

Heather LaBeau

From: Clinton Spencer
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2020 8:46 AM
To: 'phil.ross@eotnet.net'
Cc: Heather LaBeau
Subject: RE: Stepping Stones

Mr. Cimmiyotti,

Thank you for the concerns you have raised. I will add your comments to the record and they will be included as testimony to the planning commission and city council when the matter is scheduled for a hearing.

The Stepping Stones matter will have two separate land use processes. The first is the code amendment adding emergency shelters to the code. This text amendment will have hearings in front of the planning commission and city council. The second will be a conditional use process specific to Stepping Stones. Tentatively, the text amendment to the code will be scheduled in July. The conditional use permit process does not have a timeline at this point but will likely be in the fall.

From: phil.ross@eotnet.net <phil.ross@eotnet.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 10, 2020 8:32 AM
To: Planning <Planning@hermiston.or.us>
Subject: Stepping Stones

STOP and VERIFY - This message came from **outside** of the City of Hermiston.

Dear Mr. Spencer,

I am writing you in order to address my concerns with the proposed zoning changes for property zoned light industrial that you presented during the June 8th, 2020 City Council meeting. Many of the suggestions you have laid out are thoughtful and clear. I am very concerned however about the fact that there is no stipulation that this shelter cannot be placed next to a City park. It appears that the City is overlooking that concern simply because Mrs. Lloyd is determined to specifically rent property from Agape House. My impression is that Mrs. Lloyd has not, and does not plan on considering other property, away from a City park. I am shocked that the City Council as well as City Manager and City Planning Department would approve this project being located a fence away from a park. I have also been told that the school district may need to use the fields at the park for softball because the ones located by Rocky Heights will be demolished because of construction. If it's not safe to have a homeless shelter next to a school, how is it safe to have a homeless shelter next to a park? Families and children play every day of the week at that park. Parents feel safe to allow their children to run around and play on the play structure without combing the grounds for needles.

I have talked several times to Mrs. Putnam who is the current director of Agape House. She understands full well the issues that come along with attempting to help this specific population. She had been told by Mrs. Lloyd that she had talked to all of the surrounding property owners and discussed the idea with them and essentially got their blessing. She did not. She only talked with me a few hours before the May City Council meeting. Mrs. Lloyd is ignoring the fact that it is unsafe to be next to a park. During the June 8th meeting as you know, she joked about putting up two more trees to block the view. Blocking the view isn't the issue at all. The issue is safety.

I have sent two emails to the City Council. Both emails address my concerns regarding the safety of children and families at that park. Only one Council member has acknowledged my email. It is irresponsible and naive to think that drug paraphernalia won't be thrown in the park. I have sent photos of needles, pill bottles, empty alcohol bottles, and a dumpster worth of debris left on the back side of my property. This debris is from people who walk to and from Agape House and litter the debris along Harper Road and near the canal. I have personally picked up this debris for years and years without complaint. Who is going to be responsible for this type of daily clean-up? See the attached photos for reference. One attachment is from the last two weeks. The second attachment is from the last 3 days.

Again, the purpose of this email is to share with you concerns that Stepping Stones is willfully ignoring. Never should a shelter of this sort be located next to a City park. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

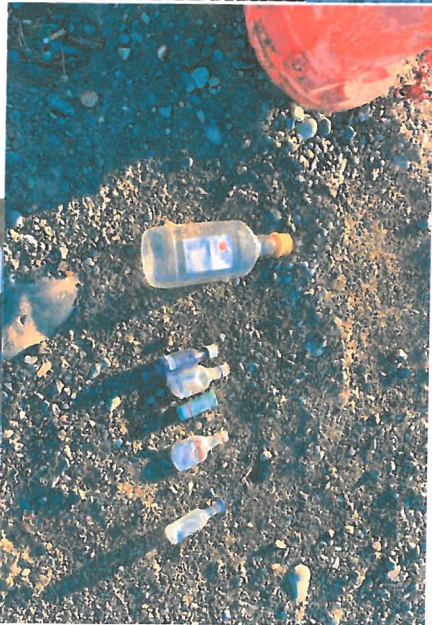
Phil Cimmiyotti

Ross

Ross Machine & Steel Sales, Inc.

PO Box 779

Hermiston, OR 97838







Common Questions and Answers

What is Stepping Stones of Hermiston? Stepping Stones of Hermiston is a project designed to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment where those in need of temporary housing might sleep. This site is truly meant to be a stepping stone and not a permanent destination. The goal is to provide an immediate short-term place for the night for some as well as longer term sleeping arrangements for others willing to work, volunteer and/or improve their situation so they might gain the means by which they can obtain permanent housing of their own. Opportunities to receive work credit for on-going nightly housing will become available.

Where will Stepping Stone be located? It will be located on 8/10ths of a acre of property adjoining the north/west side of Agape House. It will have 6 feet of privacy fencing topped by three strands of barbed wired. It is fortunate to have found a location that is centrally located and not in a residential area.

How are the huts constructed? The huts will be handmade by local volunteers. One hut is finished and available for viewing. The huts look similar to the old Conestoga wagons. The huts are constructed out of common materials i.e. cement blocks, Kiln dried lumber, plywood, cattle fencing panels, Tyvek moisture barrier, pvc pipe and fiberglass insulation. The units have 1 small window and a vent for air flow. For the safety of our guests each unit will also have smoke/CO2 detector installed. Each hut will be equipped with a locking door to give guests privacy during the night. Site staff will have a key to each hut. Each hut will have a locking storage container where guests may securely leave belongings during daytime hours when they are gone.

How will the site be kept clean and secure? Guests will be required to empty and clean their hut every morning before departure. There will be a locked container by their hut where they may leave belongings during the day. Prior to staying on site, each guest will sign an agreement that outlines specific behaviors that will not be tolerated. One example is that no weapons, illegal drugs, marijuana or alcohol may be possessed or used on the property. The site will have a 24 hour/day surveillance system and during the night there will be personnel on site to oversee Stepping Stones.

Are there similar communities that have been successful? There are similar communities to Stepping Stones. Eugene Oregon, has a community called Community Supported Shelters and in Walla Walla, the Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless has a sleep center using the Community Supported Shelter building plan. That is our intention as well.

When will it be open? Our projected opening for Phase one is October 2020. The date is dependent upon getting the necessary funds and approvals. Once a guest has signed the contract agreement and is assigned to a hut, it will be theirs nightly, as long as they are not absent more than 2 consecutive nights and they continue to abide by the site rules agreement. Phase two will take effect approximately 9 months after the initial opening.

