

Craig, Sondra

From: William Ives <anderson.will26@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, June 8, 2023 1:33 PM
To: Schwarz, Rebecca; 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 anderson.will26@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. *******

To the La Crosse City Council,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Item No. 23-0673, which seeks to amend Subsection 32-5 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Crosse regarding camping on City-owned property. As a member of the community and an individual who has closely worked with the unhoused population, I believe this ordinance fails to address the pressing needs of the unhoused community members.

Before I begin, I want to emphasize that the opinions expressed in this letter are solely my own and do not represent the views of the organization I work for.

Over the past year, I have witnessed firsthand the struggles and hardships faced by the unhoused members of our community. My experiences and interactions with the unhoused population in my role on the Patron Relations team at the La Crosse Public Library have given me an understanding of their challenges. It has become evident that the City of La Crosse and our broader community have not done enough to support and assist them. We must acknowledge that the existing resources and infrastructure are insufficient to meet their needs, resulting in a lack of support and services.

As a library team member, I work diligently to help all library users connect with the resources they require. Unfortunately, there are limitations to the assistance we can provide. Too often, I inform unhoused community members that the help they desperately need does not exist within the City of La Crosse. The local shelters, although vital, cannot accommodate every unhoused person due to limited space, resources, and funding. Witnessing some individuals being turned away based on factors such as addiction, mental health struggles, or a prior criminal record is disheartening. Consequently, our shelters are not operating at total capacity and leave many individuals with no alternative but to camp in public parks. This ordinance fails to address the underlying issues of homelessness and exacerbates the problem by further limiting their options.

Moreover, the mental health resources provided by the City and County are strained and unable to assist everyone in need adequately. This situation leaves us with no choice but to involve the police, which often escalates the situation further. Our unhoused community members have shared their negative experiences with law enforcement, highlighting the lack of proper training and

empathy. The City must allocate more funding and resources to enhance mental health services and ensure timely and compassionate responses.

In light of these concerns, I urge you to reconsider the proposed amendment to Subsection 32-5 of the Code of Ordinances. We must approach the issue of homelessness with compassion, understanding, and a commitment to addressing the root causes. I encourage the City to engage in meaningful dialogue with advocacy groups, homeless shelters, mental health organizations, and other stakeholders to develop comprehensive solutions that prioritize the well-being and dignity of all residents of La Crosse.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I implore you to carefully consider the opposition and alternative perspectives concerned citizens present and take the necessary steps to create a more compassionate and inclusive approach to addressing the concerns surrounding camping on City-owned property.

Yours in Community,

William Ives

[He/Him/His]

(847) 354-1158

anderson.will26@gmail.com

"Just because someone stumbles and loses their way, doesn't mean they're lost forever." - Prof. Charles Xavier