

**Pilon, Janet**

---

**Subject:** Homeless Encampments

**From:** Frances Murray

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 29, 2020 1:59 PM

**To:** Farr, Jason <[Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca](mailto:Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca)>; Eisenberger, Fred <[Fred.Eisenberger@hamilton.ca](mailto:Fred.Eisenberger@hamilton.ca)>

**Cc:** [hclc.cjch@gmail.com](mailto:hclc.cjch@gmail.com) <[hclc.cjch@gmail.com](mailto:hclc.cjch@gmail.com)>; [info@keepingsix.org](mailto:info@keepingsix.org) <[info@keepingsix.org](mailto:info@keepingsix.org)>; [info@hamsmart.ca](mailto:info@hamsmart.ca) <[info@hamsmart.ca](mailto:info@hamsmart.ca)>

**Subject:** Homeless Encampments

During this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and the damage it's done to our economy and social structures, it seems utterly heartless to dismantle encampments where people have set up to have a place to sleep and congregate. Where are people supposed to go when the City dismantles their temporary shelters? (Dismantling also occurred before the pandemic as there was an encampment on Chatham near the train tracks, where brush and trees were cut down in order to make the area unappealing for the occupants. They were "moved along".)

Instead of pouring increasing amounts of money into the Hamilton Police Services budget each year, a better use of our public funds is for the City to partner with social organizations, such as Keeping Six, The Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, and others in order to find solutions to better support people who have found themselves without a safe and secure home.

Other short-term solutions include the following options for the City:

- Prioritize individuals experiencing homelessness for urgent housing placement
- Engage encampment residents in assessing their needs prior to dismantling
- Remove barriers in shelters and hotels in order to accommodate the individual needs of encampment residents
- Allow for sanctioned encampment sites and/or designate specific parks/public lands where individuals are allowed to set up tents/temporary structures
- Allow for a streamlined, low-barrier, accessible process of issuing permits allowing for tents and temporary structures

I understand all of the above will take hard work, creativity and will be an ongoing issue. However, hoping the homeless "disappear" is not a suitable goal. All levels of government have to come together to create affordable housing units. Private developers and corporations are not going to provide the funding needed (voluntarily).

I also understand the concerns voiced by neighbours of some encampments. This is where mediation would be helpful – and again, this is probably not a deliverable skill held by the HPS.

Please consider the people without homes as high a priority as local homeowners.

Thank you,

Frances Murray  
Hamilton, ON