



A place where families and businesses thrive.

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

**June 18, 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 10:02 a.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 30.

GUEST PRESENTERS: None.

2. **LISTENING SESSION/COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

Councilor Kottkey opened the work session with a brief summary of the last listening session highlights and an overview of the initial proposal from the City. After reading the ground rules, the floor was opened and 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:

- How will the input gathered by the City be used? What is the process for making decisions and how will the input the City received play into the process moving forward?
- Historically the comments gathered during listening sessions are shelved. What does the City plan to do with the with the data? Is the City going to organize the data into topics or themes in order to be transparent? How big is a camp, how big is the space? Seeking a more definitive to how large the camp will be.
- Where is the proposed location of the B street encampment and how is it not in the flood plain?
- How will residents in the encampments be vetted for drug use and sexual offenses? How will the residents in the neighboring communities be informed of at-risk residents of the camp?

- Will there be supervision of the campsite to prevent issues like the ones seen at the Hwy 47 encampments? How will it be kept safe and clean and respectful for the surrounding neighbors? For example, yelling can be heard during the night.
- Given the goal of these camps is to transition people into housing and the current economic situation and lack of housing, will this just draw people to the location?
- How will you keep the limit to 8 camp sites without more people coming and joining those who are already there? How will this be monitored?
- Will each of the 8 camping positions be for a single tent or a group of tents?
- How does the transition process from camp to housing work? Will there be a limit as to how long a person can stay at the camp?
- If the County and non-profit groups are working together and the places for people to go are full, will people be forced to move out? Who will be responsible for shifting people around?
- People need to work and be hired! Forest Grove also has plenty of houses, just not affordable ones. We need landlords who are willing to rent to someone with any type of past.
- We have to remember the why. We are working towards a solution so that people don't die during inclement weather because they are unhoused.
- People need continued and expanded access to hygiene services so that they are able to work towards stability.
- Who is paying for all of the services? Where are the resources coming from? Are we receiving federal help? Who is spending the money and how is it being spent?
- Washington County has so much money and it is being unevenly spread around. How can Forest Grove make certain it receives more County dollars? In addition to housing people need detox. The City has a drug problem. Sex trafficking and drugs are directly related to the current situation. Focus and solve the drug problem.
- Grateful to the nonprofits that are doing work and suggests that the City reach out to local churches. They need to have the how – people are willing and wanting to help but don't know how. There are volunteers available.
- Why isn't employment part of the goal. Concerned that there is no support to get people into work.

- Location? Warming or Cooling station? Is the City lot a better option for the encampment? Location would be easier to monitor, provide hygiene services to and what about the possibility of pods?
- Would like the City to survey landlords and find out how they can be helped and encouraged to rent.
- Are other sites being considered? Are there any regulations that prohibit encampments being placed in specific locations? If so, what are they?
- Campsites are not going to be a temporary need. The country is experiencing unprecedented times and an influx of economic and environmental refugees. Camping can be considered a form of transitional housing. Possibly look at more non-temporary camping needs, like Safe Sites program. Would like to see the site be closer to services.
- The goal should be to work towards employment as well as housing. The camps are filled with drugs.
- The wash stations are great! If the dumpster returns the campers would clean up after themselves. Access to hygiene is extremely important and provides a sense of dignity. Continued support and compassion is needed.
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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 – 6.21.2022.

4. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.