Will it bring added criminal activity to the area? The police department has reported that they have not seen any significant increase in criminal activity in the area surrounding the current winter warming station. The communities in Walla Walla and Eugene have both stated that they have not experienced an increase in criminal activity around their sleep sites.

Will there be an increase of vandalism or issues at the nearby city ball field? As already documented, there are currently issues with vandalism, littering, loitering and undesirable behavior in the nearby area. It is our intention to be a good neighbor. One of the conditions in the hut agreement is that any individual cited for loitering, vandalism etc. in the nearby park will lose their right to stay in the site huts. Additionally, we are willing to commit to doing a monthly area cleanup. This will also be on the list as a service activity for someone wishing to obtain work credit to stay in a hut.

Will this site serve as a magnet for more homeless people moving to our area? Referring once again to the experiences of the Walla Walla Site, the Conestoga huts have not served as a magnet such as the tent cities in large cities have shown to be. Our plan is to serve the homeless people already in our area. Our site will have 20 huts when it opens, which will likely be filled by individuals already here. It would be very unlikely for others in need to risk flocking to our area without any assurance of being able to obtain a hut.

How many people can stay in a hut? The huts have been built to accommodate one or two people. This could be a single person, a couple or a parent and child.

Will the surrounding Property Values be negatively impacted? Our community is planned in a light industrial area. Looking at the Walla Walla and Eugene sites as examples, there has been no significant negative impact to the value of properties surrounding their communities.

How will Stepping Stones be funded? We currently have pledges for 18 of the huts and have raised funds for the privacy fencing, leveling of ground and the gravel. We also have a list of 23 volunteers willing to help get the huts built. Once we have city approval, we will do a major funding drive and apply for grants for the other necessary funds.

When will Phase 2 (work credit) go into effect? We plan to have phase two begin within nine months of the initiation of phase beginning. At that time guests will need to work with the exit homelessness manager to determine what they need to do to become more self-reliant and be actively involved in a program designed to assist them in achieving that goal.

Photos taken July 7th, 2020

Liquor bottles, men's underwear, men's clothing, bike parts scattered along road approaching Theater Sports Complex and on the grounds of the Sports Complex







City of Hermiston
City Manager
Planning Commission Members
City Council Members
Hermiston Police Department

July 8th 2020

Allan and Marcia Lambert
P O Box 1283
Hermiston Or.97838

RE: Temporary Emergency Shelter / Harper Road

We are the owners of the property at 680 West Harper Road,
immediately adjacent to this proposed shelter.

We are very concerned about the affect this shelter would have to
this property and others in the immediate area.

We have multiple Commercial type rentals.

Most tenants have been very long term but when potential new
tenants come to inspect the property one question that always
comes up is about the security of the property.

Currently,there is no major ploblem.

We do find the occasional person sleeping under a bush or on
benches that are attached to the building.

Some garbage is left scattered at times.

We have had to call police 2 or 3 times in the last 10 years to
remove people that have chosen to park on the property and use it

as a campground.

Several years ago, (Allan) was physically attacked by one of these transients when they were told they cannot sleep on the property.

Hermiston police can attest to this.

How many calls to the Police Department, asking for assistance to remove people from our property, will it take before the Police Department decides that we are the nuisance?

Many improvements have been made to make the property more attractive from the street and otherwise.

New fencing, landscaping / lots of trees.

Many more improvements are in the works.

An additional office and awning is currently under construction on the East side. Facing the proposed site of this shelter

West side awning is in planning.

Painting of the building, more fencing, paving and new signage at the street is planned in the next year or two.

This cannot be accomplished if the offices etc. cannot be rented.

We do provide office space for professional businesses.

There is little / NO chance of any professional entity such as a Real Estate Office, Insurance, or similar locating at this building with a shelter such as this directly across the street.

The City has scheduled the realignment of Harper and Geer Roads on the West side of the property.

When this is completed the whole property and immediate area will have a much more attractive look.

Ross Machine has also done much to improve the look of their property in the last few years.

We are not against doing something to help the less fortunate among us.

WE appreciate that many more of us are only 30, 60 or 90 days from similar circumstances, if unforeseeable misfortune were to be placed upon us by reasons that we have no control over.

The other aspect of this is that some of these transients are just plain dangerous.

Drug addicted and many with severe mental problems. Pendleton for example, has had a number of major problems with transients.

Murder, beatings and all the rest.

Do any of you that will make the decision of this location wish to deal with these outlined problems on a daily basis.

If this location is approved we will have NO choice.

We personally regularly donate to about every organization / non profit, schools and more, in Hermiston and further afield, including Agape House, our neighbor.

This shelter at this location would attract many more of those that are now a minor problem and create a major problem much to the detriment of on going efforts to improve the area.

Adjacent Property values WILL be negatively affected.

We do not have answers on how to solve the problem of transients.

The City of Seattle Does Not.

The City of Portland Does Not.

The City of Pendleton Does Not

In the City of Pendleton this year, Capeco contracted with a Pendleton Hotel to shelter transients.

That hotel is now under threat of heavy fines and permanent closure due to habitual problems.

Pendleton does have in their legislation the ability enforce this.

Does the City of Hermiston have the ability to enforce closure when this shelter and the adjacent area becomes uncontrollable?

Remember the Rodeo Inn?

Several years ago.

One of the squatters, that Hermiston police helped remove from our Harper Road property became one of the problems at the Rodeo Inn.

Has the City of Hermiston done any real research on what this type of shelter will attract from a wide area.

The word will spread quickly.

Many more will arrive.

Portland / Seattle transients ...

Dryer warmer climate.

Liquor store within walking distance.

Nice park adjacent to hang out in.

Scrap metal yard adjacent, when funds run low.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars of City expenditure has been made for the park improvements.

It has been an excellent addition to the area and is well used for baseball events, kids football practices and families enjoying the park.

Will we now have to fence and barbwire our whole property, restricting access with locking gates?

Not very attractive to a potential tenant.

Fencing / barbwire has already been constructed at the proposed site for this shelter.

Just where do you believe the people will go when they arrive at the shelter and find it full or arrive too late to be allowed entry?

In the morning, will the ones that have stayed the night be bused away from the vicinity?

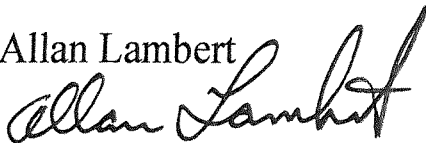
For many years we have lived in Hermiston.

We support this community wholeheartedly and ask for you to seriously consider our and others concerns regarding the siting of this shelter.

