

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Julie Hoy](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Mai Vang](#); [Micki Varney](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for City Council meeting 081125 Agenda item 5a  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 11:40:13 AM

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Shared on behalf of Bob Francis, at his request

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Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

Three Sunday mornings a month I do a program for the homeless called Cindy's Room Service. It is a very simple project. I serve coffee and give out a small bag of goodies (candy, tissue and a hand cleaner) out of the back of my car at Marion Square park. We serve about 38 people.

This program started back in 2017 when Arches joined with the business community to get homeless folks sleeping in front of businesses up and moving in the mornings. Then, the program was called Room Service. My wife and I, along with other volunteers, pulled a cart with two carafes of coffee and other items such as gloves, hats, socks, hand warmers, greeting our homeless neighbors. We did this for many years until we had to stop because of COVID. After my wife died in 2022, I started the program up again and named it after her.

In all the years we have done this, we have never had any trouble from these good folks. In fact, just the opposite has happened. We have gotten to know many. They have always appreciated getting a hot cup of coffee in the morning and, most importantly, they know that we do not judge them. Yes, many have mental problems but they have never caused any problem for us. Our approach has been to simply see them as fellow human beings who are going through a particularly

difficult time in their lives. We treat them with the dignity and respect every human being deserves.. They treat us the same way.

I believe that by seeing these folks as neighbors and showing compassion, empathy and understanding we can work together to overcome the problems of homelessness. Of course it is difficult, nobody thinks otherwise, but it can be done. We need to work together.

Thank you,

Bob Francis

965 Whitetail Deer St., NW, Salem, Oregon

Ward 1

**From:** [beebalmbees@gmail.com](mailto:beebalmbees@gmail.com)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Revised to add: for public comment regarding item #25-298  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 1:44:47 PM

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Hello Mayor Hoy and City Councilors,

The following is a list of crime issues that keep getting worse in NE Salem / Northgate neighborhood as we are experiencing loss of board members leaving

Salem in frustration over the lenient attitude the City has for the addicts, criminals and squatters. This "sanctuary city" seems to be only for these lawless people while making tax payer citizens pay more taxes and with a reduced sense of a sanctuary.

1. If any of you drive around Northgate you will see many derelict camps with trash spread out including needles, rats and disgusting human waste.

2. Squatters are occasionally moved out by ODOT or the City Codes and Compliance and then come back again and again. With the ODOT budget cuts as well as the

City, the clean ups are getting less and less. The City is starting to use the nuisance laws however, it takes too long to get the trespassers out. The trespassing law is not used properly.

3. Noise abatement is a real issue and neighbors cannot get the police to do much of anything as the loud music is making people sick.

Gangs keep trying to "claim their territory" in the parks and neighbor fences with lots of graffiti on murals, furniture and trees, etc..

At least the graffiti enforcement team is helping clean it up.

4. There is an increase in shootings and crime and theft and the police and fire say they are overloaded and are ending programs that helped fight crime.

5. Neighbors here feel like they need to assist in alerting police to the crime but are discouraged as the City levy chose the library and center 50 plus stay open longer rather than providing more funding for Safety.

6. We have suggested several times that the City can make money by fining property owners for allowing squatters on their property and not keeping up their property like cutting tall dry grass which is hazardous in this heat.

Portland does this. The police could make people that "break the law" serve time by providing public service by cleaning up trash, etc. or paying a fine rather than just letting them go over and over. This is also for shop lifters that keep getting off with no charges which sends a message that Salem is an easy place to steal and do criminal acts.

7. The Attorney General should not make it easy for criminals to get away without any consequences. It is both discouraging to the victims and to the police who worked hard to capture the criminals.

8. The City council should be embarrassed as they allow the NE side to look like a slum and even with the State fair coming soon.

9. The City has been spending general fund money on money losing programs like the Airport, Urban renewal districts, the airport fiasco, and paying private firms hundreds of thousands of dollars and studies like telling us we have crime.

The City priorities seem to focus on things that are more "fun relayed" programs rather on public safety issues which was supposedly a top concern before.

Please focus on crime in the NE side and give more funding to the police and fire...to the police in particular.

Bayard Mentrum

**From:** [Deanna Garcia](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [elna@saalemneighbors.org](mailto:elna@saalemneighbors.org); [beebalmbees@gmail.com](mailto:beebalmbees@gmail.com); [nesca@saalemneighbors.org](mailto:nesca@saalemneighbors.org); [Susann Kaltwasser](#); [Erin Grimm](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [nola@saalemneighbors.org](mailto:nola@saalemneighbors.org); [Mai Vang](#); [Trevor Womack](#)  
**Subject:** 25-298 Safety & Livability in NE  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 9:43:18 AM

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Hello, Please include the following for public comment regarding item #25-298 on this evening's agenda.

On July 30th, I attended a forum put on by Salem city staff to connect with the business community of NE Salem.

The forum was called in response to a work session between city council and law enforcement to address the topic of safety and livability in downtown Salem. I'll be honest, I feel as if this NE forum was a knee-jerk reaction perhaps after the city received clap back for only addressing safety and livability for downtown business/residents. There should be more opportunities for businesses to have these conversations and the focus should be on where safety and livability are the most impacted based on real data.

This may come as no surprise, but the forum was not well attended by actual business owners or managers. There were approximately 6 or 7 business entities represented and only a few spoke out.

Prior to July 30, I took an opportunity to connect with several business owners and managers around NOLA to inform them about this forum. Some didn't find out about it until too late or it was scheduled at an inconvenient time. I was asked for clarification on what the city's plans are while others shared experiences they've had on a regular basis.

At the forum, I shared that my business neighbors are in a tough place; where they struggle to manage the problems caused by homeless individuals. We're seeing an increase in loitering, theft, break-ins, and aggressive behavior near storefronts and public areas. These conditions are putting real pressure on small business owners, employees, and residents—many of whom no longer feel safe. Smaller businesses do not have the means to install hostile landscaping or hire private security patrols.

This is not just about commerce. Families in NE Salem are raising children who are regularly exposed to people passed out on sidewalks, surrounded by garbage, and sometimes clearly in mental or physical distress. This is becoming a normalized sight for our youth—and that should concern all of us.

Many businesses and residents share my stance on this being more than just a public safety issue - it is a public health crisis. And the conversation at this forum needed more than just city representation. There needed to be a voice representing the other side of law enforcement like Marion County Sheriff's Office and Jail; representation of the justice system like Marion County District Attorney, representation of mental health and substance abuse services, again, Marion County. It doesn't seem fair to push our leaders to make decisions involving services beyond what is within the city's wheelhouse. Without real consequences or places for people to go, the same individuals cycle in and out of our public spaces. Enforcement must be part of a broader solution—one that includes meaningful **mental health** and **substance use treatment**, and **accessible shelter options** with wraparound services.

I have asked my neighboring associations to join the North Lancaster Neighborhood Association in our request to continue this dialogue with our business community in NE Salem. This is not just an ask for more police presence. It's an ask for inclusion and partnership to find a solution to concerns with safety and livability in our part of the community too. Thank you!

Best,  
Deanna Garcia, Chair  
***N***Orth ***L***Ancaster NA  
NOLA@saalemneighbors.org  
[www.cityofsalem.net/NOLA](http://www.cityofsalem.net/NOLA)

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Julie Hoy](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Mai Vang](#); [Micki Varney](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for City Council meeting 081125 Agenda item 5a  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 11:45:04 AM

