

These are people we love. I have watched completely drug free people, riding around town on their bikes, and happy just one year ago, become homeless and ultimately die this year. Solely from the decline of their health and living conditions. I have begged other services like Adult Protective Services and DCR over and over for help, to no avail. There was not a suitable space where I or anyone could provide care for someone with the needs so many of our unhoused have – needs that are challenging enough even when a roof and adequate medical care are available. One particular individual, I knew could not survive on the sidewalk. He died at Harbor Regional Hospital within weeks because nobody would help, and he was left on the street. At least 17 people have died since January. Please – help us help them.

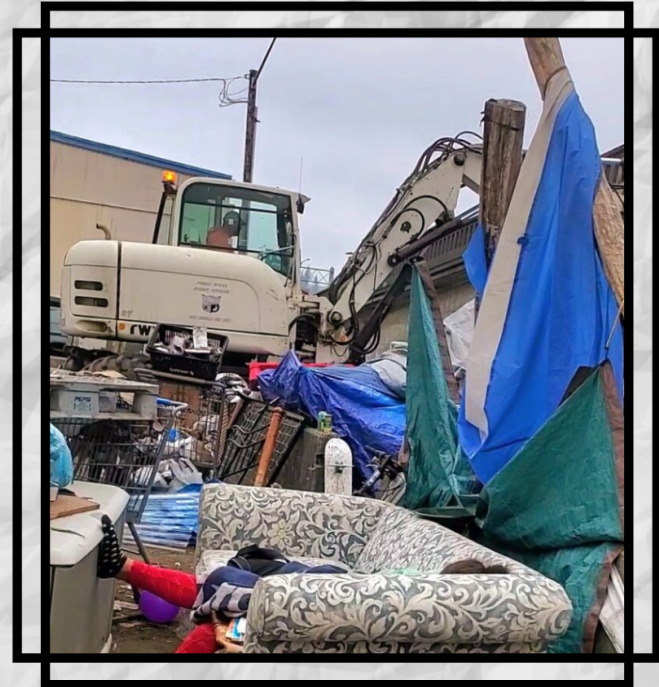
I don't know what else to say besides I hope you hear me. These are people we love. We are at that camp every day, so we know exactly what is going on, all of the time. Every time a citizen shows up to threaten them with a gun, they get shot with paintballs, they are freezing and need blankets - we show up and will continue to show up. We being Aberdeen, your community. Hundreds of citizens who have organized and continue to do so. We cook 7 nights a week and feed the people in the camps and on the streets. We clothe and provide hygiene and medical supplies and crisis response. We support them into sobriety, housing, jobs and so much more. From pastors, moms, grandpas, homeless, housed, we all do what we can. Taking care of each other works. It is just extremely hard to do so when it is a constant battle to even keep campers together, safe and alive.

Our priority is our people first.
I hope everyone has a great day.
Take care of each other & yourselves.

THIS has to stop. Aberdeen is better. Together we can be better. This was last week.....
I thought best to share this with you all here.



DESPITE COURT RULING, CITY OF ABERDEEN REFUSES TO FIND ADEQUATE SPACE FOR HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT



THE URGENT NEED RIGHT NOW IS SIMPLE.
LAND & COMMUNICATION. A STORY IN FOUR PARTS.



Preface:

The city of Aberdeen has renewed its harassment of the local homeless population by clearing out an area of the encampment that has taken root under the Chehalis River Bridge. They claimed that this was necessary in order to allow PUD to access an electrical box. They have yet to do so. The city also claimed that fully one half of the camp would need to move because they were on WADOT land. There are no alternative locations determined by the city for them to go. The map, made as a result of a court settlement over previous harassment, that the city has released recommends people sleeping on the sidewalks of downtown Aberdeen. This is a move calculated to upset the local business owners in order to legitimize the city's harassment of the homeless. This is a continuance and an escalation of their tactics to clear encampments that have been established for such a long period of time. The city has refused to find a permanent spot for people to sleep, despite being order to do so by the courts. They have also refused to designate the current camp as an official site, even though the city does provide a single restroom (for about 60 people) and trash service. The city keeps letting the trash pile up, even though they are in charge of sanitation there.



