

From: [Renee Haroche](#)
To: [Mary Gourley](#)
Subject: City Council Meeting January 18th
Date: Monday, January 17, 2022 6:41:55 PM

Dear Mary and City Council Members,

I have been communicating with Diana Rich our trusted neighbor and council member. I will attach a few thoughts, concerns and a thank you to all of you. These are from 2 emails I've sent to her.

The first -

I do support finding solutions for the unhoused in our county and community. I am also in support of Sebastopol making space for something along the lines of what is being proposed. I am concerned about the proposed location and a few other aspects of this plan. I am glad that the needs of these folks are being taken seriously especially given the ever increasing challenges of extremely high costs of housing and living, low wages, mental illness, substance abuse and a pandemic.

My office is a Morris Street address and I used to walk to the Peace Park, the Laguna trail near the Sebastopol Community Center and sit for lunch at the Laguna Youth Park. During the pandemic I did walk with some clients to these same locations so that we could be safe during Covid and still meet for therapy. Due to the RV and car parking and living along Morris, I stopped. The young people and even elders I work with didn't feel comfortable because we had to walk in the middle of the street. The sidewalks are filthy and blocked. We were also concerned about catching Covid as we were masked and the folks living on the street were not. Many times when I would sit for lunch or with a client, we would come across people who were highly altered - completely out of touch with reality on substances. We saw people defecating, urinating and naked in the park. I felt torn. On the one hand, I feel horrible that folks are so bad off and suffering, on the other hand, I didn't feel comfortable eating, walking or spending time at the local parks and trails that we happily pay taxes to support.

I would like to see priority for spots given to people who are from Sonoma County. It would be great to assist our local residents. KQED just had a radio program on people who live the van life and in RVs and they were talking about how that lifestyle can be respectful or destructive in the places they travel to and live for a time. I prefer a respectful relationship for sure.

I am very grateful that Sonoma Applied Village Services will offer social services to help better people's lives who will be living in the parking location.

I don't know how exhaustive a search the city council has taken to this matter, I would hope quite a lot. I would also hope that if a chosen location wasn't working well, that it could be moved. While I don't know all of the specifics, I have heard that Austin Texas is doing an incredible job of taking care of the unhoused in their city.

Wishing you well in moving forward with this,
Asking to take everyone in the community into consideration as well,
Thank you,
Renee

Second -

Thank you for your excellent work and communication with us in the community, I really appreciate your ongoing and thorough emails regarding what is being cared for in our community.

It sounds as if RVs and other large vehicles can still park on the streets, but hoping this is time limited - meaning a 3 hour window or such. Does this also mean that RVs, etc. can park overnight on our streets, but must move in the morning. This could be a set up for folks moving their vehicle around town during the day and still parking on the streets at night. Is this type of scenario is being looked at? I'm curious how the city plans on handling vehicles

which are non-operational and cannot be moved. It appears many of the Morris Street vehicles have flat tires or haven't moved in quite some time. I'm figuring there is some type of help to get them moving. Also, wondering when the new parking and support lot at the St. Vincent de Paul's land is going to be open for folks to move in?

Apart from these questions, my main concern is about folks finding a way to bypass all that's trying to be done to clear the streets and get people into a spot where they are accountable in some way for their vehicles, living arrangements, and being a part of the community - meaning at the Ameri-gas location or wherever else is open.

Thanks again,
I appreciate all you're tackling,
Renee