



City Council Meeting

Public Comments

July 7, 2024



June 25, 2024

Honorable City Council
City of Escondido

Dear City Councilmembers,

I'm writing today to share our perspective as the City of Escondido contemplates an ordinance to regulate encampments on public property. Interfaith generally does not support these kind of ordinances, including similar ones recently passed in San Diego and Poway, as they are not designed to address the root causes of homelessness. Though, Interfaith supports a partnership between the City and service providers to reduce and eliminate encampments by providing practical and humane pathways out of otherwise inhumane conditions that degrade the quality of life and safety for all of Escondido.

As this ordinance is discussed, we urge the City to consider leveraging State of California resources to fund collaboration with local service providers to address public encampments in parallel with or independent from contemplated policy changes. Grant funding from the State of California Encampment Resolution Fund could allow for trauma-informed engagements and outreach efforts that offer individuals access to short-term housing opportunities and supportive services when abating public encampments.

Interfaith recently worked with the City of Oceanside to successfully secure an \$11.4 million State of California Encampment Resolution Fund grant to support this exact type of work in that community. Interfaith has also supported the City of Carlsbad in securing and operating a similar grant, and we are currently working with the City of Encinitas to reach the same goal. Regionally, more than \$43 million in State of California Encampment Resolutions Fund grants have been provided to local municipalities in San Diego County. We stand ready to leverage our experience with these grants to secure funding for Escondido as well.

We also welcome continued opportunities to work with the City of Escondido to leverage existing Interfaith programs providing outreach, shelter, addiction treatment, behavioral health, and housing resources to reduce homelessness in Escondido. Interfaith pledges all our available outreach, shelter, addiction treatment, behavioral health, and housing resources to support the City of Escondido in reducing public encampments and thoughtfully addressing homelessness in Escondido.

Should the City be interested in discussing State of California funding opportunities and partnership opportunities with service providers further, please do not hesitate to reach me at ganglea@interfaithservices.org.

Sincerely,

Greg Anglea

Chief Executive Officer

Cohn Family Executive Director Chair

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email joannetenney@hotmail.com

Council Meeting Date 06/26/2024

Item # 11

Subject Ban on Homeless Encampments

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Joanne Tenney

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

I oppose a ban on homeless encampments without providing alternative options such as a Safe Sleeping Site Program similar to San Diego and a Safe Parking Program similar to Encinitas or Vista, and without increasing the number of available emergency beds to meet the needs of our community.

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email tedkevinstevenson@gmail.com

Council Meeting Date 06/26/2024

Item # 11

Subject Homelessness

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Kevin Stevenson

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

Don't do this. Los Angeles, San Diego, Portland and other cities have outlawed being homeless in their cities, and those laws haven't done ANYTHING to curb homelessness. Under these laws, Dane White would have been a criminal 10 years ago.

Dane White is nothing more than a sellout and a shill for local business interests.

Vote NO on this, even though I already know you'll vote yes because "homeless people are scary and icky". You people disgust me!

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email barberhue59@gmail.com

Council Meeting Date 6/26/2024

Item # 11

Subject encampment ordinances

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Katherine Barber Fromm

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

I cannot waste my time trying to persuade irreligious, amoral members of the city council that they seem not to understand or even reflect on a problem that is plaguing this society. Supposed men of God seem not to get it. (The Black woman up there (heaven) is not pleased. Whoever the God is that metes out forgiveness may do so. I won't.

Katherine Barber Fromm, native Escondido, Escondido Union High School, 1959, Palomar College, UCLA

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email adrianasvasquez2001@gmail.com

Council Meeting Date 06/26/2024

Item # 11

Subject Regulation of Encampments

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Adriana Vasquez

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

It is disheartening to hear that we are continuing to criminalize homelessness in Escondido. Where else do they go? We do not have affordable housing, we have no rent control, no low-income housing units, no homeless shelters, and no support for any services for low income or homeless folks. The waitlists are endless. An ordinance as such will only make it more difficult for our homeless community to find their way out of homelessness. This will not solve the problem; This will only make it easier for people to ignore it. Mayor Dane White, you continue to weaponize your experience to push anti homeless policies and it is very disappointing that you do not stand in solidarity with people, families, & children, who are experiencing a difficult and almost endless time in their lives.