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Shared on behalf of Dianne Rush, at her request

~~~~~  
Dear Mayor and City Councilors,

My name is Dianne Rush and I am a full-time volunteer at SafeSleep United – an overnight, low barrier shelter for women, and women with kids, in Ward 1 in Salem.

I am writing to express my feelings about the importance of livability for ALL people in Salem. I have seen, first hand, what the lack of livability has done to the women of our community.

Of the women I serve on a daily basis, lack of livability means some choose to use drugs to be able to stay awake at night so they can be ever watchful and ready to run when danger comes. They sleep under overpasses and bridges and cover themselves with dirt so no one will see them and assault them. They feel they have no choice but to stay with an abusive person for "protection" even though that person will rape them nightly or pass them around to their friends.

Some dress baggy or pee on themselves – to not look girly or pretty; to smell bad, so they might not be raped today. Some hide under spider infested porches, bushes, vehicles or by porta potties to try to catch what most of us take for granted every night - a few peaceful moments of precious sleep.

Who are these women I speak of? Children of God: someone's sister, moms with children (of all ages), grandmothers, aunts, and cousins. They are women fleeing stalkers, domestic violence, abusive family situations.

They are young women who are traumatized by extreme neglect and/or abuse, and aged out of foster care and they don't yet have the skills to heal from trauma and navigate life independently.

They are women who left their own lives to be a caregiver for a loved one. And when the person they cared for died, the women had no place to live because they were never on the lease, and couldn't afford the rent anyway.

They are women who had full "normal" lives and lost it all when an expensive car repair, medical bill, mental illness, dementia, addiction, job loss, identity theft (or other scam), death in the family, or yet another rent increase was more than they could afford. They don't look like the negative stereotypes of homeless women, yet now they are suddenly lacking a safe place to be, sleep, live, go to the bathroom.

They are women who have been poor and homeless for years, or for as far back as they can remember, who lost bootstraps long ago, if they ever even had any.

They are women who are well spoken and eloquent, and they are women who have no voice because they've lost all hope. They are women who have so many voices in their heads, that they talk and scream at people we can't see, just to get a word

in edgewise, or to tell their voices to PLEASE shut up!

They are women who have been living in trauma, desperation, hopelessness, and survival mode for a long time. And they are the newly homeless, on the thin edge of being able to see what might become of their own hope and survival, if this continues for long.

They are women who no longer have, or never had, easy paths for meeting their basic human needs. Some believe that their presence makes an area less safe, less lively, less thriving, less livable. The reality is a duality – people experiencing homelessness are not experiencing much livability because basic human needs are almost impossible to meet.

We need to do more of the things that work: Housing First, Permanent Supported Housing (PSH), truly affordable housing, more mental health, addiction, and recovery services and supports. More mental health professionals as first responders to people experiencing mental health crises. Return of the SOS and bicycle police to serve people experiencing homelessness in a compassionate and trauma informed way. And more things to enable livability along the way - more restrooms, showers, laundry, water, phone charging stations, trash cans and trash service, any place to sit or nap, sleep and live, and any shred of privacy.

I could go on and on about the horrors these women encounter on a daily and nightly basis. Maybe you can relate? I hope not. But if you could put yourself in their situation, even momentarily, maybe you'll realize how important it is to

provide livability to all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Dianne Rush

**From:** [Kaethe Mentrum](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Safety and Crime Issues  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 1:22:41 PM

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Dear Mayor Julie Hoy and City Council Members,

For tonight's meeting, please add that Northgate is experiencing a lot of crime and theft problems in particular. We are having ongoing issues with vandalism, numerous theft, and more. We have been having an increase in the homeless encampments all over Northgate, some in City properties while the others along ODOT's. We have had these people come into stores to harass workers at the stores and they are keeping customers from returning, thus decreasing the business for the stores. They say they are ready to leave Salem altogether.

Then there is an increase in gang members who are trying to take over parks with graffiti all over. I was told the more multi-unit apartments are built, the more crime due to population increase. And I was warned these gang members live in these apartment units. I was told they carry weapons..

Kindly make sure that the NE side is on the police's radar. Thank you.

Kaethe Mentrum

**From:** [Kaethe Mentrum](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Revised to add: for public comment regarding item #25-298  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 1:45:50 PM

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Dear Mayor Julie Hoy and City Council Members,

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Kaethe Mentrum

**From:** [Kindness Closet of Salem](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Public Testimony 8/11  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 12:19:35 PM

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Aug 11, 2025

Mayor Hoy and City Councilors,

I am writing again as a concerned Salem resident of Ward 2 and community advocate. I am the Executive Director of Kindness Closet of Salem as well as a Clinical Social Work Associate working toward licensure at a local community mental health agency.

Kindness Closet of Salem originated as a grassroots group of Salemites who desired to be part of change in the community by coming alongside our neighbors experiencing homelessness. Since 2016, we've served thousands of meals and provided essential items for survival. But the most important, and impactful, thing we've done, is to cultivate a sense of belonging and community by meeting people where they're at and allowed space for relationships to grow. In the years of providing services and engaging in outreach, we've never experienced a situation where things escalated to a point of needing law enforcement intervention.

As a citizen, I campaigned for the livability levy before the last election. I was so pleased when the levy passed because I know how tight the budget is and how ardently our city staff work. I am now deeply concerned about the messaging regarding homelessness and violence impacting "livability" in our city.

People experiencing homelessness are much more likely to experience violence than they are to perpetrate violence. My friends have told me stories about being urinated on while sleeping on sidewalks downtown by people stumbling out of bars. We don't need to look further to corroborate these stories than a story recently published by Salem Reporter in which a downtown business owner gloated about throwing homeless people into the street and throwing urine, feces, and vomit on them. Only a few days later, two young adults were found throwing eggs at homeless individuals for entertainment. Finally, the most horrifying situation of a homeless man, Russell, beat to death in NE Salem for simply existing.

The situation at UGM was a horrible example of the failures of our mental health systems and processes in Oregon of which I am well aware because of my "day job". Our city leaders should focus on what has been working such as the SOS team. I urge you to fully restore and invest in mental health supports for the livability and quality of life for Salemites. More police would not have prevented the tragedy at UGM, however proper mental health care support may have. Additionally, get the Cahoots model of street response up and running as soon as possible.

I want to end my letter on a positive story noting a few community partners. I met my friend Jim in 2020 while operating the Kindness Closet day center in NE Salem. Jim visited us pretty much every single week and became a very close friend who happened to live in a trailer which he attempted to pull around the city. Jim's trailer was constantly at risk of being towed and impounded by the city, and was, at least once at which time private citizens banded together to rescue Jim's home in the middle of an ice storm in 2023. Jim became terminally ill late last year and ultimately passed away housed in a warm bed with the support of Salem

Hospital and their Fetch program as well as Little Critters Rescue. Jim's only family when he passed away were his three small dogs. He left this world knowing he was loved by his friends at Kindness Closet and that his pups would be cared for. Jim was not dangerous. Jim deserved livability as much as anyone with skills and resources to be sheltered.

Kendra Taylor, CSWA  
Executive Director of Kindness Closet of Salem  
1080 16th St SE  
Salem, Or 97302  
Ward 2

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Julie Hoy](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Mai Vang](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for City Council meeting 081125 Agenda item 5a  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 12:04:55 PM  
**Attachments:** [Council 07142025 v2.pptx](#)  
[On Becoming an Advocate 081125 City Council meeting agenda item 5a.pdf](#)

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Shared on behalf of Kathleen Thorpe, Ward 1, at her request.  
Attached in Powerpoint, and PDF format.

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Kathleen Thorpe <kathleen@cleanyourdirt.com>  
**Subject: On becoming an Advocate**  
**Date:** July 13, 2025 at 5:10:36 PM PDT  
**To:** Lynelle Wilcox <lynelle@comcast.net>



# On becoming an Advocate

City of Salem – City Council  
Agenda Item 8  
Public Comment

Kathleen Thorpe  
2943 Tess Ave NE  
Salem, OR 97301

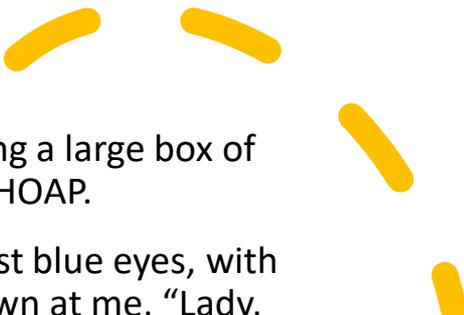
July 14, 2025

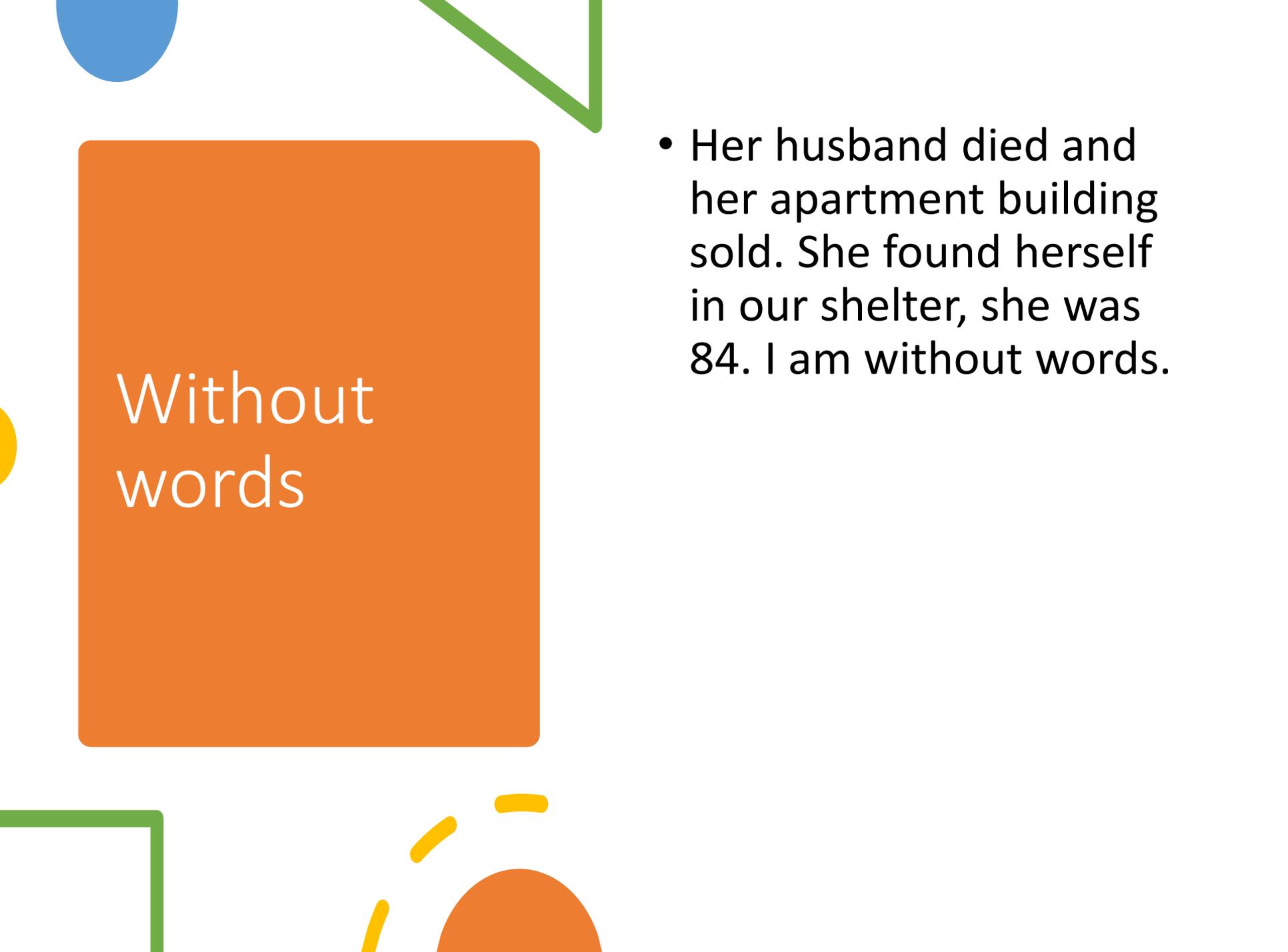
Really  
cold  
outside

- It was really cold outside. I walked into a building at my jobsite. Old nasty gas station to be torn down. I found children's toys scattered and the remains of a small warming fire.
- That broke my heart.
- Baby mom – what is going on?



# My Blue- eye Friend

- 
- I tripped over the curb, carrying a large box of feminine hygiene products in HOAP.
