

**Craig, Sondra**

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**From:** Tess & Nate Cameron <tessandnate@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 5, 2024 4:34 PM  
**To:** ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch  
**Subject:** Marsh Camping Ban

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La Crosse City Council and Mayor Reynolds:

I am writing to support the proposed camping ban for the list of parcels proposed in agenda item 24-1037.

I grew up in La Crosse and my mother still lives there. Until last year, I could walk the trails with my children and look for wildlife. As a former member of the "Friends of the Marsh" group that fought to keep the highway development out of the Marsh back in the 90s, I am shocked at what is happening there now. I'm writing to you in case you have grown numb to all the complaints and think that people are exaggerating. They are not.

At the end of July, I returned to La Crosse for my high school reunion. My mother warned me not to take the kids on a Marsh walk. I thought she was exaggerating. I live in Kansas City, and as a former journalist, I have seen A LOT of things. I took a walk to see it for myself and what I saw was SHOCKING. **I witnessed a couple openly injecting something in their arms** on the MARSH TRAIL where I used to walk with my children. At one point, the path was so packed with people, we had to wait for people to move out of the way to get by them, and I actually felt a little panicked that they were blocking our way to attack us.

SOLUTIONS:

What creative solutions is La Crosse looking at for tackling this problem? If you truly want to help people instead of just shoving them around the city, perhaps you could invest in the Drug Courts that Kansas City has had good success with: [check out this study evaluating efficacy.](#)

Does La Crosse have case workers who could help unsheltered people find more stable housing options? Do you have supportive housing or transitional housing for people struggling with mental illness? I hope you're exploring these options because they are important long-term solutions.

On the other hand, in the short term, you need to protect public spaces from criminals and drug addicts so families can enjoy public trails and parks again. You need to understand that if you don't get a hold of this problem quickly, word will spread that La Crosse is a sanctuary for drug addicts. I told people at my class reunion about seeing open drug use on the marsh trail and they were all incredibly shocked. Is this the reputation you want for your city?

I am all for finding compassionate solutions that address big-picture problems, but you also need short-term solutions that protect all your citizens. The marsh camping ban does seem to be a step in the right direction for a short-term solution.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,  
Tess Cameron

(816) 225-2765