

**Pilon, Janet**

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**Subject:** For your records - Urgent Request to Stop Dismantling of Encampments

**From:** Vilma Rossi

**Subject:** Urgent Request to Stop Dismantling of Encampments

**Date:** July 29, 2020 at 2:34:21 PM EDT

**To:** [maureen.wilson@hamilton.ca](mailto:maureen.wilson@hamilton.ca)

**Cc:** [mayor@hamilton.ca](mailto:mayor@hamilton.ca), [jason.farr@hamilton.ca](mailto:jason.farr@hamilton.ca), [hclc.cjch@gmail.com](mailto:hclc.cjch@gmail.com), [info@keepingsix.org](mailto:info@keepingsix.org), [info@hamsmart.ca](mailto:info@hamsmart.ca)

(Resending message to ensure receipt - there was a bounce back. Apologies for duplication.)

On Jul 29, 2020, at 2:32 PM, Vilma Rossi wrote:

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

Ms. Maureen Wilson, Councillor

Ward One – Hamilton

[maureen.wilson@hamilton.ca](mailto:maureen.wilson@hamilton.ca)

Dear Ms. Wilson:

Regarding: Urgent Request to Stop Dismantling of Encampments

I am writing to you in a state of both distress and disgust having just learned that the City of Hamilton has informed HAMSMaRT and Keeping Six of the plans to dismantle the encampments at First Ontario Centre and on Ferguson Street. I urge you to do everything in your power to stop these plans from being enacted.

I am a resident of Ward One. I am safely housed. And I was in a financial position to contribute funds to the purchase of a tent for members of our community who are unsheltered. I did so because I believe that appropriate housing is a basic human need – a position supported by Hamilton's Housing & Homelessness Action Plan, 2013. I also contributed because I firmly believe that living in a tent is safer, healthier and more dignified than living completely isolated and unsheltered. I was also willing to contribute because advocates/activists view the tents as a temporary and caring interim solution until appropriate housing can be found for unsheltered people – housing that is responsive to the frequently complex and unique needs of people who are currently without homes.

I understand that your colleague, Mr. Jason Farr, has a growing folder of concerned residents who have spoken against the encampments. If residents have concerns, then these concerns need to be investigated and responded to in an appropriate fashion that meets the needs of

housed and unsheltered residents of the City. The answer is NOT to dismantle the encampments and further stigmatize, marginalize and destroy temporary housing. Where will people go if the camps are dismantled? How does this make the situation better for anyone in the City of Hamilton? This is just a kneejerk and punitive response to what everyone recognizes is a complex situation. I urge you to use your influence to convince your colleagues to engage the community to come to reasonable solutions to the crisis that is facing unsheltered people. Please utilize the passion, commitment, skills and relationships developed by HAMSMaRT, Keeping Six and the Hamilton Legal Clinic to resolve any concerns that Mr. Farr's residents may have in order to ensure that unsheltered people are allowed to stay in the encampments. To do otherwise before adequate housing solutions are found is shameful and contrary to the person-centred, individualized, collaborative and engaged manner cited in the Encampment Response Information Report (June 20/19).

I am writing to you to ask for the following:

1. That the City of Hamilton NOT dismantle homeless encampments.
2. That the City provide interim and permanent housing for encampment residents with necessary supports.
3. That the City of Hamilton prioritize individuals experiencing homelessness for urgent housing placement.
4. That the City engage encampment residents to assess their needs – and to ensure these needs are met – prior to dismantling the encampments.
5. That the City remove barriers in shelters and hotels in order to accommodate the individual needs of encampment residents.
6. That the City allow for sanctioned encampment sites and/or designate specific parks/public lands where individuals are allowed to set up tents/temporary structures.
7. That the City allow for a streamlined, low-barrier, accessible process of issuing permits allowing for tents and temporary structures.

Dismantling homeless encampments will cause harm to encampment residents and this harm is aggravated by the current Covid pandemic. Dismantling encampments must not happen.

Sincerely,

Vilma Rossi