

**Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd  
Low Income Housing Institute  
Coho Real Estate**

February 19, 2016

Dear Mayor Murray and Seattle City Council:

Coho Real Estate, the owner of 1010 S. Dearborn Street, entered into an agreement with the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd to allow the church to sponsor a temporary tent encampment with Nickelsville so that homeless men, women and children would have a safe place to live. This encampment, begun in September 2014, functioned under a self-management model with staff oversight provided by Nickelsville. Support was also provided by social workers from the Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) which has successfully moved many families and individuals into stable housing. Critical to the successful operation of the encampment was an agreement that all campers had to sign and adhere to, a strict code of conduct stating that drugs, alcohol and weapons would not be allowed at the camp.

For the safety of all involved, the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Coho Real Estate and LIHI are in agreement that a safe, healthy, drug and alcohol free encampment can no longer be operated at 1010 S. Dearborn. The campers had voted to disassociate themselves with Nickelsville and to operate independently on their own. Pastor Steve Olsen met with the campers last week and they refused to reconsider. On February 13, Good Shepherd gave the campers a 7-days notice to vacate the site by February 20 at 12:01 A.M. as the church will no longer serve as the religious sponsor of the encampment as required in the temporary permit issued by the City. Coho Real Estate wants their property cleared and restored to its former condition.

We respectfully ask the City's help so that the request from the property owner of 1010 S. Dearborn to vacate his land be respected. Since January 28, 2016, the condition of the camp has deteriorated dramatically. The previous prohibition against drugs, drug selling and intoxication is now routinely flouted. The majority of former residents have responded by leaving. Those remaining have voted to reject the arrangements made with the property owner and Good Shepherd.

Camp leaders now include individuals known to have engaged in petty theft and drug running, and individuals whose periods of substance recovery appear to have lapsed. New residents and visitors include those previously barred, and include individuals known to prey on vulnerable people. Those remaining have given up trying to keep the place secure from barred individuals, or to keep out people who prey on residents of the jungle. Instead entry is available to almost anyone, in any condition, with any background.

Entry to the camp has become uncontrolled. Instead of requiring entry only at a main gate with security workers, there are now numerous entryways around the encampment, holes in the fences, and people entering at all times. There is nothing preventing the area's drug runners and thieves from coming in and out throughout the night. The drugs of choice include meth-amphetamine and heroin, and used needles are now routinely found scattered throughout the site. Intoxicated individuals jaywalk across Dearborn and pose a safety hazard to themselves and to oncoming traffic.

Past rules prevented weapons, or knives over 3.5 inches. Due to lack of security many people now have turned to clubs and machetes for safety, since the community no longer can offer protection. We seen evidence that drinking and smoking in tents is tolerated and covered up.

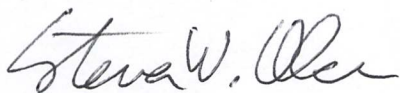
Living conditions are quickly worsening. Trash is not removed promptly. Tarp coverings are not maintained, in either individual or community tents. The kitchen is a health hazard, with food regularly exposed. Without a regular system of rat abatement for almost a month, the rat population has exploded. Trash, both organic and inorganic, is piling up in many places. Areas abutting the site have ruined upholstery and soiled clothes in greatly increasing numbers. The frequency of car break-ins is rising, evidenced by the amount of broken windshield glass on 10th Avenue South.

For the last 3 weeks, accurate records, intake forms and documents, required by LIHI and the owner for the purposes of both our mutual contract and for insurance, have not been delivered.

Since our ability to operate a safe, drug and alcohol free, healthy community at 1010 South Dearborn is now not possible, we ask the City to take the necessary steps to restore the property to the owner. At that time we will be able to finish the clean up and restoration of the property.

Without the cooperation of property owners who can rely on the City, the effort to provide shelter in Seattle commensurate with the need will be reduced. We have been dedicated to maintaining the site as a safe place for temporary shelter for many of our city's neediest residents. We make this request to clear the property with heavy hearts.

Sincerely,



Lutheran Church of  
of the Good Shepherd



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Low Income Housing  
Institute