  - Younger man with the brightest blue eyes, with little round glasses peered down at me, “Lady, are you alright?”
  - I told him my biggest damage was probably to my pride. “Well,” he said, “at least you are in good company.”
  - As the other homeless men were picking up my scattered items and offers to help me up off the sidewalk.
  - My new, blue-eyed friend, allowed as to how he had been a medic in Iraq.



Without  
words

- Her husband died and her apartment building sold. She found herself in our shelter, she was 84. I am without words.



- Young Women and mental health

Warming center, young woman comes running into the shelter to rescue the people screaming in the basement. There were no people screaming in the basement.

I chased her down – she wanted to save them, to take care of them. I wanted to save her, take care of her. She ran off into the freezing night.

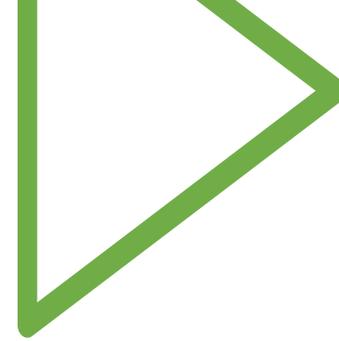
The homeless guys outside said she was schizophrenic.

I was a  
Small  
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Salem  
30+years

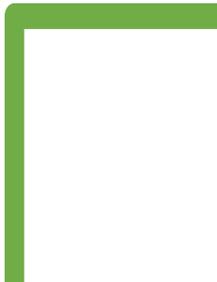
- Environmental Consulting and Cleanup
  - Walk into many shuttered businesses
    - Found many signs of folks living in the most desperate of circumstances. Abandoned food, clothing.
    - And, I had to understand, I wanted to understand.
    - My upbringing had not prepared me to this –
      - I knew about Hobos
      - And making sure I was able to take care of myself

What are bootstraps? What do you do if you don't have any?

- a loop at the back of a boot, used to pull it on.
- get (oneself or something) into or out of a situation using existing resources.



**BOOTSTRAPS**



# It is more that I will ever know

- Education – Understanding Homelessness
  - There is a lot to learn
    - Mental Health
    - Poverty
    - Aging
    - Illness
    - Domestic Violence
    - Addiction
    - Incarceration



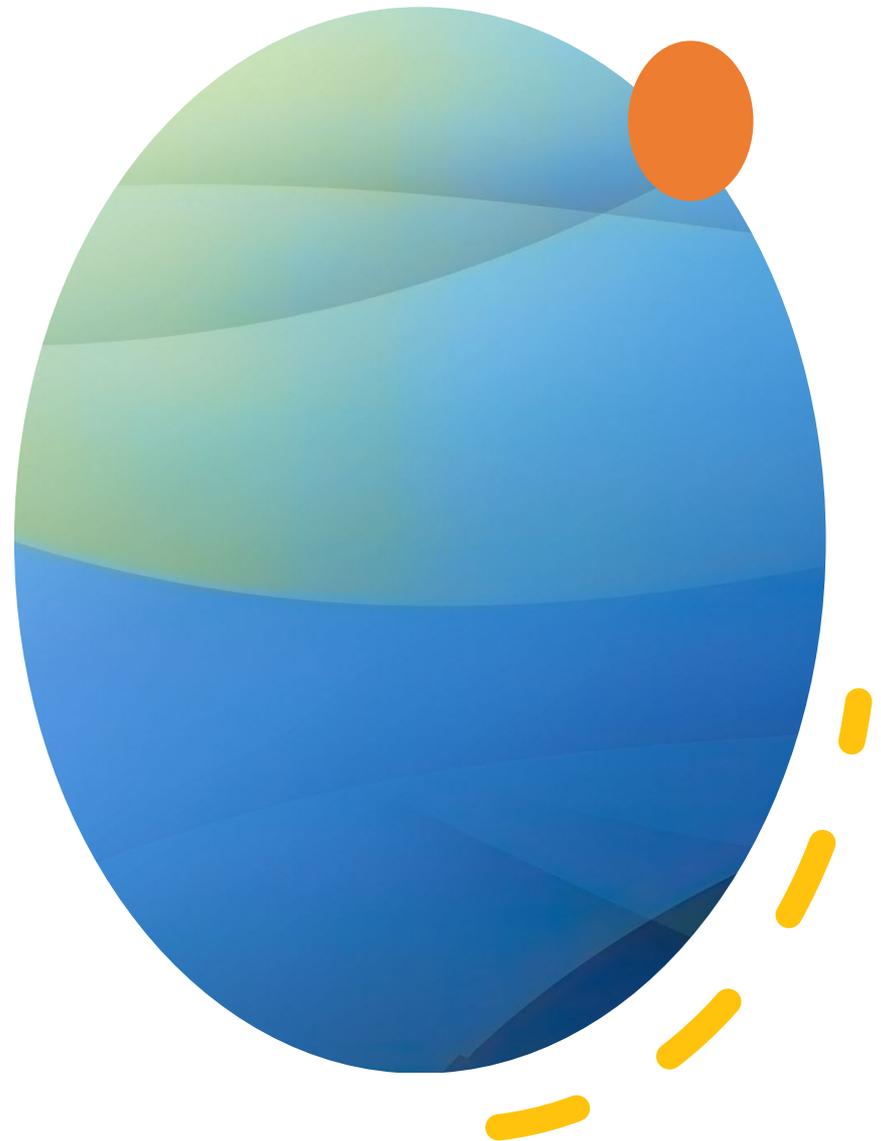
# Advocacy

Can we  
“fix” it?

- Kindness
- Listening
- Not one fix for all
- Community Support
- Silos are not helpful

Shelter  
Volunteer

- 15-years of advocacy
- “they” are people
- No fear, sad when there are no clear pathways



# Thoughts



## Focus on what we can do

Be kind

Value people



## Come together as a strong community

Collaboration

Creativity – SO many many rules severely limit even stop gap efforts

Not all homeless can succeed when they are placed into housing – they feel guilt, they feel alone, they have spent so much time just surviving and protecting themselves.

It is going to get  
much worse  
over the next  
year -  
Economics

- As homelessness rates surge in Oregon, lawmakers have slashed funding for eviction prevention and affordable housing services in favor of temporary shelters.
- Oregon is facing one of its worst homelessness crises in decades. According to Portland State University's 2024 homelessness report, the number of people experiencing sheltered homelessness rose by 24% in a single year, the sharpest increase since 2007.



# On becoming an Advocate

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Kathleen Thorpe  
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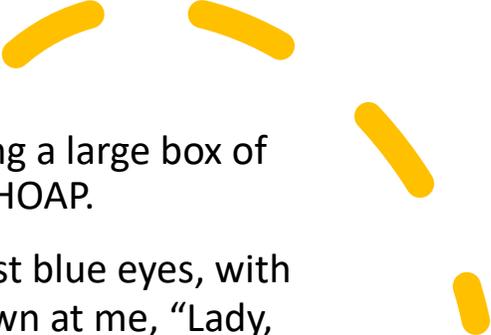
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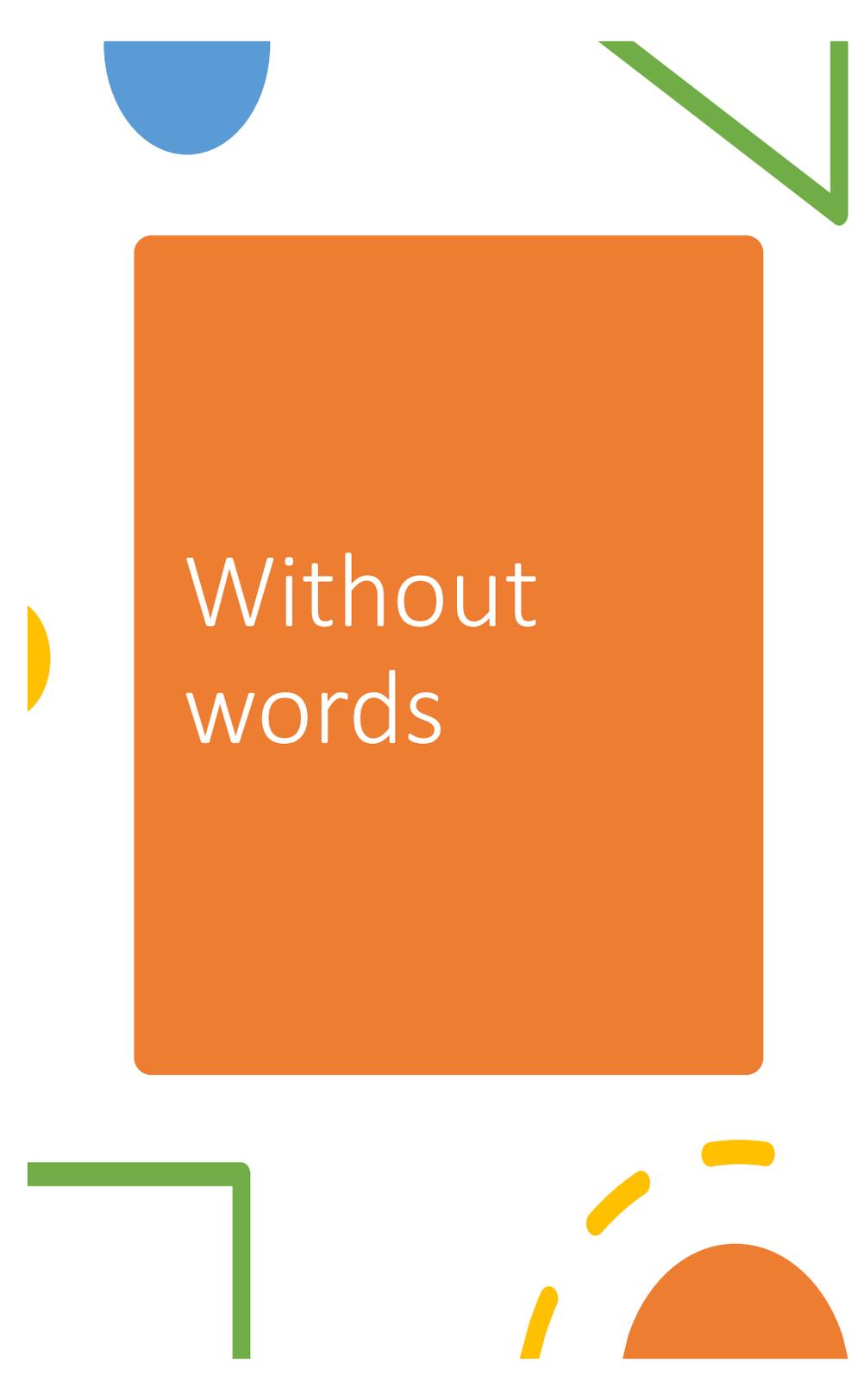
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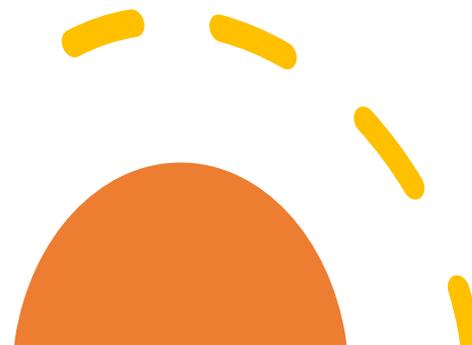
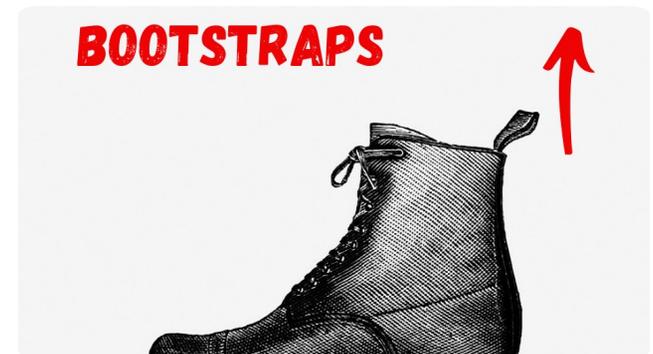
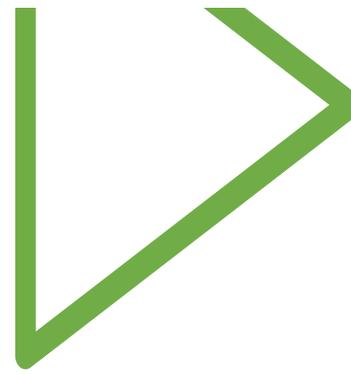
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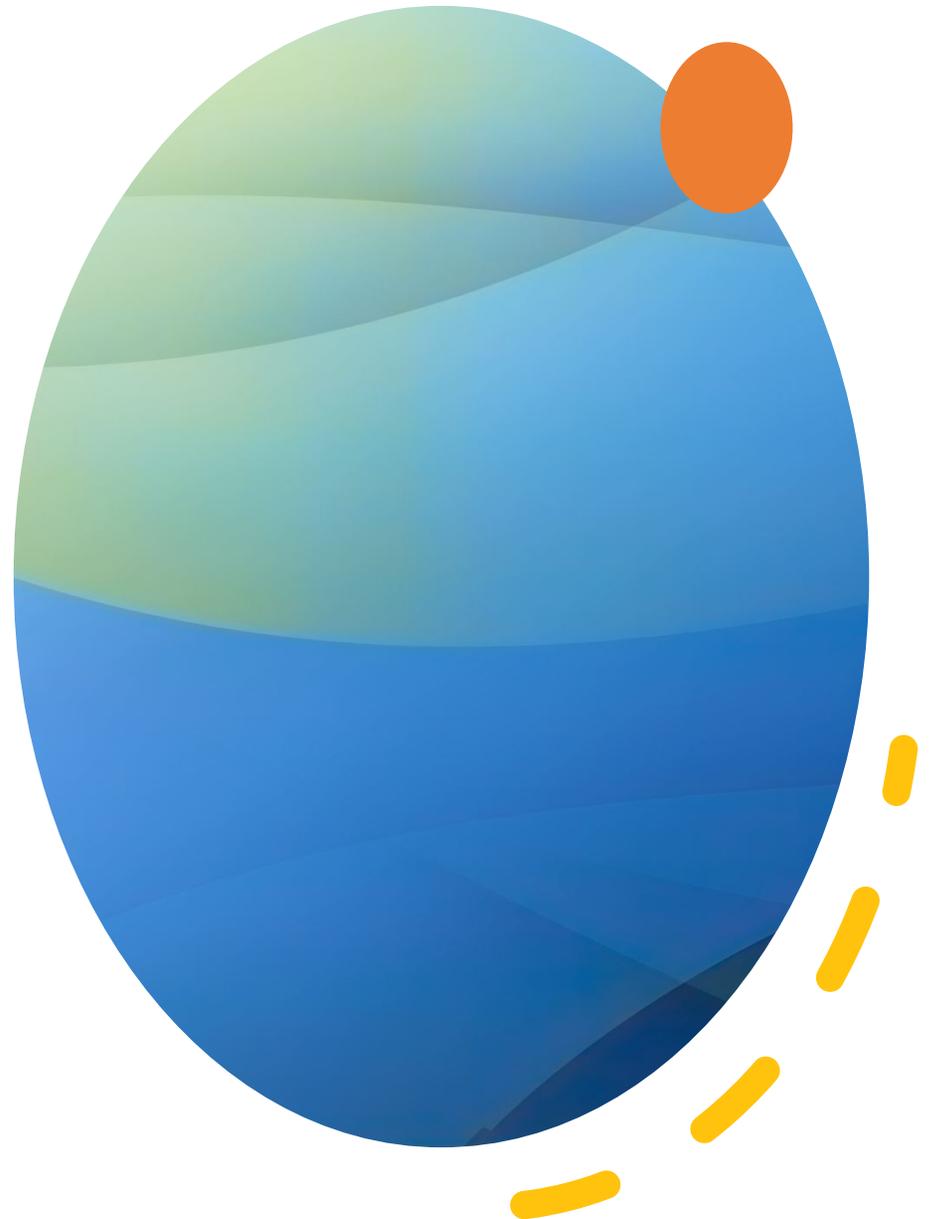
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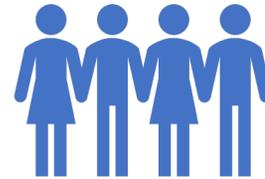
# Thoughts



## **Focus on what we can do**

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**Subject:** Public Comment for City Council meeting 081125 Agenda item 5a - LB  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 12:13:02 PM  
**Attachments:** [City Council Testimony 071225 L. Bigelow.pdf](#)

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Shared on behalf of Lindsay Bigelow, at her request

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Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Lindsay Bigelow <lindsaybigelow@outlook.com>

**Subject: Fw: Item 8-Public Comment**

**Date:** August 8, 2025 at 3:10:07 PM PDT

**To:** Lynelle Wilcox <lynelle@comcast.net>

Mayor Hoy and Council Members:

My name is Lindsay Bigelow, and I live in Ward 4. I began serving with the Kindness Closet back in 2017 and began to learn people's stories. I've learned over and over that each person is a human being that has value and is here for a reason.

Many folks in our community are very caught up in the "mess", the eye sore, the inconvenience, each decreasing the livability and vitality of our city.

Look beyond that and you will see a person whose worldly belongings are at their feet. Look for the person who is a mother who is suffering from a mental illness that has been untreated for so long most people only see a woman talking to herself covered in filth.

Look for the person who is a son who is developmentally or intellectually delayed and doesn't recognize how unsafe he is or that there is help for him.

Look for the veteran who is experiencing such intense PTSD that he shoots up to unsee things that can never be unseen; who left his family not to desert them, but to save them from the peripheral damage of his own trauma.

Look for the daughter engaging in substance use to forget the childhood trauma of abuse she endured only to age out of the foster care system with no support or skills to be independent.

These are all real people. They are people who the system has failed and are now being discarded by their community as trash. They are people who their community sees as an inconvenience, an eye sore, vermin, or invisible. The reality is they are living in trauma, desperation, and survival mode because there are more people in need of housing than there are beds. Enabling people to have a place to live where basic human needs can be met increases livability for ALL.

There is a great need for a more robust mental/behavioral health system that provides the services needed for ALL of our community members to get the help they need to stabilize and be healthy. As with those who are housed, the vast majority of the community are not dangerous or violent, but when one of our unhoused neighbors behaves violently it becomes the narrative.

We have to combat this and approach the ongoing issue of homelessness with facts and the willingness to go to our state government and fight for what our community needs. We need a reform of our mental health system, not the false sense of security of increasing our police presence in the downtown corridor. We need to restore our SOS Team to full capacity and fund a CAHOOTS model of mental health professionals being first responders to situations where someone is having a mental health crisis.

Please consider facts and what has proven to work. Also consider a volunteer-based team that could support out-of-the-box ideas on what could work to address some of these concerns. I for one would volunteer my time in this capacity if the opportunity presented itself.

Thank you for your time.

Lindsay Bigelow

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Thank you for your time.

Lindsay Bigelow

**From:** [Laura Crofoot](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Downtown Community  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 11:31:05 AM

---

Hello - I am resubmitting my letter just asking that we treat our neighbors who don't have a home with the same courtesies as we would any other community member, learn their names, ask their stories, give them hope. Thank you

Hello, my name is Laura Crofoot, accidental homeless advocate. I live in Ward 8. I'm troubled by the villainization of our community members who are experiencing homelessness. Who are these increasing numbers of people in our midst?

I'd like to share a story to add a face to one such member. He's my younger brother. Back in 2003, 22 years ago making a salary of \$90K a year, my brother began hearing voices. After a long bout with serious depression, he lost his lucrative job, his marriage and then his home, he was 26 years old. He lived in his truck for a couple of years, constantly ticketed for parking under street lights for safety, at some point I couldn't afford to continue to pay those tickets and his truck, or "home" was towed away.

We tried moving him into my home but his unpredictable and at times erratic behavior, made it unsafe and uncomfortable for my children and me. Which was heartbreaking. Now he was on the street. He was loved, but his paranoia and undiagnosed schizophrenia prevented him from seeking the help he so desperately needed. My brother was beaten with fists, pipes and kicked so many times during the next 20 years, not by his community, but by housed folks looking to hurt and victimize easy targets who didn't have doors to lock behind them.

Thanks to other homeless folks, I was able to keep in contact with my brother over those decades, so I could provide clean, warm clothing etc. as they helped me find him and even mediated the visits as his paranoia at times made him afraid to trust me. He screamed and yelled at times and looked dangerous, but in reality, was slowly dying, down to a mere 123 pounds.

After many arrests, we finally got the justice system to put him on a psych hold and he was evaluated, medicated, and received meaningful help. As of July, my brother has been housed for 2 years and making steady progress regaining his physical and mental health.

Every face you see on the street, has a unique story, we should use our privilege to lower the barriers preventing them from feeling unwanted. For so many the road to being housed looks impossible, don't be a roadblock or a reason for them to give up or believe they aren't worthy of respect, dignity and housing.

Laura Crofoot  
503.569.1433  
2356 Benjamin Ave NW  
Salem OR 97304



**From:** [Laura Crofoot](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#)  
**Subject:** Local Mom from Homeless In Salem to Success  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 11:40:15 AM

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Here is a true story of what can and does happen when our resources, advocacy and individuals determination have the opportunity to take root.

<https://youtu.be/O0vNbSVDoXc>

If this link doesn't launch, please press "control" and click the link.

Thank you all for you service to our City.

Better Together,

Laura Crofoot

503.569.1433

Ward 8

*"Create things you wish existed"*

**From:** [lorrie walker](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#); [CityRecorder](#); [Sen Patterson](#); [H Tom Anderson](#); [sen.katelieber@oregonlegislature.gov](#); [Gretchen Bennett](#); [Irma Coleman](#); [Cara Kaser](#); [Treven Upkes](#); [Debra Aguilar](#); [commissioners@co.marion.or.us](#); [Stephen Goins](#); [Gina Cepeda](#); [les@salemreporter.com](#); [Kristin Retherford](#); [Krishna Namburi](#); [jimmy.jones@mwvcaa.org](#)  
**Subject:** City Council meeting August 11th  
**Date:** Thursday, August 7, 2025 11:45:46 PM

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Mayor Julie Hoy, All,