The solution is very simple. Pick a parcel of land from the extensive list of available properties. The location does not have to be in the downtown area, but it does need to be accessible by bus. Aberdeen business owners and housed residents agree that downtown is an unacceptable location for such a camp, and the sentiment is echoed by several members of the unhoused population as well. Say "Here is where our unhoused people can setup for survival." And then let the agencies and support teams do their jobs. I promise you there are a lot of people in Grays Harbor working very hard right now for all our people who are struggling. We are finding solutions. We just need our people to be safe and by refusing or delaying the selection of a suitable location, while continuing to displace people, you remain to be in violation of the law. This community will support them because we know you all don't want to. Giving everyone the run around, doorway sleeping, camp moving, city harassment, community harassment, persistent threats towards the unhoused, and so much more continues to drain any health and well-being from those who are already starting with an empty cup. [cont...]



The City erdeen owns literally thousands of acres of land. Pick one. Anyone can access the Assessor's website, type in "City of Aberdeen" and see everything that is owned. There ARE options. It is my strong opinion that none of us are here to determine what program, treatment option, or path of support an individual needs. We are talking about shelter and the safety of everyone. Our people are literally dying in doorways because we do not have a chunk of property to setup a camp. Do you understand how hard it is to support someone into housing, treatment, mental health, etc. when they do not even have a place to lay their heads? The people who get the funds to help this population can then get out to the camp to support these individuals where they are at. Each person has completely different needs. Whether it's getting them on services, approved for housing, or into programs that fit their needs and then out of there. Yes, not everyone takes help the first or second time but if you are in this type of work, you know that is realistic. Persons with massive trauma, mental health issues and addictions STILL need a place to sleep, eat, meet hygiene needs and survive. [cont...]



One of our core organizers felt that this was unjust, seeing as though these people were told to move to this exact location by the Mayor. Without an officially designated space for people to go the homeless will continued to be shuffled around and face constant lack of stability in their lives, making it harder to get off the streets. What is needed is land for people to be able to stay long term and set up a shelter that can be heated in winter. People need enough stability to know they wont be kicked out and shuffled to another spot of town at any moment. That way they can focus on other things to improve their conditions. But when Mayor Pete Schave was reached out to for comment he declined multiple emails. When the city will not even communicate their plans it makes people in town wonder what is going in terms of planning for a solution. The City's ad hoc homeless committee has been stacked with local fascists and has no hope of reaching consensus even amongst them. Most of the city council is angry and disappointed with the Mayor currently, they feel he hasn't gone far ENOUGH in eliminating the homeless from Aberdeen. That's what their rhetoric resembles at it core, eliminationist talking points. With politicians like this its hardly surprising to hear that they are unresponsive, conceited, and out-of-touch with what the average citizen wants, a fair and humane solution to poor people having to sleep on the street. To some this means land and warmth, to others this means incarceration or expulsion.



Since Mayor Pete chose not to respond to the following emails we chose to publish them here. Our hope is that this can spark a larger discussion in our community about what needs to be done, what is being done, and the gap between those two. Below you find four emails starting more than two wheels, written by someone who regularly drives around the streets passing out supplies, checking on wounds, and assisting people however she can. She has been instrumental in building a community capable of taking on our local political elites, yet she does it with uncompromising grace. We hope that you find something in these words that resonates with you. Then we hope you take action. See you in the streets.



Date: Mon, Oct 10, 2022, 3:07 PM

Good afternoon.

As there is an apparent lack of communication throughout the city, county and all persons whom have "control" over what happens to our homeless population and the population not knowing a single thing as well. I thought I would write, again. I write because we now have a camp full of scared people and a bunch of rumors being told to them by lord knows who. What is happening? They were told DOT was coming in and half of the front camp corner was moving and have all been on pins and needles waiting.... I do not get it. Now because of last weeks trauma all of camp (both sides) thinks the city is coming in to sweep it all. To you all this might not inflict feeling but I promise, it is massive to the people who have been residing at this site. These are literal people who've been living there and are afraid to wake up to COA every morning not knowing if all their things are going to be taken, and to the sidewalk they go. We also have some very sick, mentally ill, declining homeless people just roaming the streets or sitting on the sidewalk day in and out without anywhere to go. They are tired and can't ever stabilize because of all of this manufactured instability being inflicted on them. The bottom line and what needs to happen now is our homeless need a designated safe area where they can reside. That is it. This is 100% insanity.

[continued on next page...]



Tomorrow, DOT will be down to place huge boulders around the bridge areas needed. In short, we need to move camp.

Where do they go?