Please deny this particular location that will create a blight if approved, to this advancing, busy and what will be an attractive area of Hermiston.

Sincerely

Allan Lambert



Marcia Lambert



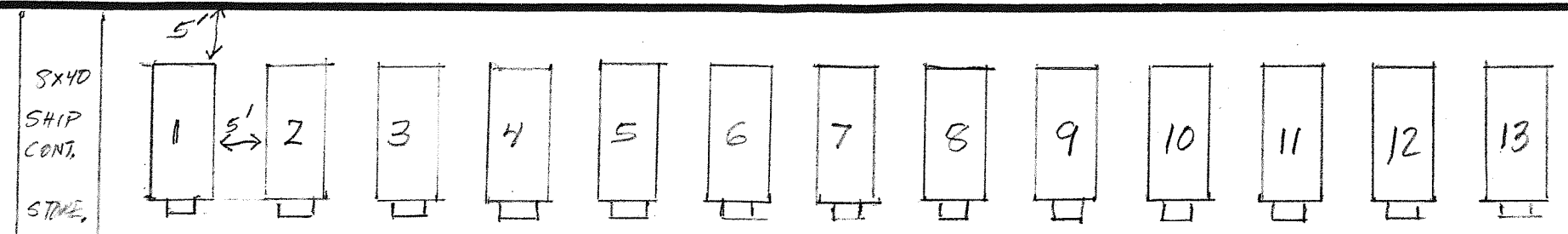
← 231' →

← 28' →

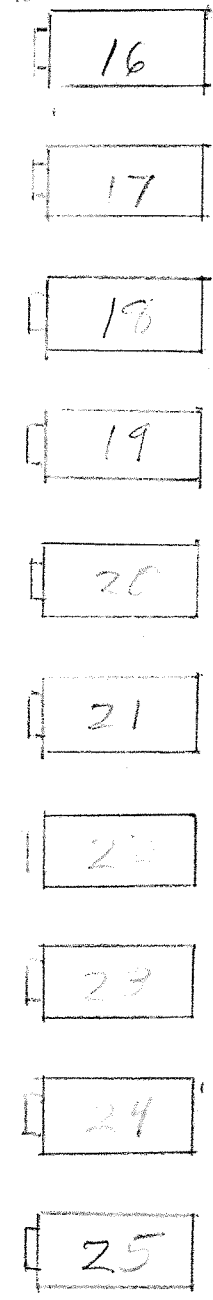
Program _____

Prepared by _____

Date 14/15 _____ Page _____



OVERFLOW TENT

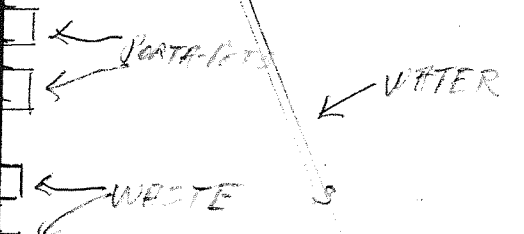


↑ N

← 16' →

DOG RUN

4' GATE



Stepping of Stones
of
HERMISTON

Ed. Bldg. (Phase 2)
[PORTABLE]

← LIGHTING

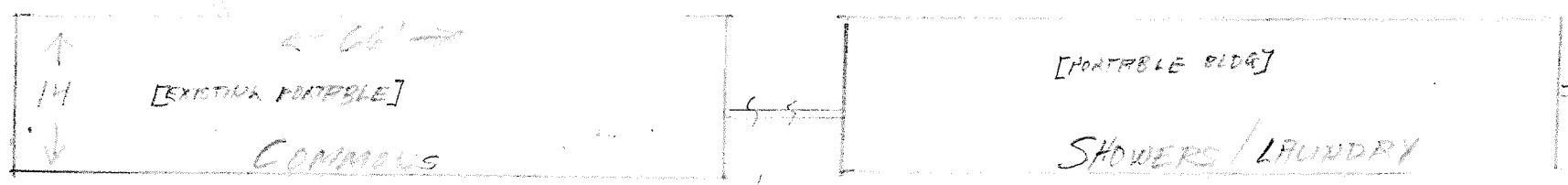
Roll GATE



MAN GATE

GATE HOUSE

BUSES →



OVERFLOW TENT

Draft Site Plan

1/16" = 1'

C. BARNES, 7-2-2020

From: [Ilene Curtis](#)
To: [Clinton Spencer](#)
Cc: [Heather LaBeau](#)
Subject: Stepping Stones Project
Date: Wednesday, July 8, 2020 5:38:52 PM

STOP and VERIFY - This message came from outside of the City of Hermiston.

I can't be there tonight in person so wanted to give my opinion.

I believe that if we help out those people in our community that really can use the help it benefits us all. I cannot imagine having a family and no place to keep them warm or have a place to sleep. It breaks my heart! This will give them more confidence to be able to find the job they need to make the money to be able to go out on their own. I'm sure that are sooo many people that can use these huts. Recipients will be so grateful and will find more confidence and will be better people in our community. Just the small help we can give them will help them immensely.

I know this project has been well planned. Our community really needs to support this.

Ilene Curtis

July 18, 2020

From: Kacie E Evans, Owner of Anytime Mobile Notary/Signing Service

Manager of His Design Thrift Store in Echo Oregon

Volunteer at Stepping Stones

RE: Stepping Stones Conestoga Huts

Hello,

My name is Kacie Evans, and I am involved in many community related organizations, non-profits and volunteer work. I have been volunteering in such organizations throughout my lifetime and in every community I have lived in because I believe in it and have seen the positive return time and time again.

I am writing this letter to you in support of the proposed shelter for the homeless in our community. I first learned of Stepping Stones and the work they do back at the beginning of the year after reading an article in the Bend Bulletin Newspaper. The organization has a passion to help those that have lost everything and found themselves homeless. Everyone has a story, it is unfair to assume everyone that is homeless is a drug addict or felon. Stepping Stones is about helping those that have lost their way off the path of their story and get them back on it, whatever that may be.

This is a “win win” in respect to the homeless situation in our community. It is not a permanent fix, but it is certainly taking the steps in the right direction. The people that truly want to find their story again and get back on the path, are going to utilize this opportunity to its fullest, no question. This in turn will help eliminate the need for our police department and officers from spending tax dollars handling all of the calls and issues that come with the homeless situation in our community. The shelter will house and contain the homeless overnight and keep them from roaming the streets and neighborhoods.

The fact is I could go on and on with the positives of this project, there has yet to be a negative that cannot be overcome or resolved with the cities help. I ask that you please give your support and approval for this project to Stepping Stones, all of us in the community will benefit from this, not just the homeless.