Last week, July 30th, I attended the Lancaster business forum. I saw the notice the city put out. The acting city manager said there was to be no divisiveness.

While in attendance I heard several attendees make derogatory comments about unsheltered people.

Comments that all unsheltered are addicts. All are criminals. Advocates are sympathizers who give people food to eat. Don't all people need food?

When I raised my hand to speak I was told that I couldn't, that I was not a businessperson.

Who oversaw the forum?

Is it acceptable at a meeting promoted by the city of Salem to limit who can speak?

It was concerning to hear hateful comments lumping all unsheltered people into criminal categories. Yet, I was not allowed to respond, until the end when I did so without "permission".

I had attended every one of Salem homeless task force meetings a few years ago, listening to the discussions. Communicating with task force members. Many people spent a lot of time and effort on workable solutions.

One of the solutions was toilets. Every human being needs to pee and poop.

Salem has not followed through with public toilet recommendations. Most of the business complaints seem to center on pee and poop. Where are the public toilets?

Why no toilets? Toilet solutions haven't happened. Why not?

How many of the task force recommendations have not been followed through on? Is anyone tasked with reviewing the task force recommendations?

I don't believe it is appropriate that the city publicize a meeting and only allow certain participants to speak. At the end of the meeting despite not being allowed, approved, or called upon, I did.

Will the city have, promote, publicize a forum for unsheltered to speak? Or agencies that assist unsheltered? Advocates? Family members? Northwest Human Services, HOAP, Community Action, Arches, Church at the Park, Salvation Army, guardians, and others to name a few.

It seems biased to me as to who the city wants to hear from or learn from.

Businesses are not people. "These people" also include drug free, clean & sober, children, parents, elderly, disabled, our neighbors, living in cars. Some no cars. Some tents. Some no tents. People are truly suffering on our streets. Trying to survive. Parents

with children, in vehicles. Invisible.

I do support the solutions Salem Police Chief Womack & Fire Chief Gerboth have offered. I have trust & faith in Chief Womack's leadership and knowledge in how people are treated. I also have trust in Salem Fire Chief knowledge and experience.

Bringing the bicycle team back, include mental health professionals as responders, would help everyone including unsheltered.

The police can't solve all these issues due to no places to take people with livability issues.

Marion county and the state of Oregon need to step up. Step up with more drug treatment centers, more mental health treatment beds, centers. A roof over children's heads. Adult's heads. Housing.

Group home funding for mentally ill that the state cut years ago, that type of funding needs to come back.

Jail isn't the answer. Moving people from one tent, sidewalk, or camp to another isn't.

Housing is. Treatment is. Facilities for people in behavioral health crisis.

The city of Salem can't solve this alone.

Marion county, the Oregon legislature and State of Oregon collaborating would be great.

City council will review info from two business forums. There has not been a forum involving the people at the center of the discussion. No forum that includes area service providers. No info from families. Guardians. Advocates.

It appears biased and lopsided.

No Information on waitlists for housing, pods, individual or families. Their struggles to survive each day are real.

They need to be heard too.

Respectfully,

Lorrie Walker

Advocate for unsheltered & mentally ill

Legal Guardian

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

## FLASH BEFORE THE BANG Needs YOU! Be a Movie Extra!

### We are looking for:

Enthusiastic and reliable Deaf & Hard of Hearing & ASL-signing extras are needed for the film, "*FLASH BEFORE THE BANG*" This is an opportunity to be part of a HISTORIC Deaf-led professional film production.

### Key details

- **Who We're Looking For:** Deaf, Hard of Hearing and ASL-signing individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and appearances are encouraged to apply. **DIVERSE INDIVIDUALS OF ALL RACES, COLORS, GENDER ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED!!!**
- **Filming Dates & Locations:**  
August 3 & 4: SALEM, OREGON [six to eight children/young adults of ages 12 to 20 NEEDED!!]  
  
-AND-  
August 7-8 PORTLAND, OREGON [all ages]
- **Compensation:** No pay – Come for the unique filmmaking experience!
- **Requirements:** Bring clothing that can pass as 80's period clothing, without brands/logos. Jeans, sneakers, T-shirts, jackets/windbreakers etc.

### How to apply

To be considered for a role as a movie extra, please email

[extrasfbb@gmail.com](mailto:extrasfbb@gmail.com) with the following information:

- Your Full Name
- Contact Information (Phone and Email)
- A Recent Photo (Headshot or Full Body)
- Any Relevant Experience (Not Required)
- Any connections with the Deaf/HoH community or ASL experience.

EMAIL -- [extrasfbb@gmail.com](mailto:extrasfbb@gmail.com)

*Don't miss out on this opportunity to be a part of the magic of filmmaking!  
Apply today and help bring "FLASH BEFORE THE BANG" to life!*

**From:** [lorrie walker](#)  
**To:** [citycouncil](#); [CityRecorder](#); [Sen Patterson](#); [H Tom Anderson](#); [sen.katelieber@oregonlegislature.gov](#); [Gretchen Bennett](#); [Irma Coleman](#); [Cara Kaser](#); [Treven Upkes](#); [Debra Aguilar](#); [commissioners@co.marion.or.us](#); [Stephen Goins](#); [Gina Cepeda](#); [les@salemreporter.com](#); [Kristin Retherford](#); [Krishna Namburi](#); [jimmy.jones@mwvcaa.org](#)  
**Subject:** Re: City Council meeting August 11th  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 11:40:23 AM

---

All,

Correction please. This is the attachment that was supposed to be attached with the email.

Respectfully,  
Lorrie Walker

---

**From:** lorrie walker <dakotalor@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 7, 2025 11:45 PM  
**To:** citycouncil <citycouncil@cityofsalem.net>; City Recorder <cityrecorder@cityofsalem.net>; Sen Patterson <sen.debpatterson@oregonlegislature.gov>; H Tom Anderson <htandersen@aol.com>; sen.katelieber@oregonlegislature.gov <sen.katelieber@oregonlegislature.gov>; Gretchen Bennett <gbennett@cityofsalem.net>; idowd@cityofsalem.net <idowd@cityofsalem.net>; Cara Kaser <ckaser.silverton@gmail.com>; Treven Upkes <tupkes@cityofsalem.net>; Debra Aguilar <daguilar@cityofsalem.net>; commissioners@co.marion.or.us <commissioners@co.marion.or.us>; Stephen Goins <sgoins@nwhumanservices.org>; gcepeda@cityofsalem.net <gcepeda@cityofsalem.net>; Les Zaitz <les@salemreporter.com>; Kristin Retherford <kretherford@cityofsalem.net>; knamburi@cityofsalem.net <knamburi@cityofsalem.net>; Jimmy Jones <jimmy.jones@mwvcaa.org>  
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Lorrie Walker

Advocate for unsheltered & mentally ill

Legal Guardian

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The City of Salem will host a Business Forum for Northeast Salem businesses on Wednesday, July 30 at 1 p.m. The event will take place on the Chemeketa Community College campus, in the Ag Hub building in the lobby and Rooms 102-104.

Present at the forum will be:  
Interim City Manager, Krishna Namburi  
Salem Police Chief, Trevor Womack  
Salem Fire Chief, Dave Gerboth  
They will share information and listen to questions and concerns.

**CITY OF Salem** **NORTHEAST SALEM BUSINESS FORUM**  
AT YOUR SERVICE

The City of Salem invites businesses from the northeast area to participate in a special meeting.

**JULY 30 1 PM**

Interim City Manager Krishna Namburi, Salem Police Chief Trevor Womack, and Salem Fire Chief Dave Gerboth will be present to share information and listen to concerns about safety and feasibility in this area of our community.

**CHEMEKETA COMMUNITY COLLEGE AG HUB BUILDING**  
USE THE ENTRANCE AT 45TH AV OFF SILVERTON RD NE  
FOR MORE INFO CALL 503-325-2242

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Julie Hoy](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Mai Vang](#); [Micki Varney](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment for City Council meeting 081125 agenda item 5a: Why don't they just...  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 12:21:20 PM

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Why don't they just...?

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Mayor Hoy and City Councilors

My name is Lynelle Wilcox. I live on Norway Street in Ward 1.

I'm writing in regard to Work Session Agenda item 2a: Improving Public Safety and Livability.

I began working with people experiencing homelessness when I volunteered at a Salem warming center about 8 years ago. I've been captured ever since.

**Why don't they just...?** I wondered initially why so many people were homeless? If they need money and a place to live, why don't they just get a job?

If they are struggling with addiction, why don't they just go to detox or rehab?  
If they have mental illness, why don't they just go to a psychiatrist and get medication?

If I were to write a book, it would be "Why don't they just...?" and I'd share all the things I've learned along the way. Nothing is as easy as it seemed to me back then.

Yet while I still believed in easy answers, I met a woman who sometimes screamed profanity and other words at people I can't see. That behavior sometimes led to her being kicked out of stores and shelters. One day I asked her... why don't you see a psychiatrist? Why don't you get medication so you don't struggle so much? She told me...Lynelle I tried that so many times. The only medication that quiets the voices in my head gives me extreme diarrhea. So I can be the crazy lady who screams and curses at people you can't see, or I can be the woman who has poop on her clothes. There is more shame in having poop on my clothing than yelling at people others can't see. You pick.

And I realized I'd make that same choice.

**Perceptions of danger:** I've changed my mind and heart so many times about so many of my beliefs along the way. At my last job, I was a social worker helping people with disabilities to use Social Security work incentives to move forward.

One client experienced mental illness and turrets, and during our meetings in the office he sometimes yelled at people I can't see. I wasn't afraid. I knew his diagnosis and expected this behavior from him sometimes.

When I began working with people experiencing homelessness, I noticed that I DID feel fear whenever someone was yelling at people I can't see. I had to think... WHAT is the difference? I'm in public! WHY am I afraid?

