

## Elsen, Nikki

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**From:** Elsenn@cityoflacrosse.org  
**Subject:** FW: Encampment Follow-up

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**From:** Goggin, Erin <goggine@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 11, 2024 9:37 AM  
**To:** Elsen, Nikki <Elsenn@cityoflacrosse.org>  
**Subject:** FW: Encampment Follow-up

Hi Nikki-

Can you please post to legistar?  
THANK YOU!!!

Erin Goggin  
CM- District 2

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**From:** D&C <[chriskouhi@gmail.com](mailto:chriskouhi@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 11, 2024 9:28 AM  
**To:** Neumann, Mark <[neumannm@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:neumannm@cityoflacrosse.org)>; Janssen, Barb <[janssenb@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:janssenb@cityoflacrosse.org)>; Goggin, Erin <[goggine@cityoflacrosse.org](mailto:goggine@cityoflacrosse.org)>  
**Subject:** Encampment Follow-up

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Dear Barb, Erin, and Mark:

I'm writing to you as council members who have responded to my letter on the marsh encampments. At this point I want to communicate with people rather than to send out broad emails but feel free to share as you deem appropriate. I mentioned in my prior letter that I had a certain tolerance for campers that my neighbours did not share. My naivete was pierced last fall when my husband and a couple of neighbors cleared out the encampment across the way and found childrens' toys and books among the many dozens of needles. On our Saturday walk we again saw evidence of childrens' toys. The mayor assures us that every homeless person is visited twice a week by city outreach workers. Is there a way to contact one of these workers to make sure that no children are currently living in this encampment? It would also be good to be assured that the mayor and city outreach team don't condone children living in these dangerous marsh conditions and that prompt action is taken.

I also prefaced my letter to the Mayor and Board of Public Works specifically to them. Since I've heard no response, I'm sharing it with you. I think you'll detect the rising anger that I and many others share!

Thanks for responding to me,  
Chris

Note to Board of Public Works:

I am a resident of The Landings and have written two letters regarding the encampments in the marsh along the Veterans' and Asfour trails and I'll try not to repeat myself. I do want to say that I know you have a life and that I am truly grateful for the time and energy you choose to invest in public service.

This letter is about the rhetoric and emotional responses around the issue. I attended the April 8 meeting of the Public Works Board and was disturbed by the words "Where will they go" and have figured out why. It is being posed not as a genuine question, which is indeed vital to the health of our community, but it has been commandeered as a slogan used to silence others. My neighbors and I have genuine concerns which include the inhumane conditions of marsh living and the regular appearance of drug dealers within yards of our home. Here's how the slogan "where will they go" functions:

- It tells us that our specific concerns aren't important in the face of the broad homeless issue.
- It tells us that if we have a problem with the use of public lands, we need to solve the issue of "where will they go" or shut up, even though we have elected you to steward our public spaces.
- It claims a moral high ground: "WE are the only ones who REALLY care about the homeless" .
- It provides an out from facing present concrete concerns in favor of some lofty future goals.
- It provides moral energy: instead of focusing on the actual conditions of the marsh, attention can be shifted to the moral superiority of "advocacy."
- Because the actual response to serious concerns is so weak, the slogan must be energized by dismissing and even demonizing the "other." The residents of the Landings are uncaring, selfish, privileged, a nuisance, @\$%^&. . .

I don't know if you personally rally to this slogan and I wasn't at the June 3 meeting to hear your comments. I do know that my neighbors made a very thoughtful presentation to you and many are enraged by your response. My impression is that the "Where will they go" slogan was wielded in full force to silence them. Canada geese as well as drug suppliers are rather aggressively claiming the marsh and its trails and this leads to my last thoughts on "Where will they go?" as sloganeering: self righteous goose poop. Anyway, my letter to the Common Council follows:

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Dennis & Christine Hallemeier