

Hello again, Arthur George, of West County Homeless Advocates, the continuing ad hoc volunteer group which has addressed you before. This week, Sebastopol is at a tipping point of action and opportunity concerning the unhoused. A highly-planned, well-coordinated sweep of the Laguna will occur, to remove and hopefully re-locate unhoused persons, initially driven by fire safety and actual fires but also concerns about Zero Waste and Climate Action impacts.

However, questions remain about what will happen to people who do not choose limited relocation services. Where will they go? They will not be allowed to re-establish themselves in the Laguna. Certain business interests west of Morris Street lobby the council and more, to restrict parking time limits on the east side of Morris, our de facto safe parking zone, to force vehicle campers off of Morris Street. Where will *they* go? Into the neighborhoods? Randomly through town? Away from the portable toilets and handwashing stations the City has wisely provided for health and sanitation?

People must be sheltered in some way. One could care not at all about the homeless, and help them not simply because it is humane, but because it is good, not harmful, for the community at large.

Concerns from other stakeholders in the area about the unhoused are understandable, as to impacts on business, cultural, and social events, but these may face a far greater detriment if no other shelter alternative emerges. The old problems, and the old valid complaints, of common vagrancy in doorways, behind businesses; on darkened peripheral grounds, structures, and porches, with accompanying human waste, syringes, and trash, are likely to re-surface.

Thus, unless and until some other public or privately-owned spaces are obtained, I urge two things of the Council:

First, leave intact, with enforcement and services as implemented, the 72-hour parking limits on the east side of Morris and the safe parking environment there.

Second, consider, at least on a temporary basis, use of a portion of the far rear northwest corner of the parking lot behind the Teen Center for unhoused camping.

No other defined alternative has yet emerged. That site is on gravel, mitigating fire risk. Fires of any kind can be strictly prohibited. It is openly visible for policing; dumpsters and portable toilets can mitigate trash and waste. It is already partially fenced, can be contained in size and duration, and camping trespass beyond its limits can be prohibited. It is just north of Morris Street "safe parking," centralizing unhoused persons at the "industrial fringe" of the city but with access for showers, food, transportation, medical care near the city core.

The Council and the City have engaged homelessness in positive ways this year as perhaps never before. We urge you to continue with this difficult issue with firm resolve, even amid pressures seeking otherwise. **We ask that you (1) retain safe parking on the east side of Morris Street, and (2) consider a portion of the parking area to the northwest behind the Teen Center for limited and monitored camping.** Thank you.