Remember, Escondido city council members only prioritize their wallets, not their community. So, thank you for increasing your salaries while you spit in our faces.

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email julie.crandall@disabilityrightsca.org

Council Meeting Date 6/26/2024

Item # 11

Subject Re: City of Escondido Council Meeting, June 26, 2024, Agenda Item 11, Consideration and Introduction of Ordinance Regulating Enc

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Julie Crandall

Are you an Escondido Resident? No

Comments

*Footnotes did not transfer. Letter has been mailed to the City Clerk and hard copies will be provided at the City Council Meeting

Re: City of Escondido Council Meeting, June 26, 2024, Agenda Item 11, Consideration and Introduction of Ordinance Regulating Encampments on Public Property

Dear Mayor White, Deputy Mayor Garcia, and Council Members:

We write to urge you to oppose the adoption of the City of Escondido's proposed Ordinance No. 2024-06 and the enactment of proposed Municipal Code Sections 17-8.1 through 17-8.7.

Disability Rights California (DRC) is the largest disability organization in California and the nation. DRC holds the unique position under federal and state law as the California agency designated to provide investigation, education, litigation, and advocacy work to redress individual and systemic disability discrimination. DRC advocates to make sure that unhoused people with disabilities can live in accessible, affordable housing in the community with the services they need to thrive.

We seek to engage with the City regarding the reasons the proposed Ordinance discriminates against unhoused persons with disabilities and to provide solutions to the City's homelessness crisis.

I. DRC's Recommendations to Improve Escondido Homelessness Policies:

1. Ensure that empirical data and research used to support policy is not outdated or inconclusive.
2. Collaborate and listen to service providers who are on the ground.
3. Conduct outreach to individuals who are currently unhoused in Escondido.
4. Actively engage with service providers and outreach workers who provide trauma informed care through Escondido's social services.
5. Financially support organizations dedicated to eliminating homelessness in Escondido.
6. Ensure the City's policies and procedures encourage and do not constrain the development of high quality, accessible, affordable housing.

7. Acknowledge how municipal policies contribute to the homelessness crisis and work to fix policies and ordinances.

II. Disability Rights California (DRC) is in Strong Opposition to Escondido's Homelessness Plans.

We oppose Ordinance No. 2024-06, which would criminalize the act of sheltering in most, if not all, public places, without any other meaningful choice.

The City of Escondido erroneously targets their citizens without a home as the perpetrators of Escondido's health and safety concerns. In 2024, Escondido estimates 401 of its citizens do not have housing, a mere 0.27% of Escondido's estimated population of 148,122. No data is provided by the City to back its claim that the majority of crime, environmental concerns, or other various issues are caused by 0.27% of Escondido's citizens.

Multiple studies have shown that homelessness criminalization laws, such as Ordinance No. 2024-06, are costly, but fail to achieve desired goals. The City of Escondido should direct its attention to data-driven, researched-backed methods to improve the life of the community they serve. We provide an overview and in-depth discussion of the issues and our recommended solutions below.

III. Overview of Problems with Escondido's Homelessness Policies, and Recommended Solutions

The City's proposed homelessness policies do not promote public safety because:

1. Unhoused individuals of marginalized groups, including those with disabilities are disproportionately affected.
2. Disabled people's health and welfare are put in jeopardy.
3. Empirical data and evidence-based research is not used resulting in ineffective public safety policies.
4. No additional resources or housing is provided for unhoused individuals.
5. Overcriminalization and segregation of people with disabilities results.
6. Overcriminalization of unhoused status is costly and economically inefficient for the City.