Sincerely,

Kacie E Evans

kacie@kacieevansclosingagent.com

541-571-9292

From: [Clinton Spencer](#)
To: [Heather LaBeau](#)
Subject: FW: Stepping Stones
Date: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 3:26:30 PM

From: Vanessa Chavez <latraviesa3ara@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 22, 2020 3:25 PM
To: Byron Smith <bsmith@hermiston.or.us>; Clinton Spencer <cspencer@hermiston.or.us>; City Commissioner <margaret.sayler33@gmail.com>; David Drotzmann <ddrotzmann@hermiston.or.us>
Subject: Stepping Stones

STOP and VERIFY - This message came from outside of the City of Hermiston.

My name is Vanessa Chavez,

I've lived in Hermiston for over 20 years and I've struggled with addiction for 14 years on and off.

I've been homeless and have friends who are also homeless. I believe that the Stepping Stones Project is an answered prayer from God. It's hard being at your lowest, hitting bottom rock and not having anyone to help you out. Even worse some of these people out in the streets have no family and are in reality alone and just trying to survive. I believe that Stepping Stones will be bringing back the hope for people, and an opportunity to better their lives. By providing them with support to lean on, they will help homeless people break the cycle of addiction. Stepping Stones will give the Hermiston community the confidence to stop self destructive behavior and bring back that fight to live life again.

I'm a few days away from being clean and sober for a year by the Grace of God and the support of Union Gospel Mission. I'm getting my life back on track. Programs like these see the brokenness in people and can also see straight to the heart where change really comes from. I believe this program will provide that starting foundation to those in need and hopefully the main goal, to transform lives and bring life long changes.

Please give Stepping Stones the support they need to help make this happen for Hermiston.

Sincerely,

Vanessa

Chavez

Chuck Barnes

P.O. Box 317, 920 W Juanita Ave.

Hermiston, OR 97838

PUBLIC COMMENT IN FAVOR OF STEPPING STONES

I have been a resident in Hermiston since 1985. Over the years I have seen the Homeless population grow. Having lived in larger cities before moving here, unlike those cities we do not have people sleeping on streets downtown....but the population is still present. We do not want Hermiston to be in a situation where we eradicate encampments, just to have people congregate somewhere else (as what happened when the camps on the east river bank, outside Umatilla was vacated). This non-solution to homelessness is akin to kicking the can down the road, or ignoring a segment of our population.

Therefore, I want to support the Stepping Stones planned homeless site. This community has supported Desert Rose Ministries, the Hermiston Warming Station, Agape House (Eastern Oregon Ministries) and Martha's House. These services leave out a segment of the population, largely men who have no place to turn. A planned, safe, secure site such as Stepping Stones proposes, will be an asset for the community. As Walla Walla will attest, having the Walla Walla Alliance site, enabled the city to enact a no sit/no recline ordinance. This approach in other places like Eugene has served homeless populations and helped provide a "leg up" to regular shelter, and employment.

We in Hermiston are very fortunate because we are a giving and caring community. We are at a time where the homeless population can be served efficiently and can become another asset in the community. To ignore this challenge at this point, will be deleterious to this underserved populace.

Having volunteered in service for the past 35 years here, this opportunity to serve on the Stepping Stones board is very important to me personally. I grieve to think of people sleeping rough when the warming station has to close and the weather is still terrible. And the sleeping rough continues year round.

I would ask the Zoning Committee to complete the enabling zoning ordinance and forward it on to council. I would further ask that the City Council then approve the zoning ordinance and consider fully the Stepping Stones proposal.

July 27, 2020

City of Hermiston
215 E. Gladys Ave.
Hermiston, OR 97838

RE: Item 6 of Agenda, Citizen Input On Non-Agenda Items

Dear Hermiston City Council,

Mr. Drotzmann, 21 years ago, you were a coach for my Hermiston High School softball team. In a million years would you have ever thought it would have been safe for our girls to play and practice a fence line away from a camp, housing criminals and drug addicts? I hope the answer would have been no. Not one person would want their grandchildren, sons, or daughters playing at the Sports Complex with drug paraphernalia, needles, and garbage lying around, just waiting to injure a child.

The reason I felt it was so important to write this letter is because I have watched Portland's community spaces and parks deteriorate so much they are unusable by families and children. I live in Portland directly across the street from a park. I know the issues first hand. What is a park? It's a public space. The unintended consequence is that Hermiston police will not be allowed to remove loiterers and keep drug paraphernalia out of Theater Sports Complex. Portland's City Council and Mayor allowed this very thing to happen. If the Hermiston Planning Department, City Council, and Mayor allow this camp to be next to the Theater Sports Complex, Hermiston will follow the exact same path as places like Portland. The ramifications won't take years, it will take only days to be felt.

I watched Mr. Spencer's presentation a couple months back to City Council regarding potential language to be used for this zoning amendment. He specifically added language to state a camp couldn't be within 1000 feet of a school, which is perfectly logical. How does a place where hundreds of children and families who use that space deserve the same language? It appears the City is specifically leaving out that very detail in order to accommodate Stepping Stones. It also appears that Stepping Stones must have been given the green light months ago or they wouldn't have proceeded on changes to the property. Perhaps there is a conflict of interest that someone should look into?

The amount of garbage, drug and alcohol paraphernalia, pill bottles, and needles my father personally picks up is horrifying. Mrs. Lloyd contentiously sites Walla Walla's shelter as a model for Hermiston. The significant difference is, Walla Walla made a very conscious effort to locate their shelter away from creating harm to families and children as well as local businesses. **The director of Walla Walla Homeless Alliance himself has shared that he does not think such site should be next to a park in Hermiston.**

Have any of you talked to Walla Walla's City Council, their legal advisors, or planning department? I have talked personally with the planning department at Walla Walla. I shared with them the proposed site for Hermiston is next to a park and the lady I spoke with was shocked. What was shared on my call were challenges, the real issues surrounding running such camp, and the ways they came up with solutions to work with the community's concerns. At one point Walla Walla also suggested putting the shelter next to a park and public space, but after very little debate, that idea was struck down. Their city of Walla Walla is well aware of the needles and danger it would have put community members in.

Mrs. Lloyd has implied she talked to surrounding businesses regarding the intent to rent space from Agape House well in advance of honing in on the Agape House property. Mrs. Lloyd has deliberately misled the City Council as well as the community. Mrs. Lloyd only talked to Ross Machine just hours before the council meeting in late April. Other surrounding properties owners as well as the new housing development were never notified until after the meeting in April.

