

City of Madison Mayor
Alder Marsha Rummel
City-County Homeless Issues Committee
City of Madison Parks Division
City Assessor

January 3, 2021

Dear City Leaders:

We are the homeowners at the East Wilson Street and Ingersoll St. cul-de-sac directly across from the McPike Park homeless encampment. Throughout 2020, we have watched the settlement and expansion of the encampment. From the inception, our approach has been to be compassionate and understanding because America in 2020 is not merciful to all.

In the periodic check-ins we have had between ourselves, we found a common thread: our amazement that the City has never communicated with us directly at any step of the way. We have been without knowledge that the first camper would be permitted, that additional tents would be erected to number several dozen, that restrooms would close and portable facilities be set up, that social service agencies would provide food and materials, that police and medical incidents occurred and occur, and that fires would be accepted against Parks standards. The compassion we share for the homeless people at McPike Park does not eclipse our concern about the lack of communication from the City.

Now that fires are permitted we are compelled to speak up. The interiors of our homes are suffused with the smell of smoke. Aside from the stacks of wood being provided to campers we have witnessed blankets and furniture being burned. A recent tent fire has crossed the line. Like everyone else in the world right now we find ourselves asking, "What exactly are we breathing?"

Thus, our request to you is multi-level:

- First, we need consistent updates about what decisions City leaders are making regarding the encampment. This can be in any form of correspondence but we are demanding steady and open communication from You to Us.
- Second, it is time to make an exit plan. We are not seeking the immediate eviction of campers but we do want to know that the City has a date for when the park will be normalized and how that will occur. Explain it to us.
- Finally, fires cannot be permitted. We have serious concerns about how being in violation of this Parks policy may affect us.

Lastly, we have included the Office of the Assessor on this message because we wonder if City leaders have considered doing nothing regarding our annual assessments affecting the high property tax we pay to live near McPike Park. We would not be surprised. We are including an image of our properties in the current setting for reference.

We appreciate the tolerance and kindness that has been shown to the campers at the park. It is now time to find and enact solutions to return the park to its true purpose and to provide better options for the campers.

Thank You,

Oliver Eng
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Jack Kear
1045 E. Wilson St.

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1047 E. Wilson St.