Someone can yell at people I can't see in an office, where I knew their diagnosis and was working with the person anyway, with no fear. Yet if someone I didn't know had the same behavior, outside in the world, I was afraid. **The only difference I could come up with is that some part of me must think homeless people are dangerous. Without even realizing I had that belief, it was creating my fear. I had to fix that inaccurate belief in my own head.**

Homeless or not, mental illness or not, some people will be dangerous. I want to always have situational awareness and my intuition engaged, while I also stay aware of my own beliefs and adjust them as needed to reflect reality. Sometimes the work is inside my own head.

**About safety and livability:** I asked some officers this month about what they are seeing. They shared that downtown crimes seem to be mostly livability crimes – feces, broken windows, camping, fires, trash, petty theft – crimes that reflect people having nowhere to have basic human needs met. Nowhere to sleep, go to the bathroom, eat, or live.

Business owners should not have the workload of cleaning those things up. And every human being should have the means and access to having basic human needs met. The duality matters and is interconnected – when basic human needs are met, livability crimes decrease.

Meanwhile, we have shootings, gang violence, and sheltered adults and teens who specifically commit violence against people experiencing homelessness. Last year one TEENAGER beat a 64 year old homeless man to DEATH. Just this

month, a business owner casually admitted that he dumps vomit, feces, and food onto homeless people on his property. Just this week, two young adults were arrested for throwing eggs at people experiencing homelessness. How is any of this a safe and livable environment for unsheltered homeless?

National data reflects that homeless people are more likely to be the victims of violence than perpetrators of violence against a stranger.

Some women and men share that they first began doing meth when they were homeless, because they need to stay awake at night in order to stay safe. Men sleeping on sidewalks have shared that they sometimes woke up because some men are peeing on them as they sleep. The bars let out, and THIS is their fun? Homeless women AND men are in danger every day and night of their lives.

**We know what works:** A lot has been done to house and shelter more people, and we need more of the things that work: Housing First, affordable housing that is actually affordable for people living on \$967/month SSI, permanent supported housing for people who need ongoing support, more treatment and places to live for people who experience mental illness, more detox and recovery options, more places people can live as their health decreases and disabilities increase, so fewer people fall through each of those gaps. More mental health professionals as first responders for people experiencing mental health crises. And more basic needs being met along the way – restrooms that are open 24/7, water fountains, cell phone charging stations, trash cans.

**Good stewardship:** We're spending tons of time and money to clean up after livability crimes, when we could shift to investing more time and money to prevent or decrease those crimes by enabling more livability. Wouldn't the latter reflect better stewardship of our limited funds?

**Values:** Salem conduct an annual Belonging survey. The survey's purpose is to assess what people in Salem are experiencing, so we can identify ways for **all** people in Salem to experience community-ness, inclusion, and belonging.

Annual survey results consistently reflect that people experiencing homelessness also experience significant discrimination, often daily. They are often treated as if they are invisible or vermin, and they are ongoing targets for violence.

As a result of the survey's findings, Salem's Human Rights Commission recommended that City Council make housing status a protected class. In November 2022, Salem's City Council voted to add "housing status" as a protected class, because the discrimination against people experiencing homelessness was so extensive.

The discrimination and violence are still happening against people who are homeless. We DO have a safety and livability issue - people experiencing homelessness do NOT have any safety, or livability of even having basic human needs met. This calls the question of whether our values apply to ALL people who live and work in Salem, or just sheltered people?

Please act in ways that live up to Salem's professed values and not down to our fears. Please act in ways that enable communityness, belonging, safety, and livability for ALL.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lynelle Wilcox

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Julie Hoy](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Mai Vang](#); [Micki Varney](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Public comment for City Council meeting 081125 agenda item 5a: Safety/livability comparison  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 1:04:32 PM

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## Safety/livability comparison

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Mayor Hoy and City Councilors

My name is Lynelle Wilcox. I live on Norway Street in Ward 1.

I attended the Safety/livability work session on July 21st. The background and conversations were valuable, and I especially loved that our Police and Fire Chiefs both conveyed strong values about how they do their work - by building trust and building relationships as the priority, with ongoing awareness that we cannot police, ticket or jail our way out of homelessness. That awareness is crucial, and the values they both expressed reflect dignity and respect to businesses AND to individuals experiencing homelessness.

That approach and those values align with the city's annual Belonging/Discrimination survey - designed to identify gaps so that Salem can do better at enabling everyone who lives or works in Salem to have a sense of belonging, inclusion, and community-ness.

It's important to balance livability and safety of businesses, their staff and customers, individuals visiting Salem, AND people experiencing homelessness in Salem.

**Livability crimes:** The crimes that businesses are experiencing reflect mostly livability crimes – feces, broken windows, camping, fires, trash, petty theft – crimes that reflect people having nowhere to have basic human needs met.

Nowhere to sleep, go to the bathroom, eat, or live.

Business owners should not have the workload of cleaning those things up, and they should not have the risk of higher repair and insurance costs. And every human being should have the means and access to having basic human needs met. The duality matters and is interconnected – when basic human needs are met, livability crimes decrease.

**Actual violence:** Meanwhile, we have shootings, gang violence, and sheltered adults and teens who specifically commit violence against people experiencing homelessness. Last year one TEENAGER beat a 64 year old homeless man to DEATH. Just this month, a business owner casually admitted that he dumps vomit, feces, and food onto homeless people on his property. Just last month, two young adults were arrested for throwing eggs at people experiencing homelessness. How is any of this a safe and livable environment for unsheltered homeless?

National data reflects that homeless people are more likely to be the victims of violence than perpetrators of violence against a stranger. See this national report:

[https://nationalhomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2024-Hate-Crimes-Report\\_for-web.pdf](https://nationalhomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2024-Hate-Crimes-Report_for-web.pdf)

Some women and men share that they first began doing meth when they were homeless, because they need to stay awake at night in order to stay safe. Men sleeping on sidewalks have shared that they sometimes woke up because some men are peeing on them as they sleep. The bars let out, and THIS is their fun? Homeless women AND men are in danger every day and night of their lives.

Businesses are mostly experiencing livability crimes and the

tangible and intangible results of those crimes. People experiencing homelessness are experiencing actual ongoing violence. BOTH sets of experiences matter, but the scale is out of balance.

**Common ground:** Most businesses, homeless individuals, and homeless advocates seem to support the possibilities of increasing staff for the HST police team, bringing bicycle cops back, adding to the SOS outreach team, creating co-response teams that include a mental health professional to be part of first responders when a person might be experiencing a mental health crisis, and possible increases to cleaning services. These things seem to be common ground.

**Imbalance:** Yet the discussions on these topics so far reflect how these things will benefit businesses. Even for these things that reflect common ground, the duality of the benefits is lacking.

As we discuss how the possible strategies might help businesses, why are we not ALSO sharing that increased HST, SOS, bicycle police teams, and Mental health co-response teams can also reduce the times that homeless individuals experience discrimination, harm, and actual violence?

Why are we not ALSO sharing that those options can also reduce the times that homeless individuals are shot at, pissed on, raped, attacked, beaten, and actually killed, simply because they are homeless?

If the city values community-ness, inclusion, belonging, and safety and livability for ALL, how are we not adding those realities to the conversations?

We DO have a safety and livability issue - people experiencing homelessness do NOT have any safety, or livability of even having basic human needs met. This calls the question of whether our values apply to ALL people who live and work in Salem, or just sheltered people?

Please act in ways that live up to Salem's professed values and not down to our fears. Please act in ways that enable communityness, belonging, safety, and livability for ALL.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lynelle Wilcox

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Julie Hoy](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Mai Vang](#); [Micki Varney](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment for City Council meeting 081125 agenda item 5a: bathrooms and livability  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 1:44:37 PM

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## Bathrooms and Livability

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### Mayor Hoy and City Councilors

My name is Lynelle Wilcox. I live on Norway Street in Ward 1.

As we consider livability, we are not (yet?) discussing options that have been discussed during previous task forces, or tried to a limited degree in the past - previous task force meetings led to recommendations of adding bathrooms, possibly one or more of the Portland Loo rest rooms. Whatever happened to trying that?

