

Pilon, Janet

Subject: homeless encampments

From: Scott Neigh

Sent: July 29, 2020 1:27 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: homeless encampments

Dear Mayor Eisenberger and Councillor Wilson,

I am a resident of Ward One and many years ago I worked in Hamilton's agency sector on issues of housing and homelessness. I have written to the two of you once before to express my opposition to the city dismantling homeless encampments and to urge greater support for homeless people, during the pandemic and beyond.

I have heard that the city intends to dismantle the encampments at First Ontario Centre and at Ferguson Street on July 31. This is completely inappropriate and will put highly vulnerable people at greater risk. Yes, encampments are not ideal during a pandemic, but forcing people to relocate from areas that are already connected with supportive services will just make things worse.

I urge that:

1. You not dismantle the encampments.
2. You provide interim and permanent housing with necessary supports for encampment residents.
3. You give priority status for urgent housing placement to homeless people.
4. You actually assess the needs of people in the encampments and address them, rather than forcing them to relocate.
5. You remove the barriers that many people face in accessing shelters and hotels.
6. You designate sanctioned sites where people can set up tents or other temporary structures, and then allow them to do so.

Despite the challenges involved, Hamilton has been doing a better job of responding to the needs of homeless residents than many other places during the pandemic. Do not reverse course now by dismantling these encampments.

Sincerely,

Scott Neigh