

Craig, Sondra

From: Barbara J Smith <bjsdas@charter.net>
Sent: Monday, August 5, 2024 6:05 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; Neumann, Mark; ZZ City Clerk External
Subject: Aug 8, Common Council Meeting

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from bjsdas@charter.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

*** 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. ***

HOMELESS ENCAMPMENTS DO NOT BELONG IN CITY NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS.

Homeless encampments should not be put in residential neighborhood parks period!

The failed experiment at Houska Park should show all that this was a very BAD idea and that park wasn't even in a residential area. There are many well documented reasons how and why it failed. Just the cleanup alone with its \$100,000 cost and many safety risks from discarded drug paraphernalia are a huge concern.

Putting it in a residential area would be only be inviting more potential problems, such as assaults, thefts and break ins. About 80% of the people in my Cliffside neighborhood are elderly and many of them are vulnerable as well. They may live alone, have health issues, physical impairments and limited ability to get help quickly. Many of us leave our homes for months at a time, especially in the winter. How would we be able to feel confident that our home would be safe?

Considering putting an encampment in Johnson Park on 33rd St is nonsense. The park is part of the Pammel Creek Walkway and there are numerous homes that back up to the path within 10 feet of their back doors. An easy target for an intruder to break into quickly and mostly unobstructed and most of these residents are elderly. We urge you all to walk it and see it for yourself. Johnson Park is a small neighborhood park catering mostly to young families using the play equipment. There is little area for tents and NO permanent hygiene facilities. There's one porta potty there but today we observed some guys from a lawn crew who got out of their truck to use the potty. Evidently one had to go really bad cuz we got to watch him walk into the bushes to relieve himself. He wasn't far enough into the bushes to hide and we dread to think that this would become an everyday occurrence. "Campers" would literally only be 10-50 feet away from homes, perhaps closer.

Violence at the Houska Encampment was a regular occurrence and we would no longer feel safe daily walking our dog on the path that's accessed in the park.

We pay over \$4,000 in property taxes to live in our forever home that we saved for over 50 years. We don't wish to leave La Crosse but we would certainly consider other options if there are homeless encampments in city parks.

Parks are not meant to be drug dens. There are resources for those who wish to change and many of these homeless people are not willing to use them to change. It's not safe for those of us who live our lives next to them.

Dwaine and Barbara Smith
3614 Parkwood Place

Sent from my iPad