When I grew up, Hermiston was a town that valued our children, future generations, and our safety. May 29th a 16 year old girl in Pendleton was brutally assaulted and nearly murdered by a homeless man who is a registered sex offender (originally from Umatilla). That girl had to be life-flighted to OHSU. June 23rd one homeless man beat another homeless man to death. Another man was finally apprehended on July 22nd who raped a woman who had been traveling between Eastern Oregon communities. These so called "guests" will be next to a park and sports complex. **This location is simply not safe.**

To be clear, my issue is not with the concept of Stepping Stones (although I feel nearly every aspect of Stepping Stones plan is flawed from location, to financials, safety, and to staffing). Yes, the amount of people facing homelessness is a problem, but a sensible plan should be developed in combination with the County and neighboring towns. My concern is that Stepping Stones is naïve enough to want to put a shelter next to a park, with total disregard for our children as well as surrounding businesses.

In a time where racial equity is at the forefront, Stepping Stones and the City are planning on putting a homeless camp next to a park in which many, many, families of all color use and depend on. With the fact that distance learning will be implemented for the 2020-2021 school year, I find it very concerning that one of the few places where children of all colors are allowed to thrive will be ruined. Allowing children of all colors access to safe parks and places to play is critical, now more than ever.

I urge Hermiston's Mayor, Council Members, City Manager, and Planning Department; please do not allow Stepping Stones to be next to a park. Please don't take the easy path. Use foresight. It's clear what happens next if you allow Stepping Stones to use the proposed property. Ask towns like Walla Walla for guidance. Require Stepping Stones to come up with other locations. Please consider the safety of families and children who make this city thrive. This community deserves the same 1000 foot stipulation for parks that has been proposed for schools. Do you want the liability that comes along with a homeless camp next to a sports complex? Are you willing to risk the safety of children? **The proposed site is a liability no one can afford.**

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Kim Cimmiyotti (Portland, OR)

Representing 400 Harper Road, Hermiston OR 97838



- Unannounced visit to Walla Walla Homeless Alliance on June 12th.
- 6 cars of “guests” along fence
- Police had been called for disturbance
- Police officer on duty shared he is called out to the site nearly every shift he works

From: [Clinton Spencer](#)
To: [Heather LaBeau](#)
Subject: FW: homeless in hermiston
Date: Thursday, July 30, 2020 8:03:18 AM

From: Eileen Laramore <gelaramore3@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2020 7:23 AM
To: David Drotzmann <ddrotzmann@hermiston.or.us>; Byron Smith <bsmith@hermiston.or.us>; Clinton Spencer <cspencer@hermiston.or.us>; Margaret.saylor33@gmail.com; Lilly Alarcon-Strong <lalarcon@hermiston.or.us>
Subject: homeless in hermiston

STOP and VERIFY - This message came from outside of the City of Hermiston.

Friends of the Oxbow Property, Umatilla county, Oregon strongly encourages you to support Stepping Stones as they move forward with their proposed shelter for the area's homeless people.

Our group has been working on the Oxbow Property since 2013 and over the years we've dealt with countless illegal campers who were homeless . Evicting homeless people is not something we enjoy especially since there is nowhere else for them to go. It isn't long before we find the same people in a different location on Oxbow. It's a never ending cycle and no one benefits from it.

Please support Stepping Stones.

Sincerely

Eileen Laramore
Executive Director
Friends of the Oxbow Property, Umatilla County, Oregon
Hermiston, Oregon
541-303-3872
gelaramore3@gmail.com

"Promoting public awareness about our natural resources."

Stepping Stones of HERMISTON



July 27, 2020

Dear Mayor Drotzmann , members of the zoning commission and members of the Hermiston City Council,

Once again I stand before the City Council as the chair of the non-profit foundation Stepping Stones of Hermiston. At this time, it is not my intent to present the pros and cons of our specific project nor am I speaking to the potential site that we would like to lease for this project. I am speaking to the need as a community to address our responsibility to the homeless population of our area. Yes, I am speaking about “Those” people. I visited today with some individuals who talked a lot about ‘those’ people. You know the ones I mean, the violent, drug users, alcoholic, sex maniacs that live only to cause crime and disruption to our community. I am talking about the transients that have raped and murdered individuals in near by Pendleton and the ones who walk or lounge about leaving their trash, wine bottles and used needles in all of our parks and alongside our roads and steal from our local businesses. I am talking about the ones who have never wanted to follow the rules and who don’t want to conform in any way to societal norms and if there is a sleep center, I am talking about the ones who will get on their cell phones and call all of their loser buddies to come to our gentle, quiet, crimefree city and ruin it for all of the other citizens living here. Because these are the homeless that are being rejected as not worthy of any assistance from others in the community. As we speak of ‘those’ people let me also reflect on some individuals that we are not considering:

1. The nineteen-year-old young man who has lived his life in foster care and when he aged up out of the foster care program, he had no place to go and no support system in place to help him.
2. The 31-year-old mother and child who came regularly to the warming station because there was no low-income housing available to her and Martha’s house was full.
3. The two men that had full time jobs but were separated from their wives and the salary from their full-time jobs went to supporting the family they aren’t able to live with at this time.
4. The families sleeping in cars.
5. The high school students who are couch surfing.
6. The mother of three who had a good job but had such enormous medical bills that she lost her housing and had no place to turn.
7. And so many more.

These are all real people, who live in Hermiston, who are citizens of Hermiston and have need of our assistance. We need to do better to help our fellow community members We need to stop the finger pointing and listen to each other. We need to make sure we truly know the facts. Right now is not about Stepping Stones or its possible location. Right now is about changing our zoning.

The proposed zoning change would allow night time temporary emergency shelter to be allowed in light industrial zones. Right now, Hermiston does not allow for any such shelters which limits the extent to which our law enforcement is able to roust homeless individuals from camping overnight on public property (see Boise vs. Martin) Allowing a temporary night time shelter would help empower our law enforcement to be able to better address night time homelessness.

