

Ruth Stellmacher

From: Roger Bell <rbofrbjb52@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2023 4:17 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: City Council Mtg 22 May 2023 Re: City Ord Bill 9-23 and City Budget

I have been reading vigorously about the recommendations for changes to our city ordinances regarding homeless individuals and "camping". This whole thing is a self-fulfilling prophecy of disaster. If a resident of this city has fallen on hard times through no fault of their own, then we, their fellow citizens, should find a way to provide a hand up - but no one has a right to a handout just because they exist.

It's a work ethic issue that seems to be lost on a preponderance of the current legislator/activists that are populating our government at the state and federal level.

Common sense has left the building with regard to personal responsibility and accountability. We as a society need to require it of each of us to keep this country from becoming a socialist regime instead of the republic it was born as.

It looks like you are telling the people who are paying the bills that they have no right to feel safe when they are out and about in their own town, but transient, vagrant, indigent people have the right to take up camping on public property simply because we, the resident citizens of the city, haven't provided them with a free place to live - that is beyond ludicrous.

My wife and I are longtime residents of Salem (meaning we worked and lived here - and are now retired here). We pay our taxes, shop at local businesses and we used to enjoy the local parks. Our taxes are always going up, local businesses are thinning, and the parks are no longer a safe place to just go walking.

When the politician/activists took Portland to a level of insanity with regard to acceptable public behavior (wear your underwear to work day, naked bike rides, unabated drugs and human trafficking, etc), we as a state started down a dark path and the insanity is spreading across this once beautiful state, a state that was a great place to work, live and enjoy life.

Now you are also looking to take the revenue that has been provided by the residents of this city to be used to provide security (law enforcement), protection (firefighters), utilities (water, sewage treatment, storm water drainage), infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, bridges) and recreation (parks) for the use of those said residents of this city, and divert it to taking care of vagrant, transient people who have come to this city simply because they can get a free ride on someone else's hard earned money. That is wrong on so many levels.

You want a solution: register each homeless person and get their name and background. If they went homeless while a resident living here in Salem and it was through no fault of their own and they are wanting to work and again become part of this community, then find a way to help them get back on their feet and regain their dignity. If, however, they came from somewhere else and have no reason for being here other than they left some other place, then put them and their personal belongings on a bus and transport them to Portland. They can be homeless there just as easily as here and since Portland is a sanctuary city by their own declaration - problem solved! Side note: with all the

businesses leaving Portland, there should be plenty of space for the homeless to set up camps out of the elements.

I hope that some day the insanity of politician/activists will be seen for what it is - a destructive move away from personal responsibility and a move toward a victim based socialist system where nothing is ever your fault and anyone who has succeeded has more than they need and should be required to give it to those who don't have it. The epitome of the lunacy is that the politician/activists will be the ones determining who has more than they need and how it will be used, not the person who actually earned it.

These comments and thoughts submitted by:

Roger and Judy Bell
1386 Rees Hill Rd SE
Salem, Oregon

Ruth Stellmacher

From: Lauren Murphy <murphy.lauren01@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2023 4:32 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Written testimony for city council meeting 5/22/2023

Hello,

My name is Lauren Murphy. I have lived in Salem for 20 years and worked in various parts of the city, I currently work downtown and see a lot of people experiencing homelessness everyday on my way to and from the office. I understand the health and safety risks associated with large encampments throughout the city. I know that there is no simple answer to the housing crisis that our city has faced over the last few years. While you deliberate over how to enforce camping rules I want you to try and put yourselves in the shoes of a person experiencing homelessness.

Imagine needing to walk a mile to and from a community center to get your meals. Imagine not sleeping for days on end, because everytime you try to lay down and rest someone wakes you up and makes you move along. Imagine not having access to a bathroom in time of need. Now imagine that you're crouched behind a bush, trying to relieve yourself and keep your dignity intact, when all of the sudden a police officer or business owner chases you off and gives you a citation. You don't have toilet paper to clean yourself with. Imagine being out in 80-90 degree heat wearing the same jeans you've worn for three weeks, your legs are chafing and sore, you haven't taken your shoes off to let your feet rest because you're afraid that someone will take them from you. After all, shoes are hard to come by. Imagine trying to battle a mental health condition without a consistent, safe place to store your medications. Imagine being labeled as a "junkie" or an "alcoholic" for enjoying one alcoholic beverage the same way many other people do in the comfort of their own homes.

