

From: Fogt, Josh
Sent time: 10/13/2015 05:50:40
To: David Preston
Cc: O'Brien, Mike
Subject: RE: Meeting requested (re: Effective Grievance Process for Homeless Campers)

Hi David – I work for Mike and he has asked me to respond.

We understand your concerns over the proposed encampment operators, Nickelsville and SHARE/WHEEL. We are confident that these new sanctioned encampments will be a different model to the relationship with these organizations. Historically, the City of Seattle has only had jurisdiction to impose our standards for the services that we contracted with them to provide, which were few. Going forward, the City will have a much stronger role in how those organizations operate an encampment using one of these new permits on City land. We expect transparency and accountability, as we would with any other agency we contract with in this manner, and we will hold Nickelsville and SHARE/WHEEL to these standards.

I have seen the grievance policy you included in your email and hear your concerns, though that is below the level of detail that we typically legislate for. That said, as constituents in our city, these campers will have the same grievance process as you or I do when we are unhappy with a city service—we can go to our elected leaders with our concerns and request help in finding a solution. **In fact, Mike and I met with some of the campers from each side of the internal strife at Nickelsville last year. We came away thinking it was a complicated situation and one that needed to be addressed through their own democratic process, messy as it was. I am aware allegations were made and recall the news articles you shared, but after meeting with both sides at the time I cannot say how we at the City could have or should have been involved.**

I am happy to meet with you to discuss these issues at further length, though I should be clear that we are planning to proceed with siting two new encampments in the coming month. In sanctioning and permitting encampments for the first time on City land, we are taking a new approach to helping meet the crisis that too many people on our streets are facing right now. It will be an iterative process and one we can continue to make improvements on as we learn how it is going. Many in City Council and the Mayor's administration, including many HSD, will be watching closely.

Thank you again for taking time to reach out to our office.

Regards,
Josh

Josh Fogt

Legislative Aide to Councilmember Mike O'Brien
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From: David Preston
Sent: Monday, October 05, 2015 11:52 AM
To: O'Brien, Mike
Cc: Taylor-Judd, Michael; Plumacher, Sola; Bronstein, Elliott
Subject: Meeting requested (re: Effective Grievance Process for Homeless Campers)
Importance: High

Dear Councilmember O'Brien:

I'm writing this to request a meeting with you regarding the City's proposed homeless tent encampments in Ballard and Interbay. Specifically, I want to speak with you about additional steps the City needs to take in order to safeguard the rights of the people at these encampments. The meeting needs to happen before the Human Services Department permits or sights any new tent cities.

Background:

Since 2014, there has been a homeless camp at 1010 South Dearborn Street in Seattle. Early this year the operators of that camp (Scott Morrow and Sharon Lee of SHARE and LIHI, respectively)* threatened to evict the campers after they voted Mr. Morrow out of his position at the camp. Nickelsville is supposed to be self-managed, and although neither Morrow nor Lee live there, they run the camp as they choose, claiming that they have a right to do so since they pay all the camp's bills—a claim which is not actually true since the City funds some of Nickelsville's operations.

Within a day or two after the threat to evict was made, the camp voted to reinstate Morrow as boss. Several of the rebellious campers were then (I am told) removed.

See these articles for background:

<http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/nickelsville-boots-leader-homeless-site-now-teetering/>
<http://www.seattleweekly.com/news/956803-129/scott-morrow-reinstated-at-nickelsville-as>

I have tried to contact Morrow and Lee to ask them for an accounting of just what camp bills they were paying and what the campers' issues with Morrow were, but they do not respond. Meanwhile, the City of Seattle has been funding the camp at Dearborn and proposes to fund future camps at even higher levels. However, because taxpayer money is involved, campers are entitled to legal protection both at the city and federal levels, and this protection includes the right to appeal or grieve certain actions made by the camp operator. Since Nickelsville campers do not effectively have the right to appeal, I believe that Morrow and Lee's actions were in violation of the law.

Michael Taylor-Judd and **Sola Plumacher** at the Human Services Department are responsible for overseeing organized homeless encampments within Seattle. I have asked for a meeting with them to discuss a remedy for the Nickelsville problem, but they declined. (Note: Ms. Plumacher did offer to meet with me, but only AFTER the camps are permitted and in place, which is not acceptable for obvious reasons.) Mr. Taylor-Judd assures me that the City will require the camp operator to have some kind of grievance process in place (see attached the excerpt from the City's document "Encampment Guidelines Page 9") and he considers that satisfactory. In fact, the camp operator (SHARE) does have a grievance process in place (see attached SHARE-WHEEL proposal Page 9), but this process is vague, and worse, it contains no provision for resolving grievances against the operator itself. It's important to understand that this is the same grievance policy SHARE already had in place at Nickelsville Dearborn, and it did not stop Mr. Morrow from bullying the camp into returning him to power. The reason for this is because Morrow, as boss of SHARE/Nickelsville, has the last word on any appeal/grievance decision.

SHARE is a mysterious, top-down organization whose workings are not subject to public scrutiny. Given that the organization has absolute sway over the homeless and destitute individuals in its care, the City needs to take a firmer stance in dealing with SHARE than it formerly has. At a minimum, the City needs to establish an appeals process that is **independent or SHARE's control**. Otherwise homeless campers' rights will continue to be violated, as they were at Nickelsville Dearborn.

I've been trying to move this issue forward through channels, but to date I have not been able to engage anyone in City government on it, and you are my last hope. If I cannot get a fair hearing of my issues in a meeting with you, I will take this matter before the Council in public hearings, and in any other public meetings at which Councilmembers appear. When I do that, I will be sure to note that I invited you to meet with me and you refused.

Please get back to me within one week. Thank you.

David Preston

*SHARE stands for Seattle Housing and Resource Effort, a city-funded 501c3 non-profit managed by Scott Morrow. LIHI stands for Low Income Housing Institute. LIHI was co-founded by Mr. Morrow. (I believe the current CEO, Sharon Lee, was hired by Morrow before he left the organization.) Nickelsville is the name of a series of roving tent encampments in and around Seattle. It is also the name of a non-profit run by Scott Morrow. The proposed new tent encampments in Seattle will be run by Morrow and his non-profits, in conjunction with LIHI. For the purpose of this matter, SHARE, Nickelsville, and Morrow can all be used interchangeably