It's also important you understand these campers have resided here for 6+ months knowingly. The City has provided the bathroom and picked up garbage. In this, there has not been any notices served to any residence by your office. No evictions, no notices in writing, nothing. Yet, they are being forced to move without any space not to mention adequate.

In short, we just do not want all these people who have had this spot displaced. We don't want 30+ added, having to sleep around town, when they have had their own shelters via tent or what not. I literally just need a strip of concrete, a grassy patch, a field, a parking lot..... I have lists too. List of county and city owner properties. If you want to sit down together and discuss what would work best let me know. If you want to pick a little nook or cranny you think would be the least frowned upon by your peers, that is fine too. I do not care. I just need a place to put our homeless citizens right now.

Cell available 24/7

[redacted]



Date: Wed, Sep 14, 2022, 11:45 AM

Hello, I hope all is well.

My name is [redacted], a resident here in Aberdeen. I lend support to our people struggling & low income families when I can. I wanted to reach out to you today after some internal struggle of how we can best stop patterns with camp & how hard it has been to place people. The constant conflict with campers & city workers, more so when a large group has to be moved. I've talked to workers, I get it. I talk to campers, I do. I am here because I think we can make things go easier for everyone. We just need to communicate. I am willing to help & there are people I believe you trust, who will vouch for the bridges I already mend in our community. I'm reaching out because I know we can work together.

I was down at camp & talked to Jay Staten, DOT & the PUD last week. Due to a number of variables campers on the nearest side are going to need to move their tents. 1, away from the PUD box, 2, out from under the curve of the bridge. After reviewing its almost that entire side.

In an effort to have campers relocate with ease & to give the PUD & DOT access towards the end of this month as they need, I wanted to see where the appropriate spot for those campers to go is? Camp is aware & I've asked they start going through their things in anticipation so was trying to piece together the rest before the end of the month.

You can reach me here. I am open & asking to coordinate something so the impact at camp, the interaction between the city workers when the move happens & the timeliness of it all goes smooth. We have a estimated date, where do I put everyone? My goal would be to have everyone moved so public works could come in on the agreed day & do their thing without issue. Also lessening the impact on campers that need to move again. All of us on the same page.

I appreciate your time.

[redacted]



Date: Fri, Sep 30, 2022, 10:52 AM

Pete, I hope the week has been good to you.

I was hoping to hear back from you by now as it's Friday, 3 days before the PUD goes into the nearest side of where campers have been for 6+ months to do what they need to their equipment. We would like to know where I can tell them they can go so, I can help support them, with the community over the weekend. This insures when PUD shows up Monday, they can just get their job done. If I go to camp and tell them they have to take down their structures, tents, places without you giving an appropriate place for them to go, they aren't going to go in a timely fashion. It's a whole thing. I know you know that and it doesn't have to be like that. This snowballs and wastes so many resources and people's time. The City employees that have to deal and evict. The cops that have to mediate and handle the confrontations and all the stuff in between. It's traumatic for the people who have lived there and now have nowhere.

We all really just want to work together. I'm just asking for a location to relocate these people that have to move. They have to have a place to go. I am available always. Here is my cell [redacted]. Please do not hesitate to reach out. We can work together too make all this stuff so much easier.

Thank you!!!
[redacted]



Date: Tue, Oct 4, 2022, 9:28 AM

Mr Mayor.

Hi. Today is Tuesday October 4th and as you can imagine we have a number of displaced individuals with more to come this week. Our attempt to combat this before hand failed because I was unable to get a response from you. I understand that you do not want to say "yes this small area is okay" but Pete you already have and you really by law have too. I have a lot of concerns right now and I am trying my very best to reach a middle ground here for everyone. This whole side of camp is going to disperse to the streets. Business doorways, alleys, abandon houses etc. I promise you us being able to move them over to a area is not only less impactful on them but our community as a whole. This is temporary until the homeless committee and all others who are working towards solutions figures things out. But you have to know just evicting over 30 people here without a place to go is not a smart move.

It's my assumption that you had CCAP come down yesterday as a solution. Which is great, however CCAP doesn't offer services that this situation calls for unless they have an area that can house these people and/or they can get them all approved and into houses by Thursday (not reality). So, that does not solve anything for right now. CCAP coordinators call me for crisis response needs like this. Tents, tarps, people stuck in the woods etc. because although funding is there somehow resource and the correct programs are not so their hands are tied. This vulnerable group faces barriers that often do not get them the services they need. [continued on next page...]