Humane and empathetic policies are essential to the health of our city. Our unhoused neighbors have the same rights as those of us with places to live. Creating policies that keep not only the health and safety of our city in mind, but also the well being of all the citizens that live here, sheltered or not, is the only way that we can address the crisis facing our city. I urge you to take a step into the shoes of a person experiencing homelessness when you make these decisions. I encourage you to talk to people who are experiencing homelessness to determine what is and is not reasonable to ask of them. By and large, most people do not cause damage and destruction just for the sake of it. Alternatives like more accessible bathrooms, more trash cans and safer places to sleep would relieve a lot of the issues caused by public camping.

The easy way out is to push the housing crisis out of sight so that the people who live in and visit our city do not have to witness the realities of our broken community, but I challenge you to make a different choice. Do not send our unsheltered neighbors to the edges of the city where they are unseen and inaccessible. Consider the level of care and respect you would want shown to a family member or loved one who found themselves in the unfortunate position so many of our community face. I again encourage you to talk to people who are experiencing homelessness about how to best support and serve them. While the input of the community as a whole is valuable and has a place at the table, do not overlook the wisdom that comes with lived experience.

Thank you.
Lauren Murphy

Ruth Stellmacher

From: Chris Cummings <chrisforsalem@outlook.com>
Sent: Monday, May 22, 2023 4:50 PM
To: citycouncil
Subject: Ordinance Bill 9-23
Attachments: Testimony for Ordinance Bill 9-23.pdf

Importance: High

Please see attached for second reading.

Thank you!

Chris Cummings
Advocate for West Salem, OR
(553 Stellers Eagle St. NE)

May 22, 2023

Salem City Councilors
555 Liberty St. SE, Room 220
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Ordinance Bill 9-23

ATTN: City Mayor and City Councilors

As the City of Salem is declining in visual appearance, providing an ordinance to make it legal/okay to sleep, loiter and defecate in our public spaces is totally unacceptable! "Campers" in the sidewalks is unsafe, hazardous (leaving needles and other objects behind and fires that break-out) and it threatens families, requires MORE expense to the City's budget to keep cleaning up, and STINKS! Many others and I are forced to walk on the opposite side of the street if possible. Why would City Council feel this is okay for the City's image? How can we attract businesses to these areas and grow our economy with a mess like this? Eventually residents and businesses do leave the City (which directly impacts City budget) and less goes into the local economy. Just take a look at Keizer. What are they doing that's working?

Even the "campers" are vulnerable to the weather elements and do not have access to the services they really do need. There are sheltered locations for folks to go to. When someone is in need of shelter, they should not have a right to demand their dog and drug habits come along. I'm very sorry. I am very compassionate. But compassion does not mean the person needing shelter is in the position of demanding their wants in their current situation. Nor should the lack of not getting their ideal shelter with the desired amenities be construed as punishment for the unsheltered. I have heard firsthand from folks on the streets that they are there because they like it better than a place with rules. This will just enable them further.

Martin v. Boise did not establish a standard that the City must allow camping on any public space. But it did restrict the vagrancy and loitering laws based on actual available locations for the unsheltered. As long as the unsheltered and/or the City keep changing the definition of what's considered "available", and the unsheltered keep asking for more amenities or less rules (that protects the establishment) to qualify for an "available" location, then this is a loose-loose situation.

Providing an ordinance to allow the problem to grow in our public places is NOT the answer. We used to feel free and safe to visit our public parks and spaces. Now this is not the case. Sporting events for kids and families that have been using our parks are having second thoughts about returning. It only spirals downward.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Cummings
West Salem (97304)