IV. The City must acknowledge its contribution to the homelessness crisis to resolve it.

The proposed Ordinance not only prohibits individuals from sheltering in most public places, "regardless of the availability of shelter," but also bans all unauthorized encampments on public property unless "specifically authorized by the City Manager." Furthermore, the City Manager and designated officials have discretion to determine that a park or open space has a substantial public health and safety risk, such that "[a]t all times, regardless of the availability of shelter space or beds" encampments are unlawful. This proposed Ordinance gives the City Manager and other designated officials, including law enforcement, unrestricted discretion to completely prohibit encampments in Escondido.

This is even more egregious with the knowledge that the City has declined to provide any funding to the

only homeless shelter in the City, instead targeting the shelter for permit violations. Importantly, because of these factors Escondido no longer has a dedicated shelter for Emergency Shelter beds. Escondido's only shelter providing Emergency Shelter beds is no longer available. There is a Recuperative Care Center, with a total of 106 beds, for individuals eligible for post-hospitalization care, but this is not permitted to shelter unhoused individuals. With the combination of permitting violations and a refusal of funding the homeless shelters, the City has caused a complete lack of availability of emergency shelter beds. If the Ordinance is passed, the City has laid the groundwork for complete discretion to criminalize persons sheltering in public spaces. This criminality will be forced upon unhoused individuals, because of the nonexistence of available emergency shelter, directly contrary to existing law.

V. The City's Homelessness Policies must follow empirical evidence for treatment facilitation.

Of note, "[t]he City of Escondido advocates for programs that reduce the prevalence of drug addiction in our community and provide mental health support to achieve independence." If the City wants individuals with disabilities (including those with mental health and substance use disorders) to receive treatment, studies have shown that eliminating shelter barriers and providing housing caused significantly higher "[u]tilization of substance abuse treatment" and individuals "were able to obtain and maintain independent housing without compromising psychiatric or substance abuse symptoms" The utilization of services "improve[] over time as staff became more competent in delivery of the [Housing First] model."

VI. The City's Homelessness Policies must prevent targeting people of color, immigrants, and those with disabilities.

The City is "committed to protecting the life, health, and safety of all people in the City." We agree with this commitment. Our comments reflect shared values with the City for an inclusive community to ensure safety, equity, and choice for all citizens.

We uplift that homelessness intersects with many marginalized communities in American society. Empirical evidence demonstrates a much higher number of unsheltered individuals identify as people of color, immigrants, those with disabilities, and those who speak English as a second population. This is because of the systemic barriers to accessing employment, housing, and healthcare for these marginalized groups. The 2024 United Nations report chronicles that "[a] law enforcement approach to addressing the consequences of homelessness and poverty is [] counterproductive, with the impacts of enforcement perpetuating cycles of poverty, social exclusion and discrimination, which can impede access to economic and social rights."

This inequity resides in the County of San Diego, as well as Escondido's own microcosm. For example, only 2.2% of the City's citizens are Black, while 7% of its unsheltered citizens are Black. Similarly, Indigenous individuals make up 1.6% of the City's citizens, but represent 7% of the City's unsheltered citizens. Individuals who are disabled are at much higher risk to become unhoused because of prejudice in hiring, healthcare, and applying for housing. Once unhoused, individuals are more likely to have poor health and acquire subsequent disabilities. The City's policy and ordinances current have a

disproportionate effect on unhoused individuals with disabilities, including those with stigmatized mental health disabilities.

VII. The City's Policies must discontinue rhetoric that marginalized populations are "criminals." The City's "Public Safety First" policy states "a pervasive and consistent level of criminal activity exists within the unhoused population." The policy also states crimes are "largely perpetuated by those with untreated Substance Abuse Disorder." No citations are given to these claims. Notably absent in the City's policy statement is the fact that unhoused citizens are often victims of crimes.

The City's public safety policies should include all citizens, and not criminalize vulnerable populations that may be victims of crime. Research in multiple disciplines proves that police over-identify and target unhoused individuals because they are easily located and often have no power or resources. When human acts of survival such as walking, sitting, sleeping, or eating are made illegal, unhoused people are the targets. We seek to ensure safety for all citizens of Escondido, whether housed or not. DRC welcomes any opportunity to collaborate with the City to effectuate equitable laws and policies.

