



Memorandum

Date: March 20, 2014
To: Planning Commission
From: Kamuron Gurol
Re: Temporary Homeless Encampments Code Development Process

Background

Recently Mary Queen of Peace church hosted the city's first homeless encampment, Tent City 4 (TC4). The permitting mechanism currently available for this type of use is a Temporary Use Permit (TUP). Many of Sammamish's peer jurisdictions have adopted specific code processes and requirements for temporary encampments. The City Council has directed staff to research the experience of peer cities and gather stakeholder input to develop specific regulations for Sammamish to permit this type of temporary land use.

Recap

At the March 6th Planning Commission meeting staff introduced the topic of homeless encampments and the relativity to Sammamish's own experience thus far. Staff presented a table depicting how seven King County peer cities' encampment regulations treat a selected list of criteria. Staff also presented the enabling legislation allowing cities some flexibility to regulate this kind of temporary use, and some research from the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) of which the City of Sammamish is a member.

The commission also heard some public comment on the subject. The following is a brief summary of comments received:

- Concerns expressed regarding:
 - The proximity of encampments to schools and residences
 - The presence of wildlife in Sammamish and the potential interaction with Tent City
 - The number of times a site can host an encampment
 - The encampment or host site's lack of insurance or liability
 - The lack of a requirement for drug testing
 - The short notice to residents, businesses and schools
 - Child safety
 - The burden an encampment has on its neighbors
 - The accuracy of crime reports and statistics relative to homeless encampments
 - The removal from consideration the option to require sex offender and warrant checks on a regular basis throughout the encampment's stay

- Suggestions to consider:
 - Enforcement of the encampment’s code of conduct
 - Requiring the host site to hire on-site independent security
 - Keeping the 60 day maximum as with the current temporary use permit requirement
 - Requiring a minimum setback from schools
 - City codes other than just the eastside; including Seattle which revised their encampment ordinance in 2011 to be compliant with state law

- Statements made regarding:
 - The Arbor Schools’ own security guard and his experiences with Tent City 4 residents at Mary, Queen of Peace
 - Camp Unity’s code of conduct and it’s similarity to Tent City 4
 - The city’s responsibility to protect children

Tonight

The expectation for this evening is to open the public hearing and receive public testimony on the topic of homeless encampments and the proposed Homeless Encampment Use Permit draft code language. If the public hearing is closed, the Commission would have the option to begin deliberations.

Prior to opening the hearing, staff will present some additional information and offer some answers to questions posed by the Commission on March 6th.

Commissioners will find the following documents attached:

- Summary of written public comment
- Draft code language
- Camp Unity Eastside Information: Code of Conduct and “Expected duties of camper”
- Tent City 4 Information: Code of Conduct (Faith United Methodist Church site)
- Staff will also provide public records from the code development processes conducted at the peer cities we have chosen to study as part of our own process. These records will be available on March 20th.

Commissioners asked staff to provide answers to several questions regarding the information presented on March 6th. The following answers can be offered at this time. Staff will continue to research answers to the remaining questions and those that come up tonight.

- Sammamish Police Department Chief, Nate Elledge, provided a report to City Council regarding his department’s experience with Tent City 4 at Mary, Queen of Peace. Staff will work with Chief Elledge to provide this information directly to the Commission.
- An inquiry to a very knowledgeable and credible source revealed the following when asked about whether Tent City 4 keeps a record of their resident numbers:
 - “Tent City 4 does not keep any statistics. People call from time to time for a camp census to know how many to cook for, but the community is quite fluid. People come in and may only stay a few days before deciding that it is not for them. Others stay quite a while but may take a few days away here and there. You might have 73 one morning and eighty five that evening if there is a sudden influx. I've never known them to be under 20. 80 to 100 is comfortable for the

camp. There are then plenty of people among whom to spread the work. When the census gets too low it is rough going. With all the security shifts, it is hard for people to hold a job.”

Information

Staff has created a web page for this subject:

www.ci.sammamish.wa.us/departments/communitydevelopment/HomelessEncampmentCode

Also, staff has been collecting public comment using an email address specific to this process: HEC@sammamish.us, and an email message has been distributed utilizing the city’s govdelivery system. Those interested can sign up for these periodic emails by clicking on the link titled “Email Alert Sign Up” on the city’s web site.

We hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if you have questions or concerns.