The Walla Walla Alliance for the Homeless offers a successful template that other communities can follow. While currently open 24 hours/day due to Covid 19, the Walla Walla sleep center was designed to be a night time only shelter which is what we are requesting Hermiston zoning to address. Here are some of the positive results that the Walla Walla Alliance has reported:

1. 85% of the guests at the sleep center have been Walla Walla residents. There have been no large influxes of transient individuals coming from long distances to their sleep center. It has not served as a 'magnet'.
2. There have been no violent physical confrontations between guests and area neighbors and confrontations on site have been largely verbal.
3. They have had a high success rate in placing sleep center guests into long term housing of their own.
4. Property values in the area have not decreased.
5. By law, homelessness cannot be criminalized so citizens have the right to sleep on public property if there is no alternative. A zoning change for Hermiston is needed.
6. The Walla Walla City Officials, Police Department, Downtown merchants and community citizens all tell of the positive effects of effective management of a well-run temporary sleep site.
7. Walla Walla states that a well-managed shelter is much safer for the community than the unmanaged encampments that are endemic with a population of persons experiencing homelessness.
8. There have been very few reports of thefts of neighboring property near the sleep site. The theft rate in the city is no higher now and probably is lower than if these individuals were on the street at night.
9. This provides homeless individuals with a safe place to sleep at night and raises their quality of life.
10. This has been a work in progress for Walla Walla and they have strived to do what is possible now and adapt the program as needed.

Now is the time for the City of Hermiston to take positive action to provide support for those within the community who have needs. I respectfully ask you to consider all of the facts and not make such an important decision based on emotion and societal pressures.

Sincerely,

Cathy LLOYD

August 12, 2020

Dear Members of the Hermiston Zoning Commission and the Hermiston City Council,

Today we are looking at the possibility of adding wording to existing zoning that would allow for a temporary emergency night time shelter to be built within the light industrial zones of the City of Hermiston. If one researches the basic human needs of life, one will find that "A traditional list of immediate "basic needs" is food (including water), shelter and clothing." Considering this it would appear that as a humane society, we as a whole have an obligation, when feasible, to help provide for those very basic needs. Safe shelter allows one not only to relax and sleep but allows the individual the opportunity to regroup and plan for something more than their current situation. This is especially true if the temporary shelter is able to provide a place for homeless individuals to safely leave belongings during the day rather than having to carry their earthly belongings with them everywhere they go.

Currently in our community, we have the Hermiston Warming station that is allowed to operate for one hundred evenings each year. Due to the limited number of nights, the Warming Station chooses to be open from the end of November until the beginning of March which typically is the coldest time of the year. However, as frequently seen, there are other nights during the year that present challenges. A winter warming station is simply not enough. Those same individuals needing winter shelter often require shelter the rest of the year as well. Due to the size of our community there are few housing choices available and even more limited low-income housing. When there is no shelter available, we see the endemic camps that currently exist along the river, in areas of large overgrowth, near Harrison Park or along the Oxbow Trail. As of three years ago, Oregon had an estimated 13,953 individuals experiencing homelessness including 1,083 family households, 1,251 veterans, 1,462 unaccompanied young adults (aged 18-24), and 3,387 individuals who were experiencing chronic homelessness. (figures from the Oregonian January 2017). Our nation, our state, our county and our immediate community has a homelessness problem and turning a blind eye to it will not make it go away nor make it decrease. It is naïve to say that the homeless individuals in Hermiston are not from Hermiston. As a long-term Hermiston resident and volunteer at the Warming Station, I can testify to the number of young people that I knew in years past who attended local schools who have come and spent nights at the warming station. The homeless are our people. And we need to help care for them throughout the year.

We are not here today to discuss a specific project or a specific location. That is a decision that should be made down the road by the Hermiston City Council. We are discussing the need to allow the opportunity for some project at some point to be able to help meet the basic human need of shelter, an opportunity to sleep in a clean, safe environment. When looking at areas within the city that might be feasible, it is reasonable to rule out protected farm land, commercial land and residential property. That leaves us with light industrial zones. There are few areas within Hermiston that fall into that category. Much has been made that some of those areas might be near a park or sports complex. Rather than automatically ruling out those areas and thereby limiting even further the possibility of a night time shelter, it seems reasonable to allow for the change of wording to the zoning to occur and then trusting to the wisdom of the city staff and council to determine each project individually and put into place the necessary

precautions and safety measures. We should never make decisions based on public pressures of imaginary 'what ifs.'

Let's consider for a moment the various locations of the Hermiston Warming Station. In the past it has been located in the basement of a church, it has been in the 200 block on Main street, it has rotated among churches and for a few years was in the ARC before coming to its current location on 395. When located on Main Street, there were not major issues with loitering, vandalizing or theft from the adjoining businesses. And it is essential to remember that the ARC sits between Hermiston High School and West Park Elementary School and is right in the middle of McKenzie park. While there, the Warming Station did not create major issues of concern for the Hermiston community. It has been said that a year-round shelter is not the same as a winter warming station. While this is true, it is feasible to assume that at least a portion of those who avail themselves of the current Warming Station would also avail themselves of a year-round station. The Hermiston Warming Station has a good record of providing safe night time shelter during the winter for homeless individuals. There is no reason to believe that a year round shelter with good planning and structure would do differently.

We have a moral obligation to help others. As we improve the lives of the least within our community, we better our community as a whole. Rather than wait until there is a huge issue, let us have the foresight to plan and provide for the homeless in our area now. Please provide within the Hermiston Zoning Code a way that our community may provide temporary night time shelter for those in need.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Cathy Lloyd

August 12, 2020

Dear Hermiston Planning Commission,

As I have previously addressed, I am deeply concerned about the safety of children. I am concerned not only about the physical safety, but mental safety of children. In a time where our world seems upside down, the last thing we need to do as a community is take away places for children to thrive. Children won't be able to be at school, at least for the near future. Most experts will agree that having safe places for children to exercise and participate in safe sporting activities will be critical.

Racial equity is at the forefront of all of our minds, while at the same time; Stepping Stones and the City are planning on putting a homeless camp next to a park in which many families of all color use and depend on. With the fact that distance learning will be implemented for the 2020-2021 school year, I find it very concerning that one of the few places where children of all colors are allowed to thrive will be ruined. Allowing children of all colors access to safe parks and places to play is critical, now more than ever.

I currently live in Portland. I am now a mom of two small children. Portland's community spaces and parks have deteriorated so much they are unusable by families and children. I live directly across the street from a park. I know the repercussions first hand. I have to explain stuff to my children I wish I didn't. Hermiston deserves the same 1000 foot stipulation for parks that has been proposed for schools. I urge you to consider the long-term effects of the proposed zoning change.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Kim Cimmiyotti (Portland, OR)
Representing 400 Harper Rd

To whom it may concern;

Since the zoning commission meeting Stepping Stones has become the topic of conversation on multiple pages on Facebook. I have seen people opposed to the idea, but I have seen a large number of our community members in favor of a sleep center for the homeless in Hermiston.