VIII. Conclusion

We ask that City Council vote "no" on the ordinance, as currently written. As an alternative, we recommend the City schedule a meeting with unhoused individuals and service providers impacted by this policy and discuss potential solutions for all parties involved. We make this request because the proposed ordinance as currently written directly targets unhoused disabled individuals. The proposed ordinance does not come from a factual or evidentiary basis, but the misplaced prejudice of those who seek to remove unhoused residents of Escondido from public spaces by any means necessary.

We urge the City of Escondido to rise above the historical targeting of individual human beings for existing. As shown through research, the ordinance above will be costly, ineffective, and most importantly, discriminatory towards Escondido citizens.

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email lisa.dahl@att.net

Council Meeting Date July 19, 2023

Item # 11

Subject Making the homeless disappear

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Lisa Dahl

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

I found the Staff Report on Item #11 to be inflammatory and alarmist.

My question is, with the number of shelter beds in Escondido inadequate to house our homeless population, where are you exiling them to? That is not addressed in the Staff Notes. Plans need to go beyond merely "moving them" to explicit statements regarding WHERE you will be moving them.

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email christinenava858@gmail.com

Council Meeting Date June 25, 2024

Item # #11

Subject Ordinance # 2024-06

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Chris Nava

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

Mayor and City Council,

As a member of the Interfaith's Homeless Task Force comprised of many concerned, educated, and experienced community members, I strongly object to the proposed new Ordinance No.2024-06. The proposal dismisses important studies on homelessness and encampments. I hardly think that the work of the city's task force comprised of two handpicked council members with a personal point of view is a responsible way to legislate. It is not good governance.

Studies reveal that banning encampments does not end homelessness but instead create additional barriers and challenges for unsheltered people to overcome on their path to self-sufficiency.

I urge you to work with Interfaith. They are committed to working with the city and other service providers to create a safer and more prosperous city for ALL. Let their focus on "reducing and eliminating encampments through humane and practical pathways, transforming otherwise inhumane condition, and enhancing the quality of life for our entire community" be a shared focus . The organization is reaching out to the city to work in partnership to secure grants and funding, and pledging all of their available programs and resources to support all efforts to address the problem.

Ordinance No 1014-06 is inhumane and does not solve the problem.

Sincerely,
Chris Nava

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email gtsmrrc@aol.com

Council Meeting Date Wednesday, June 26, 2024

Item # Agenda Item #11

Subject Encampment Ordinance

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Georgine Tomasi

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

I am perplexed! What happened to the "2 members" task force the Mayor constituted to resolve the homelessness issue in Escondido? Is this ordinance the result and recommendation of members, Garcia and White? The only thing this ordinance will accomplish is to justify the seizure of homeless people's property and their arrest by police.

Again the ordinance focuses mainly on the drug problems, you believe, that homelessness and encampments bring. Your focus is very narrow and very, very limited. There are a myriad of reasons that cause individuals to be homeless,. Drugs are "only" one of them. Loss of a job; no longer able to pay rent or a mortgage; medical debt; mental issues, etc.

With all the Council could be doing to help the homeless in Escondido, you decide to criminalize this unfortunate condition for hundreds of people who are out of choices at this point in their lives. If that is what you believe you can do to resolve homelessness in this City, then shame on YOU!

One thing you can do before voting on this incredibly shortsighted ordinance is to put together a task force with more than 2 people. Select individuals who deal with the homeless population daily and will be able to offer constructive solutions versus making homelessness a crime.

