

Name of Individual: Kara C Jongeling

Hello Councillors, I originally wanted to delegate live in the meeting but had a scheduling conflict, so kindly accept this written submission intended to speak to Motion 11.3 put forward by councillor Jason Farr titled: Enhanced Parks By-law - Encampment Enforcement. My name is Kara and I was born and raised in Hamilton. I am a Ward 2 resident, who formerly resided in Ward 7, and have seen the explosion of homeless and poverty across the city, especially over the past 5 years or more. It is no secret that Hamilton has become a hub for those in need of support and community. Our city is often joked about as being full of unsavory characters, and despite the efforts of gentrification on James St. N and other pockets of the city, and the astronomical housing market bringing in wealthier classes from surrounding cities, we still carry a gritty reputation. The reason I bring this up is to discuss the way in which the city and community handle our neighbours, your citizens, who are struggling and dying living rough. Your citizens who, deep down want better lives, but cannot even fathom a future for themselves when they do not know what tomorrow will bring, or have a host of complex mental health and physical health issues that cannot be properly addressed or recovered from without stable, dignified housing and support.

It is immoral and careless to evict our neighbours from public spaces they feel safer in than overcrowded and sometimes flawed shelter systems. If you want to continue the better the reputation of the city and help Hamilton thrive, you need to take more immediate steps to stable and affordable housing. 2, 3, 4 years from now is sadly too late. You need to invest in your citizens, whether you view them as your constituents or not. They are here. And we will continue to stand up for them. We resist encampment evictions and the City's ongoing criminalization and violent response to a housing crisis they have facilitated.