would not be something that encourages tourism and a feeling of safety.

Please do not allow our beautiful riverside city to be sullied by the homeless encampment at the proposed location.

Thank you,
Jenny Aberger

From: s n <skyhunt@msn.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:48 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Item 24-1075 Isle la Plume

*** **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. ***

This is a letter in opposition to removing the designation as "no camping" in parcel 17-50256-10.

I am a resident of the City of La Crosse, have a boat at the Municipal Boat Harbor and regularly use the dog park and trails at Houska Park.

The Houska Park "Campground" experiment a few years ago did not go well. Obviously it was a disaster that not only cost ALOT of money, (for 200 to 300 people) but also created an unsafe environment, both safety and health, for all the individuals residing in the Park. I am hoping that there is not a repeat of that eyesore.

In a campground you need to register for a specific site, show identification, keep the site clean and abide with the rules. None of these things happened when the "Campground" was previously created. If anything like this takes place again there has to be a plan and infrastructure to keep history from repeating itself. There also needs to be a 24/7 manager on scene and security. I don't know how a true "Campground" could be created at Houska Park without these things being in place and enforced.

After a year of bulldozing, cleaning and sanitizing, Houska has again become a beautiful park with activities taking place. It was wonderful to see that softball was again being played. The dog parks and trails are being safely used by the La Crosse area community.

I do appreciate the dedicated work that has been done in trying to deal with these issues and find a suitable solution. However, I do not agree with removing the "no camping" designation for Houska.

Sally Newman

From: Kevin Hundt <kevinhundt0@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 2:21 PM
To: ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: 24-1075

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Allowing camping in Houska is not an ideal solution, but it's a necessary temporary measure while an actual plan is developed and implemented to house the homeless. They have to go somewhere. There are neighbors everywhere. Riverside North, neighbors complained. Marsh, neighbors complained. Houska, boat owners complain. Everyone is saying "not by me" but not proposing a location which wouldn't be near anyone else. That's because there's nowhere in the city that isn't near someone. One of the opponents of the Houska location suggested "one of the public lands or unused parks over by the bluff" but does not actually name a location, because no such park exists. If the people who say "not by me" want to suggest a location, then we should entertain that proposal, but they haven't because there's nowhere that's not by someone.

I find many of these neighbors' complaints to be viscerally disgusting. In the discussion about the marsh camping, housed condominium residents were complaining that they didn't want to use their balconies because they overlook a campsite. In other words, the condo residents were upset that they couldn't be outside because others were forced to be outside. Now, there are people who own boats worth thousands if not tens of thousands of dollars complaining about the behavior of people who have nothing. If they are upset about homelessness, the easy solution is that they can sell their pleasure-craft and donate the money to provide housing (any Christians reading this, please refer to Matthew 19:21). If they are merely upset about unpleasantness happening near them or to them specifically (but not to others) then I don't have much sympathy.

That said, there are some measures that could be taken in this instance to potentially ameliorate the boaters' concerns. The north and north-west dock entrances could be fenced off, and better security added to the remaining entrance. Security cameras could be added. Proper organization of the Houska camp could be established and funded. Consider purchasing insurance protecting marina patrons, at City expense. In contrast to my lack of sympathy for the boat owners, I'm very concerned about the safety and comfort of the houseboat residents- special attention needs to be paid to them (fences? security guard? can the houseboats be moved?). At the very least, the City should waive their taxes and other fees for the duration.

These measures need to be established immediately, meaning fully planned within one week and implemented within two weeks.

Also, consider opening additional sites, such as the City Hall yard and the area north of Riverside, to reduce the load on any one location, allow campers to move in order to avoid having to live near people they may have personal conflicts with, and quickly have other options in case one site has to close due to an emergency.

Kevin Hundt
La Crosse

Craig, Sondra

From: Jentz, Ginger <jentz.ging@eagle.uwlax.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 7:13 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Item 24-1075

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There should be no camping in city of La Crosse parks--no exceptions! You spent \$100,000 to clean up Houska Park and now want to trash it again. That makes no sense! River boats have already complained they don't want to see the Houska encampment. This is a no brainer.

Craig, Sondra

From: Jeff Voves <vovesjeff1966@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:46 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Houska Park

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I cannot believe the City of La Crosse is even entertaining the thought of turning Houska Park into a camping area again. It did not work the first time and will fail again. As a slip holder at Municipal Harbor we seen first hand the negative impact it had to the area. To look at the park from the river as a resident or visitor to the area was totally disgusting. Is this how we want to convey to our river visitors what we represent as a community? It embarrasses me.