A concern that has been voiced and continues to be voiced is the proposed sites proximity to the Theatre Lane Sports complex. I have spent an incredible amount of time thinking about this issue, and talking to mothers of young children about that specific park, and how they feel about a sleep center being located near it.

I get mixed responses and mixed emotions every time it is discussed. There are those that feel the sleep center will ruin that park for the children in our town, and there are those that feel that with proper management Stepping Stones will have no large impact to it.

My personal feelings are that our proposal is for the sleep center to be open during the late evening, night, and early morning, which is when city parks are closed. This limits the contact between the potential guests of Stepping Stones and children playing at the park . We are also willing to have a security camera aimed towards the park so that someone is always watching the activity there. As a board we have committed to cleaning the area and neighborhood around Stepping Stones routinely and thoroughly once a month.

I can't deny that there is an issue with drug paraphernalia and trash in the area around Harper Rd, but I can with the support of our board commit to being good neighbors and offer to help clean up an issue that already exists.

When I drive around Hermiston I see there are several areas in town that the homeless population currently seem drawn to, Mackenzie Park, Victory Square park, Oxbow trail, and every entrance to Walmart. What these sites all have in common except for Walmart, is they offer shade, and cover to the homeless during the day, the covered area at Mackenzie Park has outlets so charging devices is convenient. The theatre lane park lacks these amenities, it is in direct sunlight most of the day and lacks power, which is why I believe homeless people are not already there, and will not draw them to it once Stepping Stones is established, they will continue to go to areas of town they are currently in.

In an ideal world we would find a cost effective site, with all of the perks of the proposed location with no neighbors, business owners, houses, schools, preschools or parks anywhere near it, that is centrally located for ease of access to the homeless population, but sadly I have yet to find a spot like that in Hermiston Oregon, what I believe we have found is a spot that fits some or maybe even most of the criteria I feel would make a place like Stepping Stones successful.

I don't want to dismiss the concerns I have heard about Stepping Stones I want to work with everyone with concerns to find a solution that satisfies the majority of issues. I have told everyone I have met with that I am not married to the Harper Rd location, but I am married to this project and in order for it to get off the ground we need the zoning amended to allow temporary emergency shelter and we need to be willing to make a conscious effort to come up with solutions instead of only pointing out the potential problems.

Thank you so much for your time and diligence,

Raeanne Blake

From: allan.lambert
To: city@hermiston.com; [Planning](#)
Cc: ddrotzman@hermiston.or.us
Subject: Homeless / Transient Camp
Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2020 4:26:06 PM

STOP and VERIFY - This message came from outside of the City of Hermiston.

City of Hermiston Mayor Drotzman
City Manager
City Council Members
City Planning Commission Members

July 27th 2020

RE: Proposal for Homeless / Transient Camp

First I would like to mention that it appears that the word homeless in this situation is applied to all that have difficulty with a place to stay whether they are:

Victims of domestic violence

Family or individuals that have been evicted from their place of residence for failure to pay.

People with mental disadvantages.

Persons that have drug addictions.

Criminals that have warrants outstanding.

Transients passing through that have no real intentions of helping themselves.

I fully understand that many, through no real fault of their own find themselves in these dire circumstances.

The proponents of this camp have stated that they will not discriminate in any manner as to the reason someone may wish to stay at this camp.

There is a definite criminal element amongst some of these homeless.

I have been personally assaulted by some of the homeless on my own property, less than 100 feet from this proposed camp.

SOME of the homeless that are to be catered to are just Plain Dangerous.

I am confused by the process that this proposal has so far followed.

At the Planning Commission meeting on the 8th of this month (July) it was shown that the City of Hermiston was the applicant for the change in zone codes to allow for the proposed site on Harper Road to be used.

Stepping Stones is the prospective owner and operator of this facility.

Why were they not the applicant?

This change / addition to the zoning code would allow this camp in this area as a conditional use.

The presentation by the city was for Temporary Emergency Shelters.

There will be nothing temporary about this camp if approved.

The city also presented that the 1000 foot requirement from a park / school would not need to be a requirement as with smoke shops "not equitable to subject a temporary shelter to a higher standard than a smoke shop".

Considering some of the proposed clientele of this camp, why would they not be subject to at least the same standards of a smoke shop?

Some possible misunderstanding on my part leads myself and others to believe that this is already a done deal regardless of whom the applicant may be.

If this zone code change is approved I can envision that when an application is made under the conditional use process the stock answer to any opposition could possibly be " Our Hands Are Tied, the applicant meets the requirements".

Please consider some of the other requirements just for this conditional use / zone change ordinance amendment as presented. "The City **MAY** also require a business plan, funding sources and other financial documents be provided by the applicant as part of the land use approval.

Just how important is this requirement that the City **MAY require?**

This Homeless / Transient Camp is a huge undertaking if it were to be successful at any location.

Just the annual operating costs will exceed several \$100s of thousands of dollars.

Stepping Stone references the camp in Walla Walla as an example of what they can do.

The entity that runs the Walla Walla camp has an annual operation cost well in excess of \$100,000 per year. The City of Walla Walla pays for security, provides the property and much of the upkeep.

I suspect that the City of Walla Walla's financial annual contribution well exceeds another \$100,000 or \$200,000.

How much is the city contributing to this project?

How much is the city intending to contribute on an annual basis?

The City of Walla Walla would not consider any site adjacent to any Public Park.

From what I gathered from the July 8th Planning Commission meeting, Hermiston city officials were to meet with City of Walla Walla for their input.

Did they enquire about the full annual cost to the City of Walla Walla and if so, what is the cost on an annual basis for the City of Walla Walla?

What will happen if Stepping Stones fails to meet their obligations if this homeless / transient camp is approved and opened .. anywhere within the city?

Will the city be obligated to take complete charge and carry the whole expense of operation and upkeep?

A whole new city department?

From what has been presented so far it is obvious that the city has already expended a large amount of staff and time to support this camp at this location.

Why have there been NO alternative locations presented for consideration?

Away from City Parks?

Away from well established businesses?

Away from any residence?

Marcia, my wife and myself did meet with Cathy Lloyd and Raeanne Blake from Stepping Stones last week.

We agree that they do have good intentions but are a long way from obtaining finances or completing all that is necessary, just to start such a project.

Both stated that at this time Stepping Stones has no money of any consequence.

We did have a informative meeting but do disagree, totally.... with the location that Stepping Stones / City of Hermiston has proposed.

Is the City of Hermiston going to fund the operation or other costs associated with this camp if it is located anywhere within the Hermiston area?

Have other nearby cities, Umatilla, Stanfield, Boardman or Pendleton been approached for funding?

