



The Lowcountry's Hometown

PO Box 700 | Moncks Corner, SC 29461 | 843.719.7900 | monckscornersc.gov

To: Mayor and Council
Jeff Lord, Town Administrator

From: Chief Stephen Young and Lieutenant Matthew Hoffer

Date: April 4, 2024

RE: Homeless Population Approach with New Ordinances

The Police Department has partnered with Serve and Connect, Jean's Angels, the Hill Finklea Detention Center, 180 Place, and Pam Veurink from the Public Defender's Office (who conducts homeless outreach) to develop and implement a three-pronged approach to assisting people experiencing homelessness in Moncks Corner over the past year. The first prong has focused on offering resources to the homeless; the second prong involves bolstering and adding to our current Town ordinances while respecting their constitutional rights; and the third prong helps homeless persons transitioning out of jail.

Our Victim Advocate, Zelda Holmes, was designated as the Police Department's point of contact for offering resources related to people experiencing homelessness. Over the past year, Ms. Holmes has contacted and offered services to all identified homeless individuals in the Town. As officers continue to encounter new homeless person(s), they will continue to provide the opportunity to be connected with Ms. Holmes to explore resource opportunities. If resources are desired, Ms. Holmes and/or Mrs. Veurink are responding to the officer's location to meet with the homeless person.

The potential resource opportunities include, but are not limited to, access to drug/alcohol treatment programs, mental health assistance, transportation, legal assistance, help getting a driver's license, social security card, and help finding shelter. In addition to Serve and Connect, Ms. Holmes has assisted Jean's Angels when they hold events to provide people experiencing homelessness with access to food and showers, as well as providing washing machines and driers to individuals so they can have clean clothing. This has helped us identify and offer services to individuals not identified by police officers.

Ms. Holmes and Lieutenant Merchand have also met with 180 Place in Charleston, and they will be bringing an outreach team to Berkeley County to contact all persons experiencing

homelessness again to offer services. 180 Place aids in obtaining housing, needed documents such as photo IDs and Social Security cards, employment, and training opportunities.

The proposed ordinances aim to address various community concerns while navigating legal and constitutional considerations. First, the amendment to the soliciting and panhandling ordinance seeks to mitigate aggressive begging behaviors while avoiding potential infringements on free speech, as seen in past legal challenges. Secondly, the camping ordinance streamlines the process of removing unauthorized campers from both private and public property, balancing the rights of property owners with the need to address property destruction and unauthorized occupation. Lastly, enhancements to the parks and recreation ordinance include additional rules prohibiting certain activities in parks, along with the establishment of standardized park hours for improved safety and reduced vandalism. These measures also, give our officers and our outreach cause to engage those experiencing homelessness.

The Hill Finklea Detention Center has assisted us in identifying homeless persons entering the detention facility and has allowed Ms. Holmes to identify those individuals who need assistance.

Our resource plan has already shown results, and the new ordinances, along with the new partnership with 180 Place, will continue to enhance our ability to preserve the quality of life in Moncks Corner.