

**From:** Dan Zaitzow [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 3, 2024 11:24 AM  
**To:** [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)  
**Subject:** Deposition for the General Issues Committee: November 6, 2024

Hello,

I'd like to respond to Amendment to Item 2 of the General Issues Committee Report 23-023, respecting Public Feedback and Recommendations for an Encampment Protocol and Sanctioned Sites (HSC20036(g)) (City Wide).

I live in Ward 3, about a 15-minute walk to Gage Park. I take my kids there often throughout the year to play in the splash pad, climb the structure, visit the greenhouse, make snowmen, admire the fall leaves and have picnics. I meet clients there for therapeutic sessions. I've had dates there, gone for solo bike rides and done much more. I do this in all the parks in my city, without fear or hesitation. I used to live by Beasley Park and felt the same.

I don't feel safe in a city where my leaders are criminalizing homelessness. I don't feel safe in a city where my city counselors are deeming certain people "unsafe" while others are fine to exist in a park. A park is a public space, and you do not get to determine who is worthy of existing there. People do not choose to live in parks for fun. My unhoused neighbours are folks who do not have other choices. And the shelter system is not an alternative choice for most. If that felt safe and accessible for people, they would opt into that system. But it's not.

This is a reactionary policy that's only going to hurt those already marginalized by our current system. You are putting a bylaw in place that's catering to those who aren't actually facing housing or food insecurity. If you want to actually help those who are living in encampments in our city's parks, you need to address the systemic issues. Why are there no bylaws for rent control? How can you build more affordable housing? What services need to be built out to help folks access employment? Healthcare? Mental health services? Childcare? Education? Public bathrooms and showers? Criminalizing homelessness does not solve the issue. You need to be changing the systems that impose barriers on our unhoused neighbours so that people aren't forced into sleeping rough.

You can do better. We're a relatively small city and Hamilton has the potential to be great. But you can't be great by pushing those on the margins even further out. If we do this, we are just going to turn into Toronto - a city that's become so unaffordable, so congested, so inaccessible that it's lost all of what made it so great a decade ago. Don't be like Toronto. Be better than that.

Warmly,

Dan Zaitzow (he/they)  
[REDACTED]