

Craig, Sonda

From: Kathy Zieja <kathyzieja@centurylink.net>
Sent: Monday, May 20, 2024 2:15 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; countyboardsupervisors@lacrossecounty.org
Subject: Marsh Encampments

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La Crosse City and County Representatives,

Included is a letter that I have sent to Mayor Reynolds and the Board of Public Works. I'm sharing this with you also for your awareness and hopes that you can help address this situation.

Thank you,

Kathy Zieja
14 Copeland Ave.
La Crosse, Wi. 54603

Dear Mayor Reynolds and Board of Public Works,

My name is Kathy Zieja. My husband and I live at the Landings Condo's at 14 Copeland Ave., La Crosse, Wi. facing the La Crosse River. We have resided here since 2007. Our building has 44 units with 22 facing the La Crosse River. We moved to the Landings due to the beauty of the river and the surrounding marsh. We are amazed at the diversity of animals, birds and beautiful nature in close proximity to downtown La Crosse. We love the bike trail that allows our community to enjoy this great area. This has been a great place to live but there has been a significant change within the last year.

We are now experiencing daily, chronic disturbances from the homeless encampments that are inhabiting the marsh and floodway along the river and bike trail. The time frame of this change coincides with the clearing of the encampments from the Black River near Riverside Park. They have moved to the "backyard" of our homeowners. Since the change occurred, we experience disturbances daily including gun shots, screaming, hollering, and profanities. There are domestic disturbances with physical altercations among the "campers". We have called the police due to the altercations in hopes that no one will be injured. We also are concerned for our own safety. We are awakened at all hours of the night along with hearing this throughout the day. Drug deals are being observed near the bike trail. Many needles have been found for which the fire department has been contacted. Campfires have been burning during burn bans and the fire department has been called. Our vehicle has been broken into with damage to two windows along with theft of personal belongings. A resident has been sexually propositioned while walking the trail. On a regular basis, a 14 foot Alumacraft had been traveling up and down the river several times per day. Frequently this was late at night, beginning midnight with multiple

trips per night, waking us up. We have contacted the DNR as the boat has no running lights. We were advised the boat owner was arrested on an outstanding warrant.

This area is no place for the encampments with no potable water or toilet facilities. The trash piling up is significant. The environment is fragile. How is it that the encampments were evicted from the Black River area but this issue is tolerated along the La Crosse River between the Asfoor and Veterans Trails? Both areas are located in the flood plain. Many homeowners are effected as well as those who wish to enjoy the bike/walking trails.

We are aware of plans to assist the homeless with the Pathways Project and applaud anything that can be done to help them secure adequate housing. We are aware that this is anticipated to take several years. Are we to anticipate that we will need to wait years before the encampments across from our home are addressed? The encampments were not tolerated along the Black River and we hope that they will not be tolerated along the La Crosse River.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kathy and Tom Zieja

14 Copeland Ave.

La Crosse, Wi. 54603