

From: [Scott Kerman](#)
To: [Council Clerk – Testimony](#)
Subject: Written Testimony re: Resolution 929
Date: Thursday, November 3, 2022 5:02:56 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

Mayor Wheeler and City Commissioners:

At the first hearing regarding this and the companion resolutions, I made two requests. (1) That if the unsanctioned camping ban is enacted, that nonpunitive responses be devised so that shelter resistant individuals are not criminally penalized due to their trauma and mental health crisis. (2) That the shelter plan includes smaller, higher barrier discrete spaces for persons in recovery. These individuals require sober, peer supported environments to be successful. And, as we all know, low barrier spaces frighten many people seeking shelter.

I continue to make these requests.

In addition, I'd like to respond to the inspiring testimony of Randy Humphreys, who testified alongside Street Roots Executive Director Kaia Sand. Mr. Humphreys stated that he knows many unhoused individuals who prefer to be outside. I'd like to support this assessment so far as some of the chronically homeless individuals we serve at Blanchet House. Some individuals have been homeless for so long that it's what they know. It's how they feel secure and comfortable.

I'm often reminded of the speech in the movie Shawshank Redemption where Red (Morgan Freeman) talks about what it means to be "institutionalized" due to many years of incarceration. I believe the same thing happens to people who have been homeless for many, many years. Can these individuals be successfully housed? I'd like to be optimistic. But I'd stress that they will require a great deal of support, including much preparation prior to housing.

This category also includes people with profound PTSD and trauma, especially veterans. People Blanchet House serves who are very leery if not traumatized by indoor spaces.

I agree with Commissioner Hardesty that when we hear that "people want to be homeless," we're likely talking about a small percentage of people who want to live off the grid, etc. For the people I'm writing about in this written testimony, I don't think it's so much a "choice."

Thank you for considering. Thank you, again, Mayor Wheeler and Commissioner Ryan, for coming to Blanchet House earlier this week for the listening session.

Blanchet House is here to assist as we can. We look forward to being part of solutions.

Scott



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