

**From:** [Zeke](#)  
**To:** [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Agenda Items #899-#903  
**Date:** Monday, October 24, 2022 8:32:37 PM

---

Good evening,

I would like to speak to Agenda Items #899 to #903 for Wednesday October 24th with regards to the homelessness crisis. Having read the proposed ideas for dealing with homelessness, I'm deeply concerned by the fact the proposals do not adequately address getting homeless individuals into current housing and that Agenda Item #902, whose refers to budgeting, has nothing in it whatsoever at the time of this writing.

Per reports from the city itself, there are available housing units and funding. A major issue across the country with regards to homelessness is zoning and permits in that many housed residents openly state they do not want multi-family housing units built in their neighborhoods or districts and, with this, the process to establish the where and what of construction is often unnecessarily delayed by complicated bureaucratic processes fueled, not in the least, by bigotry - including racial discrimination. If Mayor Wheeler and the city of Portland intend to actually help homeless people, banning camping in the city just to establish designated campgrounds that will not be able to hold the number of homeless people in the city - but will allow people to fall through the cracks - will not do, nor will establishing more safe rest villages which are often not ADA-compliant and suffer from racial discrimination and other issues.

Removing homeless people from the city sidewalks into designated camps does not make them not homeless. The mayor and the city must establish housing as a top priority in both construction and in placing homeless individuals into already available units. Reports from earlier this year indicate there are over 10,000 units available in the Portland Metro area at any time. Housing First Utah established the precedent over a decade ago: Housing First, and then services. There is no reason Portland, Multnomah County, the state of Oregon, and the entirety of the rest of the United States cannot follow in their footsteps. Furthermore, introducing "non-standard" work to homeless people means nothing if they cannot afford housing. Rent prices must be capped. Charge landlords a tax for vacant units that fund homeless programs to get homeless people into homes. Homeless people are a part of our community, not just a potential labor pool to be exploited by an under-detailed plan while being left to languish on the streets while politicians, bigotry, and bureaucracy drag out the process of establishing new housing.

Research indicates the majority of homeless people benefit most from housing, not having the city waste taxpayers' dollars in police sweeps and imprisonments or placing them in tiny homes. Shelters fill up and are often dangerous and discriminatory to the very people they claim to be in service of which leads people to turn them down, if they are even offered a bed in the first place.

If Mayor Wheeler and the City of Portland ever hope to solve the homelessness crisis, they must not treat the homeless crisis as an inanimate, inhuman thing to be shoved aside, hidden, criminalized, or punished. These people are part of our community and deserve the same basic human decency and respect as anyone else, not the least because most of us are an accident, a job loss, or a medical emergency away from being homeless ourselves.

Please lead with honest empathy and compassion.

Thank you for your time,  
Z. Pratchett