

Christine Havelka

Subject: FW: Attn: GPC - Haegert Park Campers

Importance: High

From: Carlstrom, Tim MTIC:EX
Sent: Tuesday, April 21, 2015 12:45 PM
To: Bylaw Complaints; Councillors; Lisa Helps (Mayor)
Subject: Attn: GPC - Haegert Park Campers

Please include in the Public Agenda for April 23 Governance and Priorities Committee meeting.

I live at 1149 Grant Street and walk the neighborhood with my dog at least 4 times per day. I have noticed the increase in regularity that campers are taking over Haegert Park at the Corners of Yukon St, Grant St and Chambers St. I notice that it is in use every night of the week over at least the past month, by at least 3 campers. We sometimes observe up to 7 full size tents and tarpaulins erected along with the multiple cartloads of belongings that are stored inside the park overnight. Even the steel park bench gets taken up by someone in a sleeping bag at night.

I am very concerned with the use of the park area as a washroom facility. I have personally witnessed people in open view covering themselves with a tarpaulin while squatting on the grass and defecating and urinating near the bordering the paved East U-Turn of Grant Street, behind the house at 1206 North Park. That paved area has soiled toilet paper strewn about and the ever-present stench of raw sewage when walking by. At the very least this is revolting and at worst a health hazard.

The covered structures in this park are regularly being set up by the same group of people around 6pm, prior to the allowed 8pm DST.

Even though there are multiple pathways through the park, I no longer feel comfortable using the park, and after dark I no longer feel safe entering the park. This is within the block of the Victoria Senior Secondary School, beside housing with young children who previously used to play in the park, and the homes of many children who attend that school and others nearby. It is also within a block of Mayor Lisa Helps' home.

I see two signs posted on the North and East side of the park that indicate no camping or loitering, but there seems to be no enforcement being done. I can only assume those signs do not pertain to the South side of the park where the campers are.

I suggest that the City of Victoria ban the use of Haegert Park for overnight shelter. I further support the use of Centennial Square for use of overnight shelter due to the washroom facilities present. I would also support the use of Stadacona Park as it has existing washroom facilities, has pathway lighting, and has fewer visible sightlines from the roads. This park also has more buffer area between the bordering residents and any area that may be used for overnight shelter.

Regards,

Tim Carlstrom and Jennifer Krause
1149 Grant Street