

August 8, 2024

Re: Homeless Encampments - Counsel Meeting August 8, 2024

Mayor Mitch Reynolds:

It has come to my attention that the council will be discussing potential Homeless Encampments at your meeting on August 8th. This is a difficult problem for La Crosse and for most cities and towns in the US. One Park up for discussion is Johnson Park on 33rd Street which is across the street from the development I live in. I was the 3rd person to purchase a home in Juniper Estates in 5/83. The curbs were up but the streets not yet paved. It has been a wonderful home and neighborhood.

The City started working on greening up the area. First of all, the Pammel Creek path was developed running from Boma Road, past Wedgewood Valley, State Road Elementary School, Trane, Hillview NH, the baseball fields, next apartments and condos and then single homes. The Hillview golf course was turned into a housing development. Nice benches were added along Pammel Creek. My neighbor worked with the City to put up a gazebo for people to rest and enjoy the area and eventually a water fountain for refreshment. She developed a floral garden of perennials around the Gazebo and then another garden further south near the playground which has a basketball court and playground equipment for children. Now how does this jive with making it a homeless camp area??

The path is very busy with walkers, joggers, elderly walking with canes, bikes of different types, family outings and pet lovers with their dogs and family members giving their loved one a wheelchair ride. When the weather is good and the sun is out it is a lovely place to be. Does that sound like a homeless encampment environment??

About 10 years or so ago, my neighbor was working on weeding one of the flower gardens close to the underpass. She suddenly noticed someone was behind her. She looked up and there was a homeless man with a knife! She slowly backed away. Fortunately a jogger noticed the problem and came over and asked if she would like help. He took her home and police were called. After that her husband always went with her to garden. Apparently a group of homeless people were living under the overpass. Often they were seen

wandering in backyards and police were called. Eventually it stopped. The police probably moved them.

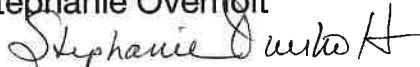
I, as you might suspect, I do not feel our area should be made into a homeless encampment. It will devalue our property and make it difficult to maintain safety and cleanliness. We all pay our taxes and our expectations are that the city maintain our area. This is a neighborhood of families.

I am wondering if you put Johnson Park on the list because it is quite south of the City - in fact on the way out of town? Where would the showers and toilets be that they will need? Food, etc. It is a concern for them and their potential neighbors.

Thanks for your time. I hope to be at the council meeting on Thursday.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Overholt

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Overholt". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the printed name.