

From: Markis Dee
Subject: Comment for immediate release plz?
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Esteemed leaders of Whatcom County:
Lend me your ear...

We've all been listening to shiny representations from Bellingham planning department, or the police department, and pretty discouragingly, advocates have been saying the truth 3 minutes at a time in Council meetings for years.

It's no wonder they yell sometimes.

On the record fact :

Hans has repeatedly lied in city and county councils about capacity in specific.
He claims to never turn them away.
But witnesses on both city and county councils saw folks turned away in front of them.
Myself , as well as other trusted advocates have witnessed this multiple times.
Alarmingly , very recently.

On the record fact:

Bellingham Police conducted illegal sweeps with absolutely NO policy in place, and in direct violation to CDC and local Health Department recommendations.

On the record fact:

BPD still uses Basecamp numbers as an excuse to sweep, despite these agency's recommendations, seen most extravagantly, and expensively last Thursday , at the illegally performed 'Camp 210 Sweep'

On the record fact:

The mission, not only cannot serve everyone, but clearly cannot serve the bulk of the houseless population.
They've been at great service to the community for many years, but if predictions on projected homelessness are even close , were going to need a more adaptable and reliable system, and we'll still need Hans to help , as government makes this worthy effort.
It's become largely accepted that the current population of local homeless folks is between 1100-1500.

On the record fact:

The mission has the right to refuse life saving services to anyone , anytime.
That right has been excessively displayed , and continues to be displayed up till today.
(9 people came in Thursday night)

On the record fact:

There is precedence for the Whatcom Health Department to take responsibility for emergency winter sheltering .
February 2019

In the absence of partners , nonprofit or church , the government accepts the responsibility for staffing life-saving shelters In the winter storm.

On the record fact:

It is the primary goal Of The homeless strategies work group of Whatcom County to identify Winter shelter and emergency winter sheltering.
We have failed.

On the record fact:

Given the state of the pandemic and the amount of personal spacing needed for Sheltering, all other sheltering methods have been eliminated except Tiny homes .

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THEREFORE :

As Homeless Advocate for Whatcom County , seated on the Homeless Strategies Workgroup , I am officially , and have been officially, stating that we have not yet provided emergency winter sheltering , and believe we stand in liability there.

I hereby advise all government officials to make the most emergent haste in identifying , and implementing emergency winter shelters Immediately, to vouchsafe the lives of our houseless citizens , and indemnify County, and City Governments from further liability.

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It's a very convoluted problem , where these statements of fact , only further support a very multifaceted solution.

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What's the solution?

While I don't think I have all the answers, its fair to say I've done real street level research . Along with MANY other advocates, I have been instrumental in achieving some major milestones toward solutions in recent years.

My plan :

I call it the Foursquare tiny home village model.

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1) Take all extra dollars from the multiple emergency funds made to mitigate the current pandemic emergency, and purchase prefabricated, affordable, and available tiny homes. (We're fools to buy less than 100)

2) Locate a government or leased lot , relatively close to available homeless related services. This has to be a large lot to accommodate, even newcomers. (ie the old St.Luke's parking lot on north garden st.)

(Ideal.)

3) Arrange buildings into adjacent groups of 25 , in a Foursquare configuration, with a large service building, divided 4 ways as well, centered between the four villages. Each corner of the building having separate access into each individual camp, with separate kitchens, bathrooms , showers, services etc.

4) Hire trained personnel or recruit services from a large government funded provider such as the opportunity council.

5) Send outreach professionals to bring in the houseless in the streets , ditches , waterways , and bushes of our community.

(save their lives)

6) Have health and mental health professionals assess the needs of the individuals , and sort them into appropriate village communities.

7) Outreach to all service providers to get folks hooked up with both preexisting, and new services .

8) Issue RFP's and RFQ's from county and city to relocate presorted , occupied villages to acceptable permitted locations.

9) Blame Markis.

You're welcome.

Please be quick about it.

The only other option for shelter , under pandemic emergency is apartment style living .

(buy an old motel)

Yours because I can ,

- Markis