There was also a time that the city hired security with a focus on watching the rest rooms/porta potties. That approach reduced restroom vandalism, and enabled the bathrooms to be more usable.

Some fancy hotels have a fancy person in the rest room to hand you a towel to dry your hands. Maybe a bathroom monitor is a variation on that?

Instead, we reduced rest room options, reduced rest room hours, and reduced rest room area security, and we're spending more on cleaning, with more cleaning needed.

Gretchen Bennet shared that she has sometimes looked for funds that are permissible to spend on monitoring restrooms. I understand that there are different pots of money for different things, yet can some rules be changed to enable flexibility

towards a common purpose? If we have money to spend on cleaning, but we might need less cleaning if we also had some monitors, can rules change to allow cleaning funds to also be spent on staffing?

More bathrooms won't completely solve the problem of people using public space as a restroom sometimes - we won't have enough bathrooms for that, and some health issues and medications can result in too short a notice to get to any rest room in time. Yet more restrooms can reduce the times that people need to clean poop from their doorways.

As we pursue options to reduce that, more restrooms AND monitoring can help, and we get in our own way if funds for that don't enable the flexibility that the realities warrant.

Separately, as we have so many conversations about the accountability responsibilities people should have, there are other livability options that can make a difference on all ends.

Things I learned in doing this work:

- Addiction is hard. It's not as simple as "just say no".
- Sometimes drugs are actually keeping you alive, as they also kill you.
- Homeless service providers and homeless police teams all try to build trust and relationships, as we share resources, information, and options.
- When someone is ready for detox and/or rehab, it's crucial to catch them in that moment.
- If a bed isn't available at the time, it's common that the detox or rehab agency needs the person to call each morning to check for bed availability.

How can someone do that if they don't have a phone, or don't have a way to keep their phone charged? We want people to do things to move forward, to be accountable, etc. Yet the realities don't easily enable that.

What if increasing livability included adding bathrooms, bathroom security, AND cell phone charging stations to stay in touch with people and to be able to schedule detox, rehab, job interviews, medical and mental health appointments, etc. so people have the means to move forward?

Can we also consider adding drinking fountains, so everyone, sheltered or not, has easy access to stay hydrated on hot days? Can we add more trash cans back, so people have options for throwing their trash away?

These things enable more livability and more means to have basic human needs met, and to do more "accountability" things that everyone says they need to do. Accountability or not, every human being deserves to have basic human needs met, simply based on being a fellow equitable human being.

Besides being humane, those things align with the City of Salem's values and Vision:

*"A **safe, livable**, and sustainable capital city, with a thriving economy and a vibrant community that is **welcoming to all**.*

*WE ARE ...*

*INCLUSIVE: We are committed to ensuring equity and accessibility across city services. We are an anti-racist organization that actively fights against racism and all other*

*forms of discrimination. Diversity is a core strength of our community and we are dedicated to creating a city where **everyone**—regardless of culture, race, or ability—can thrive."*

The homeless crisis is hard and sad in all directions. It calls the question of whether our values apply to ALL people who live and work in Salem, or just sheltered people? This topic is an opportunity to live up to our values and not down to our fears.

Please consider additional livability options that enable community-ness, belonging, safety, and livability for ALL.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lynelle Wilcox

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Julie Hoy](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Mai Vang](#); [Micki Varney](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment for City Council meeting 081125 agenda item 5a: Safety  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 1:55:24 PM

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## Safety

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### Mayor Hoy and City Councilors

My name is Lynelle Wilcox. I live on Norway Street in Ward 1.

To presume that unsheltered individuals are not safe people to be around is too broad a paintbrush. Sheltered or not, some people are not safe to be around. We have rules and laws and consequences for times that behaviors are not appropriate or safe.

If our parameters about people being "safe" are contingent on an individual's access to showers and clean clothes and only experiencing alternate reality moments and behaviors in the privacy of their own homes, we might want to look deeper than a surface view that paints too many people too broadly to be accurate.

Some of the work is on us, to look inside ourselves at our own biases to identify when and if our metaphorical paintbrushes about people might be too broad. With any group we are not part of, as we get to know individuals, we often find that there are more similarities than we expected, and some fear and "other-ness" often melts away.

Two different businesses shared with me that they were apprehensive when (two different) unsheltered individuals

slept in their doorway. Yet as the store owners got to know the them, the individuals became “people” to them.

Now, they share morning conversations, coffee, and sometimes snacks with the individuals. One business owner shared that he's come to see “his” unsheltered person as extra eyes and ears that help keep the store safe after hours.

Negative perceptions, hesitancy, or fear shifted to become team work and free security.

Realizing that’s not possible in every case, yet it shows what might be, if we give shared humanity and collaboration a chance.

The homeless crisis is hard and sad in all directions. No one wants to see people in the streets, living in absolute poverty, least of all the people living on the streets. Yet the reality is that we have more people needing help fiscally, physically, and mentally than our current systems can support.

As fellow human beings, none of us have the luxury of not seeing that and none of us have or deserve the luxury of not being affected by that reality in some ways. We’re all in this together, and we have the opportunity to work together to manage, reduce, and prevent homelessness.

Some of the homework is inside of our own heads. In a way, that is the best kind of homework of all, since it’s entirely our own control and costs no dollars at all. We each have the opportunity to exercise that flavor of accountability.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lynelle Wilcox



**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Julie Hoy](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Mai Vang](#); [Micki Varney](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment for 081125 City Council work session - agenda item 5a: Shame of homelessness  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 2:02:46 PM

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## Shame of homelessness

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Mayor Hoy and City Councilors

My name is Lynelle Wilcox. I live on Norway Street in Ward 1.

Back in 2019, the city was considering a Sit/Lie ordinance. Advocates wrote many letters to share our reasons and perspectives for opposing sit/lie. We also went to the streets to learn and share what some businesses and unsheltered individuals were experiencing.

As a result of meetings and outreach, we collected a combination of 383 letters and/or signatures, opposing sit/lie. We delivered a ribboned packet of letters to the City Recorder's office and also brought our own packet to the City Council meeting. At the time, sit/lie did not pass.





**Outreach:** Advocates were happy about that, yet whatever the outcome had been, the proposed sit/lie ordinance was a valuable catalyst to speak to many downtown businesses and unsheltered individuals.

None of the business people shared that they committed violence against homeless individuals, yet other than that, our findings back then were similar to the Salem Reporter's findings in their recent article.

Many businesses conveyed that they are affected by people living outside. Many expressed some inconveniences, yet most also conveyed sadness that people are living outside with nowhere to be, and some acknowledged that it could be any of us, and that every human being is somebody's someone. Many business people shared that initially they were annoyed and sometimes scared, yet when they offered kindness, a relationship usually happened, and the connection was often valuable on both ends.

Some business owners shared that they (understandably!) don't appreciate the ripples of homelessness. And yet some shared that they befriended people who live outside their store. And by building a relationship, different ripples happened – some shared that the homeless individuals became extra eyes and ears on their business – free extra security. Some shared that connections changed their own perception and that in itself changed the dynamics to be positive.

Many conveyed that the vibe you give is often the vibe you get back. Not always, but often. Many business people conveyed that when they offered

kindness, the relationship flourished and they were better for that experience and from what they learned.

Some business owners shared about the challenge and biohazard of having poop in their doorway. I had assumed that doorway poops reflect situations of people who experienced health issues, or cases of disrespectful people who were leaving a purposeful, metaphorical “F” you.

**Safety and livability:** Safety and livability is a complicated topic, as it requires balance in order to have safety and livability for all. What enables livability and what enables dignity and inclusion of people experiencing homelessness? What does balance look like? What is enforceable in ways that won't do more harm than good? And WHY would anyone poop in a doorway?! And people shared slivers of their stories.

**Shame of homelessness:** One man shared about the first time he slept on the sidewalk. And how ashamed he felt. And how he waited till the city was dark and asleep before he unfolded a blanket and folded himself up into it. And how he woke up early, to leave no trace, and so no one would know that he had slept on the sidewalk.

Because he never expected to be someone who would end up with no place to live, and he didn't want people to think of him as one of “those” people.