We at the harbor are a neighborhood just like any other part of the City of La Crosse. By turning the park into a campground you take away MANY of our daily activities that we enjoy. No more walking our dogs in the area, worrying about our families being confronted, having to go up to the parking lot when guests or family arrives because we and they are afraid. Really? Finding syringes next my vehicle as I'm loading the grandkids into the vehicle. Listening to the sirens at first from our local Police Department almost daily. When I say at first I mean after awhile they would shut the sirens down before they got close to not draw attention. We figured that one out. I personally called 911 twice because of a person unconscious on the side of the road. This will change the whole family atmosphere that we create and respect at the harbor. I could go on and on. Please do not let this happen. If you do it will be another \$100000 or more to clean it up again in a few short months at winter approaches. Totally foolish.

Jeff Voves
Proud slip holder. C32
Sent from my iPhone

Craig, Sondra

From: Vicki Magadanz <magadanzvicki@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 10:26 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Resolution for camping in Houska Park

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Good Morning Council Members,

I am writing you with my concerns about the proposed resolution for camping in Houska park.

I am a city resident and also a slip holder at Municipal Boat Harbor.

In the past when camping was allowed it was a disaster. The trash (some which was hazardous materials) including needles was literally knee deep at times. The city did supply dumpsters but the homeless refused to use them. I'm sure a few did but the majority did not. I cannot comprehend why they are so disrespectful of the people that are trying to help them. It seems there are very few rules for them to follow. I witnessed people strung out on who knows what loitering on the docks at the harbor, in the parking lot , the green space etc. If you have never seen these people high I'm here to tell you that it is down right scary and I don't frighten easily. I could go on and on with examples of issues but I'm sure that you have heard them already.

Another concern I have is tourism for the city. We have several river cruise boats docking at Riverside Park. The view of Houska as a tent city from the river is an embarrassment for the city of LaCrosse. The people on these cruise ships could potentially return to LaCrosse as a vacation destination and I don't think that if the first thing they see is Houska Park in that condition that they will ever want to return. This can have a huge impact on the tourism industry.

I do not have the answer for the homeless population but I do feel that Houska Park is not the temporary answer.

I also think that these people need to be held accountable for the way they chose to live. Small things like taking responsibility for disposing of one's garbage properly can make a big impact. Maybe a drug free zone and random testing.

I hope that you take my thoughts into your consideration on this issue.

Thank you for your time,

Vicki Magadanz

Sent from my iPhone

Craig, Sondra

From: Liz M <megeemo@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 11:42 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: City Wide ban on Camping

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Good afternoon,

As a La Crosse resident, I'm writing to state I support a city wide ban on camping. I feel that if we allow any form it is just going to increase the amount of unsheltered people that come to our area because we make things easy for them. Our numbers increased when there was an allowance of camping at Houska. The park was ruined and required the city to pay out even more money from a declining budget to bring the park back to what would be considered a usable space. We shouldn't have an area in our city where residence are afraid to travel to because risks associated with the people hanging in the area.

If we continue doing what we are doing we are going to deter businesses from wanting to stay in our area. Please, take a look at what has happening in larger metropolitan areas (Minneapolis, San Francisco, Portland, etc).

People who want help will try to seek out the helpers but you cannot help people who ultimately don't want help.

There is a great need for workers in the mental health & social work fields to help during what seems to be a very difficult time. I think if we could find a way to incorporate getting more of these people in touch with our unsheltered population it may help.

Also, if we are going to move towards helping unsheltered people we need to make a policy/move on illegal drug use. If you seek the help you must stay clean/be in active rehab in order to receive any form of city help.

Thank you from a concerned citizen.

Liz Mansky
29th St S

Craig, Sondra

From: Trey Parker <tparker@regalplastic.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 7, 2024 7:11 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: 24-1075

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Dear City Council,

Houska Park is a beautiful park, do not allow the camping there again moving forward. I've walked that area for many years. When you have the park polluted with homeless, drugs, and likely some violent individuals, it becomes a completely off limits territory for myself as well as other community members that pay tax dollars to upkeep that area. When the police don't even enjoy going down there, that should tell you something.

Keep our park safe and clean. Many of those people filter into our walking trails and make life unpleasant for the rest of us hard working citizens that pay our taxes and should have a safe place to enjoy.

I don't have a solution, but Houska Park isn't one of them.