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email kwalker619@yahoo.com

Council Meeting Date 6/26/24

Item # 11

Subject Homeless encampment ban

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Kymberly Moon-Walker

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

Good evening council members And honorable mayor. I come to you online with my comments today as somebody who works the front lines of our unhoused men and women daily on the streets of Escondido. Passing in encampment ban before grants Pass legal situation is ratified seems premature. These men and women currently have no services able to be received from north counties, largest homeless shelter, Where are they supposed to go? Interfaith brings the homeless to Escondido and then offers no services that are of any value to them, and then they just stay on the streets of Escondido, exacerbating the issue further. I have come before the council many times to try and show you that there are people in our beloved Escondido community, Who need help today. These men and women are peoples children, mothers sisters, husband, wives, and brothers and every time I come to a city council meeting, I feel as though we are turning our backs as a Society on the most vulnerable population that is out there. I understand the council decision to not move forward with the homeless shelter with assistance from San Diego county, but something needs to be done now! If we continue to just kick this ball down the road and wait for some great solution to manifest we are going to have a larger homeless population than we do currently. I have been a street clinician since 2017 and worked in three different states doing this exact job, homelessness in Escondido and California has become a transactional encounter. Continuing to throw money at it with no real solution is a waste of taxpayer dollars and time and effort by the homeless outreach workers and clinicians to continue to try. So I come to you as an Escondido citizen as well as a homeless outreach clinician to ask where would you like me to tell them to go? Give me a parking lot an empty lot somewhere where we can tell these men and women they can go and sleep at night without being woken up by police and asked to move. The city of Escondido gave Interfaith a ridiculous amount of money during Covid, and their response has been to shut down their homeless shelter temporarily, and further, hinder the homeless men and women's ability to get back on their feet. So are we really helping anyone or are we just throwing money at it hoping something will change? I know this encampment ban will pass, however tell the street clinicians and homeless outreach workers where to send them and we will get them there... Mayor Todd Gloria's tent city isn't open to Escondido residents, so there is literally nowhere for them To go.... We should be protecting the vulnerable and mentally ill and prosecuting those as needed. I ask that The city council consider what if that was you? What if you needed somebody to give you a little extra help or to hold your hand through something, you would hope that somebody would have

empathy and understanding and I asked the city council to have that same consideration for House neighbors. Thank you

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email dw8493@yahoo.com

Council Meeting Date 6/26/24

Item # 11

Subject Encampment ban

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name David Jones

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

Let's get rid of I faith community services and that would solve half of our homeless populations. I live in the apartment complex next to Interfaith community services and cannot wait to get out of my lease due to the massive amount of drug use homeless people and trash all around the area. Interface will pick up the trash in front of their own business however, they won't do anything extra. Get rid of Interfaith community services in Escondido and a lot of our homeless population will decrease. I go out and talk to these men and women on the streets to see what kind of services they are getting from Interfaith and it appears they just get a brown bag lunch, Does that help get out of homelessness? According to Escondido's budget During Covid Interfaith received \$400,000 from the city of Escondido, Where did it go and what did they do with it? In opposition of the encampment ban only because there are no services offered for them currently. Why doesn't the CEO of Interfaith Publish his yearly salary? For interfaith Homelessness is a business and they make money from it and should be ashamed of themselves, Anyone who has lived near them to see that they are not helping at all

Board or Commission for Public Comment City Council

Email lsackfield@gmail.com

Council Meeting Date 06262024

Item # 11

Subject Encampment ban

Position In Opposition

First and Last Name Leila Sackfield

Are you an Escondido Resident? Yes

Comments

To; The Honorable City Council of Escondido

From: Leila Sackfield

I am writing to you today as you contemplate the approval of the encampment ordinance. While I too share a frustration regarding the population of the unhoused who engage in activities that do harm to our city, I question whether now is the time for the ban you are considering.

I would much rather see the city continue to leverage the support of organizations such as Interfaith Community Services as well as the community at large to work on solving this problem. We know that Interfaith in particular, has worked with other municipalities in North County to leverage state grant funding that addresses this very issue.

Doing so may provide all of us further information to assist in determining the most appropriate next steps. This problem is real, and I truly understand the pressure that is placed upon you from the public to "do something". I also firmly believe that we can not police our way out of this complex problem. Don't just do something to say you are doing something but instead take the time needed to do the right something.

Thank you for your consideration

Leila Sackfield