~~~~~

And as we talk about problems downtown, one girl is brushing her long lovely hair. And she tells you that she was taught that you brush hair and clip toenails in private. Yet when her toenails were pushing against the inside of her shoes, and she finally found a nail clipper but had nowhere to go for privacy, she clipped her toenails in a park. Feeling shame for doing personal hygiene in a public park with people all around.

And she tells you that every day, a little bit of dignity slips away, as you make do, as you do what is needed wherever you can, because options are often a luxury that doesn't exist for them.

~~~~~

A woman shared about the lack of bathrooms in general, and especially at night. And a man shared that he'll go to the alleys, behind dumpsters, to have a

sliver of privacy as he relieves himself. And some women shared that the alleys are not safe for them. So they might go on the sidewalks or doorways.

And none of them never expected to be in this position, yet what do you do when you find yourself in this place, with no options for meeting such a basic human need? And what do you do when you have no plastic bags, no toilet paper, nothing to pick it up with, and no trash cans nearby to put it, even if you had toilet paper? And with each person sharing, their words and the tears in their voices convey their deep shame. Their shame is deeper than our disgust.

~~~~~

And one man shared that he tries to eat in ways and times that he won't need to relieve himself until places are open for him to use a bathroom. Yet sometimes health issues result in runny and unpredictable poop, or some drugs (prescription or not) are laxatives, or nature has no heed for the bathroom scheduling you aim for. So he'll use alleys and behind-dumpsters as needed.

Yet when there's no warning or lead time, and when relieving yourself in public is already undignified and shame-filled, a doorway offers a shred more privacy than the sidewalk itself. And a doorway means you're less likely to attract attention for doing a basic human function that every human being does. And a doorway reduces the chance of being cited for indecent exposure, and possibly being a sex offender as a result. Men and women have had that happen.

And he's embarrassed to admit that he's used doorways on rare occasions. And the shame in his voice is thick. Public disapproval only adds to the shame that he already feels at a deep core level that eats him up a tiny bit each day.

~~~~~

Things I didn't know at the time:

Some people use meth for the first time specifically to stay awake at night, in order to be safe. Sleeping is safer in the daytime, when people are around. For some people, meth causes diarrhea. So you trade dignity for safety in order to stay alive.

Metformin is a common prescription medication for people who have diabetes. Metformin causes diarrhea for some people. So you choose whether to take meds to help stabilize your blood sugar, or you choose not to take that

medication, because you don't have fast and easy access to a restroom 24/7.

~~~~~

Another man shared that he also trained his body to only need to go to the bathroom once restrooms are available. And he feels so much shame about using doorways or sidewalks that on the rare times that he couldn't make it to a restroom, he soiled his pants rather than using a doorway.

~~~~~

And now I see that these situations are rarely, if ever, the "F" you I imagined them to be. Now I see those times as a reflection of a shared human need not just to relieve ourselves, but also to have a shred of privacy, dignity, and safety when we do so. And I'm embarrassed that as a community we haven't done better yet.

And I am reminded once again of the things that seem so obvious to me only after someone shares slivers of their stories. And I am grateful for their trust and candor, and so sad to see our lack in enabling ways for fellow human beings to meet basic human needs with some safety and dignity.

**With every individual I spoke with about bathroom needs, their shame was bigger than our disgust.**

In a city rich with beauty, and in a city aiming for inclusion, belonging, and dignity for all, my heart breaks for the shame they feel and conveyed to me. And I'm in sad awe of the lengths some individuals go, to avoid using public space as a restroom.

And there have been times in my own home or travels where due to illness, lack of bathrooms, or other issues, I barely made it to the bathroom in time. Haven't we all been there now and then? **What if that was your reality every single day?**

And I know there are problems and messes to clean up when we have bathrooms. Yet we have problems and messes to clean up when we don't have bathrooms.

If we're investing our collective time and money on cleanup anyway, what if we

chose paths that enable dignity, livability, and more safety for ALL?

Thank you for your consideration.

Lynelle Wilcox

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Julie Hoy](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Mai Vang](#); [Micki Varney](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment for City Council meeting 081125 Agenda item 5a - outreach, balance, and shame  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 2:08:40 PM

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## Outreach, balance, and shame of homelessness

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Mayor Hoy and City Councilors

My name is Lynelle Wilcox. I live on Norway Street in Ward 1.

Back in 2019, the city was considering a Sit/Lie ordinance. Advocates wrote many letters to share our reasons and perspectives for opposing sit/lie. We also went to the streets to learn and share what some businesses and unsheltered individuals were experiencing.

As a result of meetings and outreach, we collected a combination of 383 letters and/or signatures, opposing sit/lie. We delivered a ribboned packet of letters to the City Recorder's office and also brought our own packet to the City Council meeting. At the time, sit/lie did not pass.





**Outreach:** Advocates were happy that sit/lie did not pass, yet whatever the outcome had been, the proposed sit/lie ordinance was a valuable catalyst to speak to many downtown businesses and unsheltered individuals.

None of the businesses back then shared that they committed violence against homeless individuals (as current articles reflect), yet other than that, our findings back then were similar to the Salem Reporter's findings in their recent article.

Many businesses conveyed that they are affected by people living outside. Many expressed some inconveniences, yet most also conveyed sadness that people are living outside with nowhere to be, and some acknowledged that it could be any of us, and that every human being is somebody's someone. Many business people shared that initially they were annoyed and sometimes scared, yet when they offered kindness, a relationship usually happened, and the connection was often valuable on both ends.

Some business owners shared that they (understandably!) don't appreciate the ripples of homelessness. And yet some shared that they befriended people who live outside their store. And by building a relationship, different ripples happened – some shared that the homeless individuals became extra eyes and ears on their business – free extra security. Some shared that connections changed their own perception and that in itself changed the dynamics to be positive.

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kindness, the relationship flourished and they were better for that experience and from what they learned.

Some business owners shared about the challenge and biohazard of having poop in their doorway. I had assumed that doorway poops reflect situations of people who experienced health issues, or cases of disrespectful people who were leaving a purposeful, metaphorical “F” you.

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~~~~~

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~~~~~

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And none of them never expected to be in this position, yet what do you do when you find yourself in this place, with no options for meeting such a basic human need? And what do you do when you have no plastic bags, no toilet paper, nothing to pick it up with, and no trash cans nearby to put it, even if you had toilet paper? And with each person sharing, their words and the tears in their voices convey their deep shame. Their shame is deeper than our disgust.

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Yet when there's no warning or lead time, and when relieving yourself in public is already undignified and shame-filled, a doorway offers a shred more privacy than the sidewalk itself. And a doorway means you're less likely to attract attention for doing a basic human function that every human being does. And a doorway reduces the chance of being cited for indecent exposure, and possibly being a sex offender as a result. Men and women have had that happen.

And he's embarrassed to admit that he's used doorways on rare occasions. And the shame in his voice is thick. Public disapproval only adds to the shame that he already feels at a deep core level that eats him up a tiny bit each day.

~~~~~

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Metformin is a common prescription medication for people who have diabetes. Metformin causes diarrhea for some people. So you choose whether to take meds to help stabilize your blood sugar, or you choose not to take that

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~~~~~

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~~~~~

And now I see that these situations are rarely, if ever, the "F" you I imagined them to be. Now I see those times as a reflection of a shared human need not just to relieve ourselves, but also to have a shred of privacy, dignity, and safety when we do so. And I'm embarrassed that as a community we haven't done better yet.

And I am reminded once again of the things that seem so obvious to me only after someone shares slivers of their stories. And I am grateful for their trust and candor, and so sad to see our lack in enabling ways for fellow human beings to meet basic human needs with some safety and dignity.

**With every individual I spoke with about bathroom needs, their shame was bigger than our disgust.**

In a city rich with beauty, and in a city aiming for inclusion, belonging, and dignity for all, my heart breaks for the shame they feel and conveyed to me. And I'm in sad awe of the lengths some individuals go, to avoid using public space as a restroom.

And there have been times in my own home or travels where due to illness, lack of bathrooms, or other issues, I barely made it to the bathroom in time. Haven't we all been there now and then? **What if that was your reality every single day?**

And I know there are problems and messes to clean up when we have bathrooms. Yet we have problems and messes to clean up when we don't have bathrooms.

If we're investing our collective time and money on cleanup anyway, what if we

chose paths that enable dignity, livability, and more safety for ALL?

Thank you for your consideration.

Lynelle Wilcox

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Julie Hoy](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Mai Vang](#); [Micki Varney](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment for City Council meeting 081125 Agenda item 5a - Salem Reporter livability and safety article  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 2:11:43 PM

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## Mayor Hoy and City Councilors

Salem Reporter spoke with local businesses about safety and livability. They dropped their paywall so everyone can read it!  
Businesses they spoke with mostly suggested kindness, yet there is also actual violence committed against homeless individuals.

<https://www.salemreporter.com/2025/07/14/as-businesses-call-for-fixes-to-clean-up-downtown-some-say-the-problem-is-more-complex/>

**From:** [Lynelle Wilcox](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Cc:** [Julie Hoy](#); [Vanessa Nordyke](#); [Paul Tigan](#); [Linda Nishioka](#); [Shane Matthews](#); [Deanna Gwyn](#); [Dr. Irvin M Brown](#); [Mai Vang](#); [Micki Varney](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for City Council meeting 081125 Agenda item 5a - SB  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 1:58:39 PM

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Shared on behalf of Shavannah Bouge, at her request

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My name is Shavannah Bouge, Ward 1. I am sharing part of my story as public testimony for city council's consideration on homelessness, safety, and livability.

I had a husband, family, and home for 16 years. We broke up, and we both spiraled down and started using drugs. There was domestic violence, and then a no contact order, so he ended up living in his vehicle while I lived in the house. We both got more deeply with drugs. He was convicted of some crimes, which resulted in him being required to go to a treatment program for a full year.

With the loss of our family's main breadwinner, I was no longer able to afford rent. I was evicted, and bought a trailer to live in. When my husband came out of his rehab program, he was clean, and he took the kids because I was not doing well. I was homeless, stressed, and using.

I had some relationships that were violent; I went deeper into addiction, with ongoing violence in my relationship. Each time my friends and I were swept was more trauma and hardship – to figure out how to get things to a new place, and where can we go? Not having any place to actually be adds to the stress, which often increases drug use, just to cope.

