

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Stop Dismantling of Homeless Encampments NOW

From: **Stef Dubbeldam**

Date: Thu, Jul 30, 2020 at 10:22 AM

Subject: Stop Dismantling of Homeless Encampments NOW

To: <jason.farr@hamilton.ca>

Cc: <hclc.cjch@gmail.com>, <info@keepingsix.org>, <info@hamsmart.ca>

Hello,

My name is Stefani Dubbeldam and I have been living in Ward 2 for almost 5 years now, and worked in the downtown core for several years. When I learned about the city's plan to dismantle the encampments at the First Ontario Centre and at Ferguson Station, I was completely appalled at this. Before writing to you, I have researched both your public and private responses to residents, and I am so incredibly disappointed in you. You have consistently ignored emails and inquiries from residents who are calling you to stop this action, but have told residents asking for the removal of the encampments that you are collecting reports of certain concerns from residents to help your motion move forward. Your website clearly brags that you have a good relationship with your colleagues on council and are able to gather support for 'nearly every motion [you] have devised and delivered', and I don't doubt it, since you clearly prioritize speaking up when it seems convenient. However, your website also grandly throws around your 'progressive and inclusive approach' and how you're 'improving the quality of life for *all* residents'. It's interesting to read this perspective, since your actions have led me to believe that you are only interested in improving the life of *some* residents. At some point, you have made the decision to focus on promoting films, sports, and patios, and would trade safe havens for marginalized folks to keep your position of power and influence. Considering that we are in a global pandemic, I am shocked that I would need to even write this to you, asking you to prioritize the protection of our vulnerable homeless population over the disgruntled residents who dislike the disturbance, but at this point, I have such low expectations for you that I am also not surprised.

You've heard these requests before, but since clearly you have one folder for a case against these encampments, I pray that you are adding this to a different folder, calling for your action against this motion. If you actually represent *all* residents of Ward 2, I would like to see some immediate action on the following:

1. The City not dismantle homeless encampments.
2. The City provide interim and permanent housing for encampment residents with necessary supports.
3. The City prioritize individuals experiencing homelessness for urgent housing placement.
4. The City engage encampment residents in assessing their needs prior to dismantling.
5. The City remove barriers in shelters and hotels in order to accommodate the individual needs of encampment residents.
6. 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. The City allow for a streamlined, low-barrier, accessible process of issuing permits allowing for tents and temporary structures.

And to be clear, I have read some of your responses to these demands, about the city bylaws and not seeing other cities do this successfully. That's not good enough. This response clearly comes from protecting the interests of *some* and is not for all. The City can change its bylaws, and we can be the first to make something

work. All steps forward require someone taking the first step, and I hope someone as 'progressive and inclusive' as you can fill those shoes.

I look forward to hearing from, and more importantly, seeing you in action.

Sincerely,

Stefani Dubbeldam

A Disappointed Ward 2 Resident