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From: C. Shipley [<mailto:mc.shipley@verizon.net>]
Sent: Saturday, March 03, 2012 12:37 AM
To: 'kreeves@cambridgema.gov'
Cc: 'council@cambridgema.gov'
Subject: Regarding Policy Order O-4 - Homeless Storing Items

Hello Councillor Reeves: Regarding the policy order O-4 on Monday's agenda.

I agree with you that it is probably not a good plan to allow a homeless person or persons store possessions in a public park. However, I have been working with a few homeless women recently, and one of the big problems for these women is where to store their possessions that would be safe. They cannot afford to rent a storage unit at a storage facility. They usually have their belongings in tote bags and therefore have several or maybe even a backpack as well. At the present time, a homeless woman has my permission to store some of her bags in the my garden shed because one of the day shelters she visits tossed some of her possessions a few weeks back and one of the bags contained her address book and other favorite items.

May I suggest that you ask Officer Helberg, if you haven't already, if he might know who that homeless person might be who is storing his or her stuff there in the park by Ellery St. Officer Helberg may know the situation and the person. Also, I know a few residents in that general neighborhood. I could try to ask one of those people if they have noticed who is doing it.

If this were an ideal world, the solution would be to provide some kind of storage lockers for these people in some city building, such as a DPW building or maybe even in the underground garage under the library and high school. Even a wooden box with a lock on it would be such a blessing to these homeless individuals who are hanging around the library.

The options for homeless people are scarce. Quite often the homeless are the people that the State threw out of mental institutions some 20 years ago. The mental institutions may have had their faults, but at least the residents did not have to search for a roof over their head and a bed every night.

One woman I have befriended tries to get into the Harvard students' shelter every night. But the shelter will only allow an individual to come to that shelter 14 nights in a row. Then they have to take a week off from asking for shelter. Then they go back after 7 days and apply to the waiting list again for another session of 14 nights. In the interim, they can call the shelter at 9:30 p.m. to see if one of the floater beds (there are about 4) is available. One has to call right on the dot of 9:30 p.m. to qualify for one of the floater beds. If the temperature is above 32 degrees, no one may have a floater bed. The floater beds are only for so-called emergencies. If she doesn't get in on a particular night, she sleeps on the rear porch of a friend's house, even in the dead of winter. She wears about 4 or 5 layers of clothing. She has a thick comforter and other clothing.

This is the story of but one of the over 400 homeless in Cambridge.

Thanks for reading this.
Carolyn

Carolyn Shipley
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Lopez, Donna

From: C. Shipley [mc.shipley@verizon.net]
Sent: Monday, March 05, 2012 7:49 PM
To: City Council
Cc: Lopez, Donna
Subject: Policy Order O-4, 3/5/12

Please enter into the official record of the City Council. Thank you.

To the Honorable the City Council:

With regard to the above policy order, here are two paragraphs excerpted from the Health and Environment Committee Report #3, June 20, 2005 which relate to the topic of this evening's Policy Order O-4. Food for thought.

Thank you.
Carolyn Shipley

Committee Report

Committee Report #3

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE MEMBERS
Vice Mayor Majorie Decker, Chair
Councillor Henrietta Davis
Councillor Anthony D Galluccio

In City Council June 20, 2005

Arthur Shurtcliff, Tri-City Mental Health, stated that he is "on loan" to CASPAR in preparation of this meeting, he talked to homeless people in Harvard Square about what Harvard Square homeless people need most. He stated that eight to twelve people sleep at the Harvard Square Coop and Tannery entrances. They need rest rooms at night; there are five restrooms that homeless people can use during the day. This is a major problem for the women especially. He reported speaking with a woman whose life possessions were two sleeping bags. Recently one was stolen; her request is a safe place to put her sleeping bags.

Len Thomas, Director of the Multi Service Center, DHS, said that some of the business owners do not understand why the homeless people are sleeping on the streets. He also said that there exists an incredible degree of cooperation among the service agencies in Cambridge. At the Multi Service Center, they see clients who are able to come to their more traditional settings. Some other clients feel better understood at Bread & Jams and On the Rise. He reported on another woman whose major issue is also possessions. She has two large suitcases and two plastic bags. He emphasized the need to meet the challenges to keep vulnerable clients who have been placed in permanent housing in their placements.

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