

From: [Satpal Sidhu](#)
To: [Council](#), [Jed Holmes](#), [Seth Fleetwood](#), [Tyler Schroeder](#), [Entire Bellingham City Council](#)
CC: [Tyler Schroeder](#), [Jed Holmes](#)
Date: Jan 27, 2021 at 12:47 PM
Subject: Homelessness - Article in NW Citizen on the City of Bellingham Council Meeting
Attachment(s): 2

Hello All

I read the article this morning and below is my reply.

<https://nwcitizen.com/entry/city-hall-clutches-its-pearls>

My Reply to this article:

Satpal Sidhu

Jan 27, 2021

Dear John and your readers,

While I appreciate your coverage of the City Council meeting and showcasing how these young citizens knew the conditions outside the city hall, implying the Council members did not. That is not a fact. This homelessness is not a making of policies or workings of the local city (including small cities) or the county. This has been the result of macro-economic policies at the highest levels of our government. It is the result of half a century of mis-placed priorities by both Democrats and Republicans. So, when it comes to the instant solution demanded by citizens (especially younger ones, who are starting their life journey in America) the only people in front of them are local elected officials to vent. This will take time, there are no instant solutions to homelessness and behavioral health remediations services. I am not trying to make an excuse but showcasing the reality of the situation. This is a regional, state, and national issue not a Bellingham's issue to solve.

As far as the situation outside the City hall, it has been a more of "protest" than an attempt to find a "solution". Many of the advocates (collective) are thinking of

this as “us vs them” rather than working together to find reasonable solution. These solutions may require small but effective steps at a time. The Mayor and I have been working collaboratively with the “advocates group”, who want all or nothing. Even the ALL they want has no clarity. I have heard arguments like, if you give someone a motel voucher, then that person must be guaranteed a tiny house when the person leaves the motel, or something like City / County shall have 1100 tiny homes placed before “we leave” camp 210. This ownership of “we leave” the camp 210 is more of a threat than an amicable dialogue. It smacks of using the plight of these needy citizens as a negotiation tool. Their first priority is not to get them to a warm place!

We all know that homelessness cannot be solved in 60-90 days and demands like “everyone should get a tiny home” under 60 days are impractical. After 3 months of dialogue with the collective, they have not been able to show their ability to manage a camp of 25 tiny homes. We as government went through the same proceeding with HomesNow two years ago. Today they have learned and earned the credibility of an organizational commitment and dedication to their mission. Talk is cheap!

The County and City Council members, Mayor and I are always open to dialogue and finding reasonable solutions rather than “demands of protesters”. They have hurt the very cause and the very people, who they are trying to advocate for, by inviting outside extremists to bring violence and vandalism to our community.

Satpal Sidhu

Whatcom County Executive

Thanks!

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