

Elsen, Nikki

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Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 4:27 PM
To: ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: Comment on 24-0510

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All that banning camping at various locations has done so far is push people into locations which are more isolated, harder for emergency services to reach, harder for social services to find, presumably more likely to cause injury due to being shoved up against slopes on the edges of the marsh, and make it harder for campers to get to services and jobs.

Clearing the encampment on March 18th was a pointless and cruel act of wanton violence. No clearance has solved any problems, other than the problem of homeless people not being sufficiently miserable. But, hey, maybe the next clearance will fix everything!

This is just NIMBYism, as always. That said, I also live very close to the past and current marsh encampments and frequently pass by them on the trails, and yet I have never felt unsafe or threatened, nor have I ever seen these supposed needles (not that that would matter). Perhaps the NIMBYs should consider getting over it?

What I have felt, on the other hand, is a deep sense of shame that our city has failed to provide basic life-sustaining services and housing to people in this state of utter desperation. The only thing that the city government seems interested in providing to our unhoused neighbors, people who are in severe and ongoing crisis which will only get worse without help, is violence.

So, yet again, I have one question for advocates of clearances:

Where exactly should they go?

Not "where should they go next year?". Not "where should they go next week?". Not "where should they go tomorrow?". Where should they go TONIGHT?

If you don't have an answer to this question then don't call for a clearance.

Yes, yes, "pathways home". Maybe in five years. Where do they go in the meanwhile?

Feel free to disregard this letter if you believe that homeless people aren't actually people, which seems to be the prevailing opinion of many members of the so-called La Crosse "community" and our Mayor and Parks Director. Both of whom should resign if they have the slightest amount of self-respect.

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