



CITY OF KIRKLAND

City Manager's Office

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www.ci.kirkland.wa.us

MEMORANDUM

To: David Ramsay, City Manager

From: Marie Stake, Communications Program Manager

Date: January 22, 2008

Subject: Draft Response Letter: C. Keyes RE: Tent City4 Length of Stay

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize Mayor James Lauinger to sign a letter as presented or modified responding to Ms. Cami Keyes.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

On January 10, 2008 an email (Attachment 1) was sent to the "Kirkland Council" and "Tent City" City email addresses from Ms. Cami Keyes. In the email, Ms. Keyes expresses concern regarding the length of stay Tent City4, the homeless encampment, will be located within Kirkland City limits.

For the City Council's consideration is the draft response letter to Ms. Keyes. (Attachment 2)

Attachment 1: Email from Ms. Cami Keyes, 1/10/08
Attachment 2: Draft City Council Response

From: Cami Keyes [mailto:Keyescom@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, January 10, 2008 1:57 PM
To: TentCity; KirklandCouncil
Subject: 6 months is too much

Dear City of Kirkland and City Council Members,

As one who works with reputable homeless organizations such as Union Gospel Mission and Congregations for the Homeless, I understand the need for safe beds and an environment that encourages dealing with the issues that create homelessness. And while I don't like tent city because they lack the needed link in helping people deal with what lands them in such a predicament, I understand its place.

However, because Share/Wheel refuses to offer the wrap-around services the vast majority of people in Tent City need, their problems persist (both for the homeless individuals and S/W). As a result, there are burdens on the communities that host them. From the knife wielding man near the teen center the last time Tent City was in Kirkland, to the thefts from nearby stores when Tent City was in Bellevue (with merchandise tracked to the tent of a TC4 resident, along with extensive drug paraphernalia), to the intoxicated man urinating on TC4 residents in Woodinville (all documented police reports), it is clear, many in Tent City suffer from drug and alcohol addiction. This does create burdens on city services and non-city entities.

As such, I think hosting Tent City within our boundaries for a total of six consecutive months is too much. It's too much to ask the people of Kirkland to put up with and too much strain on the city, businesses and residents. Even Bellevue has limited consecutive stays within their city borders. I urge Kirkland to do the same. Three months out of every twelve is sufficient for a program that causes problems, is a definite eyesore and does not raise itself to the level recommended by the 10-year plan to end homelessness (wrap-around services).

Even Congregations for the Homeless does not spend more than 30 days at any one church or facility, recognizing the strain it can put on local resources. And they offer job counseling, drug and alcohol addiction prevention, direct supervision and much, much more. It's time for Kirkland to stand up for both the homeless and the community they are living in and put limits on the amount of time Tent City can be within our borders within a year. At least let there be 3 month resting times in between. Alternatively, ask that there be a wrap-around service plan put into place to ensure people are getting the true help they need, voluntary or not.

When it comes to Tent City, Kirkland has defied the desires of the majority of citizens and completely rolled over, capitulating to the demands of Share/Wheel and its host churches. Is it not ok to set limits and expectations that include the interests of all parties? If you don't act, we could find the three churches in Kirkland who host TC and the one in the nearby potential annexation area, the only places TC goes. Be careful in being afraid to take a stand and set limits.

Sincerely,

Cami Keyes
Kirkland, WA

February 5, 2008

DRAFT

Cami Keyes
8126 NE 115th Court
Kirkland, WA 98034

Dear Ms. Keyes:

Thank you for taking the time to express your concern to the Kirkland City Council about consecutive stays of Tent City 4 (TC4). In your email dated January 10, 2008, you suggest that the City place a greater limit on the number of times a homeless encampment should be allowed in the City, express specific concerns regarding the lack of human and health services for the homeless, and mention public safety issues associated with previous TC4 stays in Kirkland and other communities.

As you are aware, TC4's current stay at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church will end on February 9, 2008 and the encampment has accepted an invitation to move to the Kirkland Congregational Church. Kirkland Congregational has applied for the required temporary use permit which is being processed by the Planning and Community Development Department.

To date, TC4 has located in Kirkland City limits three times. At the time of the first two encampments in 2005, the City's regulations did not specifically address homeless encampments. In 2006, with input received by the Kirkland community, the temporary use regulations were amended to include homeless encampment standards. When the Planning Commission and City Council considered the temporary use code amendments, including the homeless encampment standards, they were sensitive to protecting neighborhood communities from continued temporary uses at the same site. As a result, a specific amendment was included that prohibits a temporary use at the same site more than once in a 365-day period (Kirkland Zoning Code 127.30.01).

As public safety concerns are often raised when TC4 is in Kirkland, it is worth noting that it has been our experience that the three TC4 stays in the City did not result in an increase in crime attributed to Tent City residents. It has not been necessary to have additional officers for patrol purposes or to pay overtime. There have been a minimal number of incidents involving TC4 residents that have required a response from the Kirkland Police Department. The most common response involves police assistance when an encampment resident does not comply with the Code of Conduct enforced by the TC4 security team. The City has not received reports from businesses regarding negative impacts while the encampment has been in the City.

You raise a valid issue that TC4 residents do not receive wrap-around services to support families and children with severe or multiple needs and risks. When TC4 is in Kirkland, the City's Parks and Community Services Department provides human service provider information to residents.

The City recognizes that homelessness is a very serious problem. We are committed to addressing the root causes of homelessness and pursuing solutions. Kirkland is a founding member of “A Regional Coalition for Housing” (ARCH), an agency that provides funding for the development of affordable housing including projects specifically designed for the homeless. In addition, the City is an active member of the Committee to End Homelessness in King County, which is pursuing an aggressive ten year plan to address this issue.

On behalf of the Kirkland City Council, we appreciate your correspondence. Your email and this response will be provided to SHARE/WHEEL, the managing agency for TC4.

Sincerely,

KIRKLAND CITY COUNCIL

by James Lauinger
Mayor