

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Emergency vote to end the encampment bylaw

From: Farr, Jason <Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca>

Sent: August 10, 2021 12:50 PM

To: Ani Chenier clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: RE: Emergency vote to end the encampment bylaw

Hello, Ani and thank you for engaging. Hopefully the following facts will provide you with some peace of mind and confirm that are indeed safer and more humane options. I would also argue as I have many times publicly in the past, that we are better than most when it comes to tackling housing and homelessness in this city. We have very passionate and experienced staff working with a plethora of equally passionate and qualified partners. That has of been the case and it will continue.

Sleeping rough outdoors is the least safe or humane option for our citizens. This is something Shelter Health and Keeping Six signed off on as well. We all agree.

And respecting your concern on consultation. After failing to get any traction or support with the Ministry of Health and other provincial Organizations that pay most of their salaries, those organizations you mention began to focus on the municipal government and our bylaw and went to court last year, succeeding in getting an emergency injunction on the city of Hamilton bylaw (similar to bylaws in most every city in Canada) that prohibits overnight camping in public parks and places. When those organizations did that – they did it swiftly and we were unable to have legal representation at the injunction hearing to defend our laws because of it. Legal can only represent council in court when council approves it. Because of the tactics, council had no time to approve anything. Just my opinion here, but that pretty much indicated to me their (Keeping 6, Shelter Health Network, Ross n McBride Downtown Law Firm, etc) preferences on how to communicate with this issue.

So here are some facts that I hope help...

- Last night, City Council voted to return to its pre-pandemic housing strategy, which includes helping individuals sleeping rough find safe and humane housing and enforcing the City's camping bylaw that prohibits camping or living on public property.
- The City will remain focused on helping individuals experiencing homelessness, and balancing our response to the needs in the homelessness community, safe access to public spaces and the City's longer term goal of finding safer and more permanent housing for our City's homeless population.
- 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 those individuals sleeping rough to find alternatives that are safe and humane, which is dependent on people's individual circumstances and the available options.

Key Facts and Stats:

- In 2020 over 700 households from Hamilton's Access to Housing wait list were housed in rent-g geared to income units, in the private market using portable housing benefits, and from intensive case management and Rapid Rehousing programs. In 2019, 595 households were housed from the wait list.
- **In 2020 and 2021, the City's Housing Services Division assisted in connecting over 440 homeless individuals and families with permanent housing solutions.**
- Hamilton spends \$120 million annually on housing initiatives, which includes \$64 million from Hamilton and the remainder from higher orders of government.
- In June 2021, Council approved a one-time, \$2 million investment that provided housing allowances for clients of City-funded Intensive Case Management Programs.
- In 2021, the City committed to an additional \$950,000 in annual funding for a shelter that would serve the needs of women, the LGBTQ+2 community and the indigenous community.
- **In 2021/2022, ground will be broken for at least 400 new affordable housing units.**