

**Rock Dump Coalition**  
c/o Juneau Tours and Whale Watch  
190 Mill Street  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
VIA E-MAIL: brett@juneautours.com

March 25, 2024

Mayor Beth Weldon  
155 Heritage Way  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

**Re. Proposed Relocation of the Mill  
Campground**

Mayor Weldon:

We are an ad hoc group of business owners, individuals and representatives of commercial enterprises in Juneau who are concerned and alarmed at the recent proposal to relocate the existing seasonal Mill Campground for persons experiencing homelessness to a new location immediately adjacent to Thane Road in the heart of a commercial area.

On Monday March 18, 2024, more than sixteen business owners and agents with a vital interest in our commercial operations, from the area we refer to as the Rock Dump Industrial Park, met to discuss and respond to the recent decision by the working committee of the CBJ City Assembly on March 11, 2024, to relocate the existing Mill Campground to the AEL&P owned storage lot on the corner of Thane Road and 100 Mill Street south of downtown Juneau.

We are all in agreement that 100 Mill Street is an unacceptable location. CBJ's alternate plan, allowing this population to disperse, is dangerous to everyone in Juneau. Reopening the former Mill Campground has proven very challenging to manage. We urge you to enact emergency efforts that increase safety, better meet the needs of the homeless, and resolve to work diligently to find a long-term solution.

We urge you and the members of the CBJ Assembly to resist unintentionally expanding the lawless and unacceptable behavior taking place in our community. Avoid opening a concentrated encampment for the homeless, in the middle of commercial activities. Allocate funds, city land and resources to existing service providers like the Glory Hall and St. Vincent DePaul's and other organizations as part of an emergency response; the critical first step towards a long-term care solution for this challenging and sometimes dangerous population, that nonetheless needs our compassion and support.

Letter to Mayor Weldon  
Relocation of Mill Campground  
March 25, 2024

All attendees agreed to forward a petition which is enclosed with this correspondence to you, the members of the CBJ Assembly and other CBJ officials. We agree that the existing Mill Campground is a blight on Juneau and should be closed immediately. We also are unanimous in our belief that the proposed relocation is ill-conceived and accelerates the already intolerable conditions our businesses, and the homeless population, are facing. Relocation to 100 Mill Street will cause needless harm to commerce and negatively impact tourism and the safe and beneficial use by local residents. The homeless will be forced to choose between living on the streets or camping on a fenced in gravel lot in a commercial area. We categorically reject the notion that the CBJ Assembly is required to relocate the existing Mill Campground without meaningful and timely public and commercial input or that it should allow this population to disperse into the community.

The homelessness problem in Juneau is chronic and sometimes acute, especially for individuals who are unable (due to the lack of available rooms), ineligible or unwilling to go into existing temporary housing, or who choose to live outdoors and avoid the law or society. Moving the Mill Campground to a suitable site warrants emergency measures, followed by a measured and studied approach to a permanent solution. Certainly, nothing justifies relocation of an existing highly problematic seasonal campground to a new location that will exacerbate conflicts and problems or, perhaps even worse, resigning to our fate and dispersing this population into the community at large.

The unintended consequences are potentially devastating to our city and its residents. How, we wonder, is it in the public interest for the CBJ to move the abundant and widely known problems associated with the Mill Campground into the middle of business operations vital to the public and to the Juneau economy?

Emergency measures are required to expedite relocation to a suitable site. The operation of the existing Mill Campground has shown that this population is a real and obvious danger, and after relocation, will be a danger to the hundreds of people who work in the Rock Dump Industrial Park, a blight and problem for visitors, tourists and locals alike with the potential to shut down the delivery of goods, fuel and the transportation of cruise passengers during an emergency at the camp. Ending all camping services, thereby forcing this population to disperse, spreads the danger broadly across all of Juneau. For this and other reasons we oppose the 100 Mill Street location or allowing the camping services to cease, which we have outlined in the attached petition.

There is also the optics of a homeless encampment to consider. How will Juneau residents perceive a homeless encampment, located on a fenced-in storage lot, in an

industrial area, across the street from a marijuana dispensary, in the view of the public? Some have already begun to refer to 100 Mill Street as 'the cage.' Will creating a concentrated encampment, in a place frequented by hundreds of thousands of visitors and tourists, in the vicinity of a shipping hub and fuel depot, project Juneau's desired image to the world? Will the homelessness advocates in Juneau and abroad see this as a compassionate solution? Can this be the 'band aid', as it was described in the March 11 working committee meeting, the city needs until a better solution becomes available? Or is this simply more salt in the wound of a pervasive and growing problem facing our community?

Juneau, as a community, with the assistance and aid from the CBJ, provides significant resources for individuals suffering with homelessness and the myriad causes that lead to homelessness, including addiction to drugs and alcohol and mental illness. Moving the existing campground to the highly visible parcel on the Rock Dump adjacent to Thane Road will not solve the problems experienced by individuals suffering from acute addiction or improve the situation for these homeless campers. Relocation of the existing problematic campground to an unsuitable site will increase the suffering of Juneau citizens who rely on services provided by businesses in the Rock Dump Industrial Park. The intense scrutiny of the public and necessary security measures of businesses in the 100 Mill Street area will shine a spotlight (metaphorical and real) intensifying the feelings of hopelessness and shame the homeless population endures daily.

We need to do better. No more band-aids. No more delays.

Very Truly Yours,

Business Owner Representatives:

Michael Tripp

Owner - Timberwolf Ventures, Inc.

Brett Hutchinson

Land Operations Manager - Juneau Tours and Whale Watch

Andrew Green  
Port Manager – Cruise Line Agencies

Robert Janes  
Owner – Gastineau Guiding Company

Hayden Garrison  
Owner – G2 Properties, LLC

Kyle McDonnell  
Vice President of Business Development – Alaska Coach Tours

Daren Booton  
Owner – Alaska Shirt Company

Enclosure: Petition

(w/enclosure) CBJ Assembly Members

Robert Barr, Assistant CBJ Manager (w/enclosure)

Alec Mesdag, AEL&P (w/enclosure)

Alex Pierce, CBJ Tourism Director (w/enclosure)