

Pilon, Janet

Subject: FW: Forced Removal of Homeless Encampments

From: Laura Pin

Sent: Tuesday, August 4, 2020 11:01 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Fwd: Forced Removal of Homeless Encampments

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Office of the Mayor** <mayor@hamilton.ca>

Date: Thu, Jul 30, 2020 at 8:44 AM

Subject: RE: Forced Removal of Homeless Encampments

To: Laura Pin

Good Morning,

Thank you for contacting the Office of the Mayor.

I have shared your correspondence with the Mayor and their Advisors for review.

I also recommend forwarding your correspondence to the Office of the City Clerk who will be able to add your correspondence to an upcoming Council/Committee Agenda. This will ensure that all Members of Council will see your correspondence. To submit correspondence to the City Clerk, please see the following link:

<https://www.hamilton.ca/council-committee/council-committee-meetings/request-speak-committee-council>

Encampments of street involved or homeless individuals have been increasingly visible in the community over the past several months. Encampments are a complex issue with multiple factors contributing to individuals staying outdoors. On an ongoing basis, City and homelessness serving agency staff work to engage with individuals experiencing outdoor homelessness in order to refer and make connections to support and appropriate resources.

In order to respond through an integrated and collaborative approach, representatives from various City departments have been meeting on a regular basis since June 2018. This group is co-chaired by Housing Services Division and Public Health Services and includes representatives from Municipal Law Enforcement, Hamilton Paramedic Service, Hamilton Police Service (including Social Navigation Program), Waste Collections, and Parks & Cemeteries. The group also ensures collaboration and connection to community agencies which provide direct housing, emergency response, social, and mental health supports to those experiencing outdoor homelessness.

The goal of this ongoing group is to ensure active encampment sites are known in a timely manner, allowing for person-centred engagement opportunities and individualized housing plans. This also provides an opportunity to identify gaps in response efforts and assess risk level of the encampment to determine steps that may need to be taken based on City of Hamilton By-Laws.

We continue to do individual outreach to help individuals sleeping rough so they are aware of what their options are to find housing. We appreciate that people sleeping rough have individual circumstances that need to be addressed. We remain committed to helping them find shelter and/or legal housing alternatives as appropriate.

We remain committed to informing individuals of their housing options, and connecting them with the available community resources and supports. This work is actively being done at two sites in particular this week: York and Bay outside the FirstOntario Centre and Ferguson Ave N.

The City of Hamilton has bylaws that prohibit camping on public property. We aim to uphold the bylaw in a way that is respectful and supportive to all involved. Our goal is to help as many people sleeping rough to find alternatives as early as Friday. This is dependent on people's individual circumstances and the available options.

If you have additional concerns about a particular encampment, please contact the Intensive Case Management Access Coordination (IntAc) at 905-528-0683. All reports will be followed up on, however, due to the complexity and needs of individuals, it often takes time and multiple engagement efforts to determine appropriate options.

Additionally, you may wish to reach out to Public Health who are on top of this file: publichealth@hamilton.ca

Regards,

Paul Szachlewicz

Legislative Assistant

Office of Mayor Fred Eisenberger

City of Hamilton

71 Main Street West, 2nd Floor

Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5

905-546-2489



Hamilton Public Health Services' COVID-19 hotline: **905-974-9848**

Email: phscovid19@hamilton.ca

For the latest information: www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus

From: Laura Pin

Sent: July 29, 2020 6:13 PM

To: Wilson, Maureen <Maureen.Wilson@hamilton.ca>; Office of the Mayor <mayor@hamilton.ca>

Cc: hclc.cjch@gmail.com; info@keepingsix.org; info@hamsmart.ca

Subject: Forced Removal of Homeless Encampments

Dear Mayor Eisenburger and Councillor Wilson,

I'm a resident of Ward 1 in Hamilton, and also a researcher with expertise in social policy.

I'm writing to register my alarm at the plan to suddenly dismantle the homeless encampments at First Ontario Centre and on Ferguson St. Forced removal of these encampments flies in the face of an evidence-based approach to public health and homelessness.

I would urge you to consider alternatives in collaboration with key service providers and people who are unhoused, including

1. Engaging encampment residents in assessing their needs
2. Removing barriers in shelters and hotels in order to accommodate the individual needs of encampment residents
3. Sanctioning ongoing encampment sites where individuals are allowed to set up tents/temporary structures and are provided with sanitation support (i.e. portable toilets)

Dismantling homeless encampments will cause harm to encampment residents and this harm is heightened by the current pandemic. There are other better solutions, and I urge you to consider them.

Sincerely,

Laura Pin,