Every place we went was just another situation of being swept

again. The trauma and stress of that keeps you in a position of being unsafe, so using meth enabled me to stay awake for my safety. Using and dealing drugs also enabled us to have a little bit of money to buy gas and propane - to stay alive, to try to do things to move forward. But it was just ongoing circles.

I needed to be with my kids again, so I needed to become clean and housed. I went to detox and recovery, and I have now been clean and sober for 4 years. I've been housed again for 2 years. I am providing a clean and stable environment for the kids.

I realize that people who experience homelessness can seem scary to some people. I hope that people might think more deeply about that. At my church, we have a kid who has autism, and he sometimes rocks and waves his hands, and screams loudly. His behavior is very disruptive at those times, and it seems scary, until you recognize that he has autism, and this is part of his intermittent usual behavior.

Similarly, in experiencing homelessness and now working at a shelter for women experiencing homelessness, we sometimes serve women who experience mental illness, and some situations are disruptive and can seem scary. Yet as we learn what is typical for each woman, we see that screaming or cursing, or yelling at people we can't see is very rarely dangerous. When someone is being difficult, it reflects someone having a difficult time. In those situations, kindness may be more important than anything, and kindness can often change the dynamics, as someone feels heard and seen.

Mental illness affects many people – homeless or not. The difference is that we SEE mental illness more visibly when someone has nowhere to be. Homeless or not, mental illness or not, some people will commit violence. Always have your intuition and situational awareness engaged. Yet national statistics show that people experiencing homelessness are more likely to be the victim of violence than a perpetrator of violence against a stranger. The stabbings at UGM reflect a huge gap in mental health services and supports – NOT a reflection of people experiencing homelessness being dangerous.

When someone is homeless without shelter, they are constantly swept; they are treated as if they are vermin or invisible, and they experience discrimination on an ongoing basis. Survival mode living takes a toll on all, most especially on the people living in survival mode. Self worth and hope often fade, and mental illness or addiction can grow because of the ongoing danger and trauma.

The crimes downtown seem to be mostly livability crimes - feces in doorways, broken windows, camping and fires, trash, petty theft - crimes that are reflections of people having nowhere to sleep, go to the bathroom, eat, or live. Of course, no one should have to deal with those things – not the people with nowhere to live, and not the businesses.

Yet livability crimes are a reflection of people who are not able to have basic human needs met. We have done a lot to

increase places for people to live, and to increase shelter beds, and there are still more people than there are places for people to be, and there are still many people who can't meet shelter entry criteria, ie not being able to do activities of daily living independently, so we still will have many people who are unsheltered homeless.

Meanwhile, we have shootings, gang violence, including young gang members who specifically commit violence against people experiencing homelessness. One teenager beat a homeless man to death. As we figure out how to make our city safer, what if we focused on reducing **actual** violence as a priority?

And what if we continue more of the things that are proven to work ie, creating more permanent supported housing, more places for people to be in the meantime, and if we focused on having mental health professional as first responders for people having a mental health crisis. These things reduce livability crimes and increase livability for ALL.

As we profess values of inclusion, community-ness, and belonging, and we do an annual survey that repeatedly shows that people who are homeless often experience discrimination daily, it calls the question of whether those values apply to all people who live or work in Salem, or not?

We're investing so much in clean up, when we could invest in more prevention - if we provided restrooms, trash cans, trash service, cell phone charging stations, water fountains, places

for people to sit when they are weary to enable more livability for ALL, livability crimes would decrease, and we'd also be more aligned with Salem's professed values.

Thank you.

Shavannah Bouge

**From:** [Susann Kaltwasser](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#); [Councilors](#); [Trevor Womack](#)  
**Cc:** [nanasue03@yahoo.com](#); [dg.boardstuff@gmail.com](#); [skaltwasser@salemneighbors.org](#);  
[nescasalemneighbors.org](#); [beebalmbees@gmail.com](#); [Mai Vang](#)  
**Subject:** Comments regarding Agenda Item #25-298 Improving safety and livability in high response areas  
**Date:** Monday, August 11, 2025 7:20:51 AM  
**Attachments:** [East Salem community meeting .pdf](#)

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Please find attached a letter from ELNA to the City Council regarding East Salem community meeting of July 30 and our desire have another community dialogue.

I wish to have this letter distributed to mayor and council members as well as the Police Chief and City Manager.

Thank you,

Susann Kaltwasser  
ELNA  
co-president



## **EAST LANCASTER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (ELNA)**

August 11, 2025

To: Salem Mayor, Julie Hoy  
Salem City Councilors  
Salem City Interim Manager, Kristna Namburi  
Police Chief Trevor Womack  
From: Susann Kaltwasser, East Lancaster Neighborhood Association  
RE: East Salem Community Meeting - Item # 25-298

In late July I received an invitation to a meeting of East Salem business owners that was called by the Salem City Interim Manager Krishna Namburi, Police Chief Trevor Womack and Fire Chief Dave Gerboth to discuss safety and liability in our Northeast and East Salem community. Unfortunately, neither the co-president nor I were able to attend, however, shortly afterwards, I received an email, text messages and a phone call from concerned members of the community who had attended. These people were upset by the tone of the meeting, the content, and the fact that neighbors were not allowed to speak. Later, I was able to read the summary of the meeting in the Salem Reporter newspaper.

I must admit that I was dismayed by what I heard and read.

I don't know why Neighborhood Association chairpersons, and members of the community were invited and then excluded from being able to share their thoughts about our community. If the purpose was to only speak with business owners, why would we be invited to listen and not be invited to speak?

My second concern was the negativity of the business owners towards our neighbors, especially the unsheltered.

Since the meeting and following some discussion with others, I have come to believe that there was no malicious intent in holding a meeting for just business people. However, it still rankles that neighborhood representatives could not speak. Unfortunately, the article in the newspaper has left yet another stain on the reputation of the good people who live in East Salem.

Neighbors who live in East Salem are a diverse group of people who care about their community and want to be safe. I'm sure that many of the people who live in East Salem would have liked to have been heard.

I am puzzled by the discrepancy between what I was told by those who attended and the report to council in the Interim Manager's report. The newspaper article seemed to reflect the narrative of the participants.

On behalf of the East Lancaster neighborhood Association we formally request that the next community meeting be more inclusive and representative of the diverse members of the East Salem community. We would like the opportunity to express our feelings on a variety of issues, dealing with safety and liability and on how we might work collaboratively on solutions to problems that we feel are important.

I just learned that there is a plan by the Police Chief to host another community meeting. ELNA would like all of the area neighborhood associations to have input into the design of the conversation and be able to suggest who might be the facilitator. We have approached our councilor from Ward 6, Mai Vang, about working with us on a joint meeting, sponsored by the neighborhood associations in the ward and with support from the City of Salem. Perhaps one of my colleagues has also spoken to Dr. Brown from the other North East Salem ward about this proposal and hopefully he will be supportive too.

East Salem also includes both residence who live within city limits and as well as many who live in the county, so it seems reasonable to include representatives from those neighborhoods and county government.

Our goal would be to identify what people like about East Salem; what they would like to see change; and how they could work collaboratively to make our community a better place to live and work.

Further the East Lancaster Neighborhood Association board would encourage council and the police chief to not make long-term decisions regarding our community before we have had an opportunity to be listened to and to work together on actions to be taken.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susann M. Kaltwasser". The signature is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Susann Kaltwasser  
East Lancaster Neighborhood Association  
co-president

**From:** [Scott Russell](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for agenda item 5a  
**Date:** Sunday, August 10, 2025 12:28:21 PM

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My name is Scott Russell and I work in Ward 1.

In the past 12 years I was homeless at the beginning for 5 years, and now I work at Arches for the last 6 years. During this 12 year period I have never heard of any acts of physical violence committed by homeless on sheltered folks, always the other way around, or homeless vs. homeless.

So why are we so afraid of homeless folks? They're humans, just like us, with their share of problems, addictions, mental illness, etc. A big difference is that these folks have no place of privacy to work out their issues, so they're left with working out issues on the streets in the public eye. Please consider this as you look at livability in the downtown area.

Thank you for your consideration.

**From:** [Scott Russell](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment for agenda item 5a  
**Date:** Sunday, August 10, 2025 12:33:03 PM

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My name is Scott Russell and I work in Ward 1.

I was homeless from 2013 to 2018. During that time, Salvation Army's Lighthouse Shelter on Front Street offered 24/7 access to their restroom. Homeless people in that area could use that restroom, even if they were not staying at Salvation Army's shelter. Because 24/7 restroom access is so important, I often stayed in that general area.

I was fortunate then, since Salvation Army later discontinued that courtesy after hours. Even fewer restroom facilities exist now downtown after 7pm. It's kind of an unwritten rule that if homeless camp on any business property and storefronts overnight, then you must vacate by 7am latest, and leave no messes behind. When business owners give grace to those on the streets who camp on their property overnight, this is commendable, and appreciated, thank you.

It's sad that businesses are dealing with messes sometimes - no one should need to clean up after others. But please consider the utter lack of restrooms downtown after business hours these days, and please consider the state of mind some people are in.

My state of mind was clear, and I was not drowning in addiction or struggling with mental illness, so I was able to sleep and behave respectfully on others' property. Many others are not as lucky. There are not enough places for unsheltered

people to be, sleep, or live with the wrap around services and supports that they need. They still need livability, with basic human needs met. They are still human beings who need help.

As we consider actions to increase livability in Salem, punitive policies, aggressive policing, and sweeping people from place to place adds trauma and hardship and puts people further and further into survival mode and causes more desperation and less less hope. Those practices result in reducing livability for people experiencing homelessness, which reduces livability for all.

We need more resources for people experiencing mental illness and addiction. We need more first responders that include a mental health professional for mental health situations. We need more housing first and permanent supported housing. We need more resources that help people meet basic human needs. These are proven strategies that increase livability for ALL.

Thank you for your time.

Scott Russell

**From:** [Pamella Watson](#)  
**To:** [CityRecorder](#)  
**Subject:** Public comment  
**Date:** Sunday, August 10, 2025 5:04:31 PM

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Mayor Hoy, City Councilors,

As we continue to grapple as a community, city, business owners, advocates, with how to care for our unhoused with dignity and respect. We are also wanting our business owners and customers to enjoy our downtown area and businesses to thrive.

It's all of these reasons that I support bringing back the bicycle police officers. I saw in the past how having officers on bikes downtown created relationships with business owners and our unhoused.

I am also very encouraged with the concept of a mental health professional working with a paramedic to provide care to our unhoused struggling on our streets with mental health issues. This will hopefully relieve some of the burden on our police to respond to those calls.

These are positive first steps.

I am hoping by implementing these solutions we can begin to tone down the anger and vile comments made about our folks with no shelter. During these times of "othering", it's so easy to lose sight that we are all human beings. That some of us have had a harder road to walk than others. We all have a name and a story.

I think we all can agree we want our businesses to thrive!

Some of us also want our unhoused and those struggling with mental illness to have the best shot at thriving as well.

There are no easy solutions here but we can as a community begin to take these first steps along with expanded cleaning services, access for all to a bathroom/s downtown to decrease the feces and urine.

Let's come together as a community and be part of the solution.

Respectfully submitted,

Pamella Watson 97317

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

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