

Elsen, Nikki

From: Elsenn@cityoflacrosse.org
Subject: FW: The Landings

From: Mitch Moths <rioman.mitch@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 1:07 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch <reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org>
Subject: Re: The Landings

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Mitch, thanks for your response. I know my owners are looking for a shorter term solution but I understand your information.

My biggest fear is that trail. I was very uncomfortable walking past those folks. I have been telling everyone in the building to avoid it but I fear at some point someone is going to walk into a drug sale or a mental health issue. I had no fear walking the trail behind the friendship garden because they were not right on top of it. That just seems like a bad situation waiting to happen.

On Wed, Apr 3, 2024 at 11:59 AM Reynolds, Mitch <reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org> wrote:

Mr. Moths,

I was under the impression you had received a response from someone else. Apparently I was mistaken. My apologies for that.

I am not sure if this is helpful for you but this is the message I provided to The Landings VP, Jon Ellefson when he inquired about the legality of camping on city parcels in the marsh and whether the city had taken action to allow that activity:

Camping is not expressly permitted anywhere on city-owned property in La Crosse. That action has not been taken by the city council nor my office. I am not certain whether state or county-owned property in or near the marsh has the same restriction.

Based on my observations, the resettlement of unsheltered individuals is happening in much more disbursed manner than what was the concentrated encampment at the area along the Black River. Unfortunately, the numbers of individuals are so high that it may seem that way. This is an area of ongoing work and city staff--especially police and fire personnel--are in daily contact the people in question and are constantly seeking other living solutions for them.

As you may know, the combined city and county plan (<https://lacrossecounty.org/homelessness-plan>) for ending chronic homelessness, just begun in January, includes the ending of encampments. In the future, these activities simply will not be allowed. Unfortunately, the current capacity to absorb these individuals into the current system of treatment and housing does not exist adequately. I expect that to improve soon. In the meantime, it will continue to be city policy to

prioritize public health and safety for the entire community while still operating within individual constitutional and ethical constraints.

In relation to the issue of flooding: In mid-winter, City emergency response leadership expressed concern about likely April flooding and potential threat to health and safety that represented—for the individuals camped along the Black River, as well as emergency personnel who have had to conduct rescues of individuals in similar circumstances in the past. During that time, the City was also contacted by the DNR about potential violations related to other encampments that had been cleared in December. These, along with the normal health and safety concerns associated with all encampments, are among the reasons the sites mentioned were vacated and cleaned. While this may well turn out to be the first April in many years the area along the Black River does not flood, we could not predict that during the planning process in February and March. There were no developers to my knowledge who expressed any reservations about the encampment. Many others, however, did lodge complaints.

Brian Sampson does indeed have an incredibly difficult job and is balancing multiple competing interests while he focuses on the singular goal of finding lasting solutions to homelessness in our community. In the short term, there are multiple action steps that the City and County are taking to effectuate the long term plan. Both governments will continue to do that work. I encourage you to view the Pathways Home plan that I sent to Mr. Ellefson so you can see those action steps for yourself.

As you suggest, the cleanup process exacts a fiscal toll on the City. It is not nearly the amounts you have mentioned, but it is extremely costly. That is true for all of the services that are provided for those who are unsheltered in our community. With additional costs for emergency response, medical treatment, and social services, the community is investing tens of thousands of dollars in each individual. The Pathways Home plan seeks to end that directionless process with a viable and sustainable long term solution. Again, the Pathways Home plan is currently being implemented and efforts are underway to decrease the numbers of individuals sleeping outdoors in our community *right now*. Unfortunately, the challenges are vast and it will take time to reach fully functional zero in homelessness. Certainly, I strongly recommend contacting emergency personnel to address any current safety concerns.

Thank you for contacting me with your concerns and I invite you to do so at any time in the future.

Sincerely,

m.

Mitch Reynolds

Mayor
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From: Mitch Moths <rioman.mitch@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 10:57 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch <reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org>
Subject: The Landings

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Sent an email to you last week. Just checking to see if you got it and if there is any response.

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Mitch Moths - President The Landings HOA - 14 Copeland Ave, La Crosse, WI 54603

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Mitch Moths

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