

Members of the Sweet Home City Council and City Manager,

Thank you for your time investment and ongoing efforts to find constructive ways to address the homeless problem in our community. The initial plan that was outlined by the subcommittee for the homeless population on the proposed site at the old mill property was well thought, and provided a realistic solution for much needed services with dignity and respect. I strongly support those efforts. However, I was very surprised to read in this week's paper concerning the proposed changes to that plan and the decision to relocate the site to the new city hall.

One of the key considerations the subcommittee proposed, was a site that was not within proximity to schools, houses, and residential areas. This new initiative places the proposed site adjacent to a residential development of 80 homes, a future apartment complex, and within short walking distance to Hawthorne School. Those 80 homes are part of the Duck Hollow Homeowner's Association and ten of those homes directly border the proposed site. All of those adjacent homes are a one to two minute walk from the proposed site.

I was shocked that one of the council members was quoted in this week's paper saying "it doesn't affect any surrounding neighbors" and went on to state, that in the current location downtown, owners aren't "having their property and business rights protected". Moving the location from our downtown area as a result of ongoing issues to a residential location, simply passes those issues on to homeowners and the small market less than a block away. The Walla Walla police sergeant quoted in the Union Bulletin on January 7th, 2019 stated that the camp the council is considering modeling, required law enforcement to respond to complaints almost "twice per day" before the camp was moved to an industrial area away from residential housing. I am not aware of many facilities that serve the homeless that don't have problems that spill over into the surrounding area in which they are located. Those problems have been well reported in our own community. The proximity to the nearby trailer courts with their own history of issues, compounds the problem. We currently already have spillover from these issues in our neighborhood.

In relation to the proposed camp expectations, I have a concern as to where these residents are going to go from 10-4 on Mondays when they are required to leave. Human nature leads me to believe they won't go far from the facility. All that said, I would challenge the council to seek input from the Duck Hollow Homeowner's Association, as the proposed site will directly affect homeowners in the association and the property the association manages. Susan Coleman said it well when she stated, "I don't think there is any perfect location". However, there has to be choices that don't affect 80 homeowners, their families, and their investment.

I believe that the plan the council and subcommittee has put together is a positive and necessary effort to serve the homeless in our community. However, I strongly question the choice of location. I would challenge the council to re-visit areas that do not affect homeowners and are industrial. I would also encourage the council to schedule a meeting with representatives from the Duck Hollow Home Owners Association before moving forward, so the interests and concerns of the community affected can be fairly, and appropriately addressed.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Stutzer". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Eric Stutzer
Home Owner
Duck Hollow HOA president