If a homeless / transient camp was operating in Hermiston it would not be any stretch of the imagination that the police officers /departments and other agencies in these other cities would readily send to Hermiston, or suggest to those with the need, that accommodations are available right nearby in Hermiston.

Land use approval, Site plan review and other normal procedures.

Will Stepping Stones / City of Hermiston follow the same requirements as other property owners in the same vicinity or zoning, have to follow as far as parking , landscaping and much more?

I recently applied for a permit to add an additional office and awning to the building we own at 680 West Harper Road. This is immediately across the street from the proposed homeless / transient camp.

A site plan review was requested by the city.

As just part of the requirements, an Off Street Parking lot location with a design and a required number of parking spaces was essential before a permit would be issued.

This was just to add additional 700 sq. ft. of structure to an existing building.

The proposal for the camp is for approximately 20 plus living units, shower facility and toilets.

From visiting with the people at the Walla Walla camp it was found that up to twenty vehicles and sometimes more arrive each night with people that stay overnight.

These vehicles are parked along the roadway in front of the camp.

Theater Sport Park is closed at night and no overnight parking is permitted in the parking lot for the park.

How will Stepping Stones / City of Hermiston comply with the off street parking requirements for the camp at the proposed site?

Landscaping requirements also?

Will the City choose to change the requirements for a site plan review?

Will the City change the rules for overnight parking in Theater Sports Park?

If so, will the City relieve us, as an adjacent property owner, of the same requirements and allow us to include the Theater Sports Park parking area to comply with the required number of off street parking spaces for our minimal sized addition?

August 12th 2020

This has not been finished but are submitting this as an unfinished draft.

When I accessed the City website some time ago the hearing for tonight was said to be delayed until September.

Only today, I read in the Hermiston Herald that the continued hearing would be tonight.

Sincerely

Allan Lambert

Field Use Agreement



League/Organization Name: Columbia River Heat Agreement Expiration Date: March 1, 2018

League/Organization President: _____ Phone: _____

League/Organization Vice President: _____ Phone: _____

League/Organization Mailing Address: _____

Field to be used: Theater Sports Park North Days of use: Wed / Fri 5-7pm

Months of Use: Beginning March 1 Ending May 15

IMPORTANT NOTE: Each season - *three (3) weeks prior to the first practice date - the League/Organization shall submit a schedule showing the days, dates and times the fields are to be used for practices and a preliminary game schedule. Two (2) weeks prior to the date the first game(s) is to be played on the field(s), the League/Organization shall submit a final schedule of all games to be played for that season. The Parks and Recreation Department will prepare fields for use.*

Fees for Service:

Service	Fee	Total
<input type="checkbox"/> Field Prep	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage / Litter	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Portable Toilets	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Performance Deposit	_____	_____
Total Due	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Paid by	Check # _____	

Park Rules & Regulations

Welcome... Hermiston is proud of its parks and invites you to enjoy park property responsibly. Report any concerns to:

Hermiston Parks and Recreation 541-667-5018 (Emergency 911)

- **No alcoholic beverages (special permit only)**
- **No off leash pets – dispose pet waste**
- **No overnight parking or camping**
- **No horses, No littering**
- **No fires, fireworks, or hunting**
- **No damaging public property**
- **No unauthorized sales or solicitation**
- **No skateboarding, motorized toys or vehicles**
- **No amplified sound or disturbing noises**
- **Vehicles in designated areas only – not on grass**

PARK HOURS DAWN TO 12AM UNLESS OTHERWISE POSTED

HMC – 93.04 Class A Violation

Theater Park Field Schedule

South Field:

March 1—May 14

First come basis

May 15—August 31

ASA Adult Leagues

North Field:

March 1—May 14

Columbia Basin Heat

M,W,F 5pm—7pm

May 15—August 31

ASA Adult Leagues

Parks and Recreation Department

For field information call 541-667- 5018



Where Life is Sweet

Theater Sports Park Saturday July 24th



Theater Sport Park Saturday July 25th



Theater Sports Park Saturday July 25th



A photograph showing a person in a blue shirt sitting on the ground in a dirt area. There are trees and a fence in the background. The person is facing away from the camera, looking towards the trees. A white plastic bag is on the ground next to them. The ground is uneven and appears to be a mix of dirt and some sparse vegetation. The fence is made of vertical slats and runs across the middle ground. The trees are green and leafy, partially obscuring the sky. The overall scene suggests an outdoor, possibly neglected, area.

**Just one of the Homeless / Transients that hang around the property
at 680 West Harper Road Not too often.**

**Can the City or Stepping Stones explain how we are
supposed to keep this property secure when there will
be 20 .. 30 .. 40 or more people morning and night and
all hours between ??????????????????????**

**Photo taken 10am Tuesday 28th July 2020
Approximately 50 feet from entrance of Mobile Home.**

**Theater Sports Park Overflow Parking
Sunday July 26th**



**Theater Sports Park Parking lot
Sunday 26th July**



**Site of proposed Homeless /
Transient Camp**

**Theater Sports Parking
NW 6th street Parking**

Sunday 26th July

Proposed site for homeless / transient camp

A photograph of a parking lot on a clear day. Several vehicles, including a white pickup truck, a silver SUV, a dark sedan, a silver pickup truck, and a white sedan, are parked along a white chain-link fence. The fence runs across the middle ground. In the background, there are utility poles and trees. The sky is blue. The text 'Proposed site for homeless / transient camp' is overlaid in bold black font across the fence.

A photograph of a mobile home situated on a gravel lot. The mobile home is a long, rectangular structure with a light-colored exterior and a white door. A wooden deck with a railing runs along the side of the home. The lot is surrounded by various trees and bushes, including a large tree on the left and a smaller tree in the center. The ground is covered in gravel, and the scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Mobile Home

**Less than 300 feet from
proposed Homeless / Transient Camp**

A photograph of a mobile home situated on a gravel lot. The mobile home is a long, rectangular structure with a light-colored exterior and a white door. A wooden deck with a railing runs along the side of the home. The lot is surrounded by lush green trees and bushes. The ground is covered in gravel, and shadows from the trees are cast across it. The sky is clear and blue.

Mobile Home

**Less than 300 feet from
proposed Homeless / Transient Camp**

Mobile Home East view



View from east end of Mobile home driveway

**Proposed Homeless
Transient Camp entrance**





**Office & Awning
Construction at 680 W Harper Road.**



Homeless Transient Camp Entrance

Office Construction at 680 West Harper Road



**Office and Awning Construction
at 680 West Harper Road**

**This photo taken from entrance of
proposed Homeless / Transient Camp**