Trey Parker













Craig, Sondra

From: Andrew Peterson <andrewwpeterson@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2024 1:20 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Camping at Houska Park

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Good afternoon,

Thanks for taking the time to read my email. I am a resident of the Town of Holland but I spend a lot of time in the City of La Crosse, and especially near the La Crosse Municipal Harbor because I grew up on the south side of La Crosse and I currently rent a slip from the City for my boat. **I am in opposition of the resolution to allow camping at Houska Park.**

I am unable to come to the meeting this afternoon due to commitments with my daughter's school, but I'd like to make my voice heard on the issue of camping at Houska Park.

I get compliments from friends and family who visit the area and go boating with us on how nice the area is. While the issue with homeless in the area is certainly a difficult one, I do not think this resolution proposed would solve the issues. It would just move the issue to another place which will affect different people. It would also be costly to maintain the park facilities if this were to go into effect.

Again, thank you for taking into account my opinions on this matter. I believe this plan would fail like it did in previous years.

Andrew Peterson
Town of Holland Resident
Representing Myself
In Opposition of Houska Park Camping Resolution

Elsen, Nikki

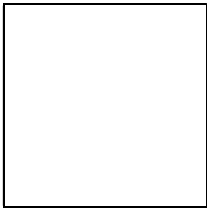
From: Elsenn@cityoflacrosse.org
Subject: FW: homeless-share with other members

From: Gordo Pankratz <2littleguy@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2024 9:41 AM
To: Happel, Douglas <happeld@cityoflacrosse.org>; Goggin, Erin <goggine@cityoflacrosse.org>; Dickinson, Tamra <dickinsont@cityoflacrosse.org>
Subject: homeless-share with other members

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To city leaders and council members,



I don't like the fact the city is catering to the homeless. How much money have we spent and what do we get in return? Littered parks that look worse than garbage dumps. The things the people and city have helped them with have been repaid with no respect.

Why are people that litter not being ticketed and arrested? I feel that as a community we should all take our trash and dump it in the parks as a symbol of hey it's okay the city allows it. Why go camping to paid facilities when you can camp for free at the parks and other places.

Do we spend a proportionate amount of money on the other sectors of the city, like the elderly who are struggling with trying to stay in homes with limited income?

Sincerely
Gordon Pankratz

--

"May your mind be as sharp as your hooks"

Gordo

Craig, Sondra

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Andrew Peterson
Town of Holland Resident
Representing Myself
In Opposition of Houska Park Camping Resolution

Craig, Sondra

From: ZakandSara Tesnow <countryfam57@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 8, 2024 2:24 PM
To: ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: Written Comment For Meeting

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To whom it may concern,

Good afternoon. I was just writing this email in hopes to make another voice heard for tonight's meeting on the homeless population and Houska Park . I would like to voice my opinion opposing the use of Houska park to house the homeless again. I am an avid dog park goer at the Houska dog park. I go every single day, rain or shine. I own 4 dogs and I use the park to socialize and exercise my animals. This is the only decent park in La Crosse that dogs and owners can enjoy the room and freedoms the park provides. There are so many older folks and disabled citizens that use the park to exercise their dogs because they can not physically walk their dogs too. We had to stop going to the dog park while "tent city" was in operation last time. There were used needles, trash everywhere, and people would come into the park just to beg for money and cigarettes, or just to annoy the dogs. I did not feel safe at all. Every single person I have talked to at the dog park does not want the homeless population back down there. I am sure the boat owners and the boathouses do not want these people there either.

If the city allows the homeless to come back to Houska, I am also wondering if there would be a possibility of creating a new dog park in South La Crosse? There are so many spaces that are unused to make a new dog park. I myself would even volunteer for free to help clean and maintain a new space. I already try to do that at Houska dog park already. The one place I recommend a new park is beside/ behind the Hillview Assisted living/ Nursing home, and in front of Chad Erickson Memorial Park , where I know the city owns a large piece of land . Or use the piece of land between Caribou Coffee and O'Riley Auto Parts that is too awkward of an oblong strip to do anything else with anyways. I am sure there are so many more options to be able to create a safe and accessible dog park that people would be happy to use and maintain.

I hope us Dog Park Goers are heard just as much in these times of the unknown for Housksa Park . We love our animals , and find so much joy and peace being able to see them run free and socialize. Having a dog park for my dogs means everything to me. It sounds funny, but its true. It makes them happier to be able to get out, to run safely, to make friends, and for myself to socialize with other dog parents as well, as I am a stay at home mother.

I do wish the homeless the best of luck, and hope to find them a place that they can find shelter and help, but this is NOT Houska Park. They need a place that is staffed, patrolled, and managed. Maybe even indoors, like the old Kmart or something like that.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email. I truly appreciate the work you do.

Thank you

Sara Tesnow