

Gibson, Dylan - CM

From: Troy Younger <troy.j.younger@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 07, 2022 10:33 AM
To: Gibson, Dylan - CM
Subject: 11-7-2022 City Council meeting - Written comments regarding homelessness

Good evening, everyone

Thank you for accepting this email. It was my intention to present this personally, but it is cold and flu season and my family is currently experiencing this.

I want to share my experience. I ran the Soup Kitchen at Thrive Church in Federal Heights for 7 years. My experience made me realize that we are doing the majority of those dealing with poverty and homelessness a huge disservice by treating the homeless as a monolith. During my time managing Soup Kitchen I dealt with the Working Poor, those with some form of Mental Disability, struggling Vets, those enslaved by addiction issues, and those commonly referred to as Campers or the Homefree.

Mayor Huseman was very kind and sent me a link to the recent Council Study Session regarding Staff's presentation for using the 10 million in ARAP funds for creating a centralized homeless resource center. During the study session Mayor Huseman made a comment at approximately 2:37 into the session, "Are we going to be bold and find a solution that works for everybody and start to address it (Homelessness). Or, we can sit around and continue to make excuses on why we don't want to do anything?"

There is not a universal solution to homelessness, and to attempt a solution that works for everybody will only leave portions of the community disenfranchised.

While technically the Working Poor and those with Mental Disabilities aren't homeless. They live right on the edge. And, if we don't do something to make resources for education/training and more stable employment available to them, they'll be living in their cars at Eagle Pointe. If CC has to spend 10 million of Federal funds on some kind of Central Resource center, perhaps a better investment would be a Vo Tech campus where CC can partner with business to create an internship that would lead to stable employment.

Regarding struggling Veterans and those enslaved by addiction, other than some sort of hospitalization with medical treatments and compassionate care, I honestly don't know what else can be done.

The Campers / Homefree are different altogether. During the study session I heard some of the members of Council ask questions that made the assumption Campers are a part of various metro communities. They aren't part of a traditional community, they're more like a Nomadic tribe. They don't need more resources from CC. There are nonprofits and community resources available throughout the metro area. They know where the resources are, they know what resources are available, they know when resources are available, and they know how to access resources. If Council makes more traditional resources available in CC, this will only attract more.

Another statement made during the study session was, "There is a price for everything. We can either pay that price now and hope for a solution, or we can continue to pay a price while having done nothing." The statement is true. There is a price for everything. However, do we want to use money for solutions that will cause more problems and cost more money? I apologize for using the line from Field of Dreams, but it is true, "If you build it, they will come." And they will come in great numbers.

Mayor Huseman also shared a link with me about the City of Gresham Homeless Services video on YouTube. Thank you for that. I was enlightening. Compassion is mentioned numerous times during the video. And, as I watched video from other cities regarding their solution to homelessness, compassion is used over and over again.

My views on dealing with Campers will not be seen as "compassionate". I've been criticized for that many times. However, compassion isn't infinite and we're going to have to make a decision on where CC will direct its compassion. Will it be directed towards citizens and businesses that call CC home or will it be directed to those living outside of social and cultural norms that are doing damage to those communities? In my opinion, Homefree / Campers don't need more compassion. They need encouragement. They need to be told that they are some of the most powerful and prosperous people to ever live on the planet. They need to be told that they are not living up to potential. Trying to do so can be terrifying and uncomfortable, but they are capable of achieving their potential and more.

Troy

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