



A place where families and businesses thrive.

**Homelessness Subcommittee
Listening Session/Community
Conversation Meeting Minutes**

**June 14, 2022
Community Auditorium**

<i>Minutes Approved by the Subcommittee 06.28.2022.</i>
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1. **CALLED TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Evelyn Orr, Chair of the Committee for Community Involvement.

ROLL CALL: Kristy Kottkey, City Councilor; Timothy Rippe, City Councilor; Peter Truax, Mayor.

ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Lauren Quinsland, Community Outreach Specialist; Henry Reimann, Police Chief; Jesse VanderZanden, City Manager; Jaime Zaik, Executive Assistant.

PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE (In-person & Zoom): Approximately 24.

GUEST PRESENTERS: None.

2. **LISTENING SESSION/COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

Councilor Kottkey opened the work session with a brief summary of the City's plans to date and explanation of the funding now available to the city by way of Washington County. It was further explained that the intent of the work session is to provide the community with a framework regarding the current homeless issue and to bring the opinions and recommendations of the community back to Council. After reading the ground rules, roundtable style discussion began. Written public comment received prior to the meeting is attached. The following is a summary of questions and comments shared by community members:

- In regards to the potential B street encampment, what is the capacity of the 8 sites, how large will the sprawl be?
- Square footage questions, how big is a camp, how big is the space?
Would like to have a more definitive answer as to how large the camp will be.
- What does the term "temporary" in the bullet point listed on the website mean?
Is the camp truly temporary? Will the residents be temporary?
- Saying the camp is temporary is a bit misleading, would like more details regarding the conditions of the temporary nature, the finite purpose.
- How long can someone stay there? Would all the people in the camp have to be in the program? Some people like that lifestyle? Will the proposed plan provide an opportunity for those folks to stay?

- It was stated that there are approximately 60 people in FG who are homeless, does this include the Highway 47 camps as well or just the B Street site?
- Concerned regarding the impact on wildlife in the area, the removal of trees, dumping in the river, vandalism, people fighting, dismantling vehicles, leaving debris, feels as though the persons living at the B Street site are being enabled to live the lifestyle they are living. Feels that there are people who have aspirations to stay there. Are the services currently being provided encouraging people to live there? People are trespassing, wandering onto their property and stealing items. Hoping for a solution that will truly help people instead of enabling.
- Concerns regarding the recent growth in population of homeless persons in the area and the safety of the people living there and neighboring the 47 camps. Has concerns that the size of the B street camp will continue to grow. Is the City planning for the site to become a park or will it be a homeless site? If it is intended to be a Park and continue with the City's original plan? Or is it not going to be a park and FG will maintain a homeless encampment there? Would feel safer if the camp was not able to grow, and will also be happy to see us providing a safer space for those currently living there. What will the B Street site look like in 4 years?
- Is there a better suited property within the City that would allow access to public transportation in order to increase access to food services, and other resources?
- Concerned for the safety of the residents surrounding the area. The police are being called to the camps weekly. Residents in neighboring properties are being approached by trespassing transients. Concerns regarding theft of personal property, animal abuse, crime, drug use. Would like to see funding go to police services. Drug addiction is preventing people from getting into housing, and is concerned that people are supplying needles to encourage the drug use. Expressed frustration regarding tax dollars being used to provide dumpsters and other sanitation services. Concerns were expressed for the wildlife and the damage occurring to the area's vegetation and the removal of trees to create land bridges and shelters.
- Concerns regarding the burning of debris, garbage, and other items at the B Street site. With warm weather approaching cooking fires and waring fires could get out of hand. Would like to have people monitoring the fires more closely.

- Would like to hear from the Police Chief regarding the scoring and methodology behind the cleanup matrix. The crime stats are concerning. Believes that the same rules should apply for the houseless population as well as the tax payers supporting them.
- Is the Hwy 47 encampment being assessed every two weeks? How often are the B street camps being monitored/visited? What happens after 5 o'clock when the County staff and Police Officers are off of work? Why was the person residing and sleeping inside of the bus shelter in front of Safeway for over 48hours not removed? Concerned that word is spreading about the camps and services that are being provided in the area. Who is making certain that the case managers are being held responsible? What type of training are police officers receiving in order to properly handle people in mental health crisis or having a drug related episode? Furthermore, why is it the police officer's responsibility? We need to follow through and hold the agencies accountable for the services they are saying they are providing to ensure that the city and its residents are being protected.
- Loves the community but not the homeless population. What happens in 5 years if we have not reached the housing metrics? Due to the rising levels of crime related to the large numbers of homeless persons the community member has chosen to start carrying a firearm.
- Concerned about where the campers will go if they are removed from the current B Street site. What are the city plans? Feels like it is inhospitable to remove the people from their current location.
- Would it be possible to ask our major retailers to install shopping cart locks?

No formal action nor formal decisions were made during the Listening Session/Community Conversation.

3. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEXT MEETING:

Listening Session/Community Conversation Work Session 2 – 6.18.2022.

4. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.