

Craig, Sondra

From: Nanette Harter <nandjharter@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 6, 2024 8:04 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: sheltering the homeless

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Dear Council members,

I have lived in La Crosse my entire life (57 years). I have always loved this city. I am an outdoor person who does a lot of biking, hiking, kayaking, and enjoying outdoor festivals. Over the past few years, I have felt more and more uncomfortable and unsafe in areas I would normally feel safe, due to the homeless encampments.

I have worked directly with those with mental illness and addiction for over 20 years. I am very passionate about getting them the best help we can. What I do not believe in, is the way the city enables this population, by allowing them to continue to destroy our property with leaving their garbage all over the city. In order to help those who are using drugs and alcohol, as well as those with mental illness, we need to ensure we don't do too much for them, having them rely on handouts, rather than working on improving themselves and getting the help they need.

It would make sense to me, for the city to put up a large pull shed, tent, some type of structure, in the parking lot between the Salvation Army and the County Adm Center (as this parking lot is no longer needed). With that, you could ban all city and county camping (other than in campgrounds), give the homeless the option of staying in the shelter over night, then have social workers available to work on getting them the help they need. You could offer port- a -pots for bathrooms and cots to sleep on, in one big room. Social workers should be on staff 24/7 to ensure it does not become one big room to do more drugs and to help support them in the recovery process. This is what happens when you allow them in parks and in hotels.

The more the city enables the homeless, the more people who come to the city and join them, thus the population of homeless, mainly drug users, inhabit our city.

I can't imagine what a tourist thinks when they come to bike or kayak our area. I would personally not return if this is what I encountered. I have roots here, so for now I am staying, but it is so frustrating to have to worry about where I bike, walk, and/or kayak.

Please do not allow them in our parks or hotels.

Sincerely yours,
Nanette