

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Stop Encampment Evictions

From: Hollie Pocsai

Sent: Wednesday, September 22, 2021 12:10 PM

To: Ciriello, Monica <Monica.Ciriello@hamilton.ca>; John, Edward <Edward.John@hamilton.ca>;
nrinder.naan@hamilton.ca; Farr, Jason <Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca>; Office of the Mayor
<Officeofthe.Mayor@hamilton.ca>; clerk@hamilton.ca

Cc: Hamilton Encampment Support Network <info@hesn.ca>

Subject: Stop Encampment Evictions

Good morning all,

My name is Hollie Pocsai and I am a resident of Ward 2 in Hamilton. I am calling upon you to stop the dismantling of encampments, most recently in JC Beemer Park, and in all other parks and public spaces across Hamilton, while there continue to be no options for permanent housing.

Almost every day I walk past the empty 5.4 acre Jamesville Social housing complex that has been vacant since late 2018, while my neighbours set up homes in tents directly across the street. How can the city dismantle and uproot these residents in good conscience while they sit on land and empty homes waiting for the best offer from developers?

This is not an issue that will go away by policing and violent policy. Each time an encampment is cleared without sufficient resources or permanent shelter it perpetuates more trauma and loss for those residents. If there is no permanent option immediately available, why are we shuffling these residents around every few weeks? For whose benefit? If safety or sanitation is a concern, why are we not setting up viable supports for the encampments as they exist and meeting these residents where they are at? You respond by locking public washrooms and turning off public water fountains. Instead of listening to those affected and their advocates, you choose to continually displace and destroy homes, communities, and social/support networks over and over again. Not to mention you waste an enormous amount of community money that could be spent on permanent housing each time you aggressively and shamefully try to display your power and dominance with these clearings.

As we head into the winter months, these residents are trying to prepare themselves as best they can, and that is impossible to do if they continue to be displaced. The funds that the City of Hamilton has used, and the lack of empathy and compassion shown towards my unhoused neighbours again and again is reprehensible. I have watched as Hamilton police and municipal law enforcement continuously harass encampment residents and throw away their belongings. I demand an end to these evictions, and that City Council stops using community funds on violent policies, instead of permanent humanizing support and resources.

I will continue to watch closely as to how the city navigates this crisis. We need permanent housing now.

Hollie Pocsai
(prn: POH-chai-ee)
Ward 2