

King County Council Comment 11/3/14  
The Rev. Bill Kirlin-Hackett  
Director, Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness

The need for interim survival mechanisms such as tent cities has substantially increased. Most places the current 6 organized encampments stay are within King County cities, many of which have written their own ordinances. The more similar these ordinances are, the better. However as I said October 13 before you, local jurisdictions do what today I encourage you to avoid; that is, micromanage with legislation. One thing we have learned since the year 2000 is that tent cities are safe and responsible and at the same time, not perfect. Now we see even the Committee to End Homelessness concurring that in our present crisis all remedies are necessary that can provide pathways to stability. In its Faith Encampment ordinance, Seattle has eliminated time frames, allows multiple encampments simultaneously, and advances how families can stay together. I do encourage amendment of what I have seen as the submitted renewal. I have suggestions that I include as an attachment, that include:

- The frequency of siting in Section 3.C.
- Transportation in Section 3.E.
- The rule for responding to children in Section 3.J.
- # of days in Section 3.B

Make no mistake. We are in a Crisis. The common impediment is the lack of affordable permanent and short term housing, and the insufficient supply of places to have a roof over every bed tonight. Today I ask you become the model – as this ordinance was in 2004 when it was written – for how jurisdictions outside Seattle in King County will amend and update their own ordinances. You will become the measurable standard again, and frankly, you ought to be.

## Comments on the Proposed Encampment Ordinance renewal

The Rev. Bill Kirlin-Hackett  
Director, Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness  
11/3/2014

The following comments are submitted regarding suggested alterations to Ordinance 15170:

- **The frequency of siting in Section 3.C.** – I suggest instead, words to this effect: “The same encampment may be located at the same site no more than once every 12 months.” There are currently 2 Eastside encampments and, including these, now 6 in the greater Seattle area. More available sites are needed. If it is a faith org site, other potentially limiting restrictions apply (see comment on Sec 3.B below)
- **The distance from public transportation in Section 3.E.** –Section 3.O. adequately describes the need. Section 3.E. is back to micro-managing by legislation.
- **The rule for responding to children in Section 3.J.** –Why engage CPS? Use of them may seem for better, but as often it is for worse for a family. Why would the legislation open that door? The CEHKC currently responds to families via the Family Housing Connections (contracted to CCSWW). Policy (and funding) ought have that pathway be the default of choice.
- **# of days in Section 3.B** ought to read: “The duration of a homeless encampment at any specific location shall be limited to 122 days at any one time without the approval from the Director for a longer term, to include setup and dismantling of the homeless encampment.” Why do I suggest this? First, faith community rights....if this is a faith site on County land that would need to use this ordinance, the State and Federal law really puts the County in a bind by such limitation, since a “substantial governmental interest” must be shown and then the “least restrictive permitting” used. Second, the site may be appropriate for longer hosting, at the Director’s discretion. Third, the precedent has already been set at Woodinville Unitarian where Camp Unity stayed 9 months under the current County ordinance. A faith community or another site not surrounded by near neighbors, more likely on County land, ought have capacity to stay longer, as determined by the Director.

The following comments are made with regard to **proposed amendments** as of 10/30/2014:

- 1. Alternate Permit Process** – I concur this might be worth including.
- 2. Retaliation** – Best to leave this out of ordinance. 2 reasons: a) micro-managing, and b) might be offered as a best practice instead
- 3. Garbage disposal** – This is acceptable as long as it stays general and avoids too many specifics.
- 4. 92 days** – Encampments may well stay 92, or longer, or shorter. This demands more frequent and costly moves as law.
- 5. Warrant check** – Treating the homeless as criminals ought not be legislated; instead, recommend this as a best practice and especially ask managing agencies to perform sex offender checks. Warrants do not usually indicate dangerous individuals.
- 6. Reports** – While these ought to be completed and submitted, such reports ought to be done by the CEHKC, and not legislated.