

Dear Mayor and Council,

I'm writing to oppose the Public Space By-law as it is currently written. I'm a resident of the downtown and see the tents in St. George's Square, elsewhere in the downtown as well as other locations around Guelph and find it upsetting. While I understand what the by-law is trying to do, it's going after the wrong people. The people who are most vulnerable are the ones who will bear the brunt of the consequences set up in this bylaw. They are on the streets for a variety of reasons that are much wider in scope that need deeper understanding.

The tents illustrate to the wider community the failings of that community to look after their needs. What does the city propose to do for people who find it safer to be in their chosen community vs. shelters, and what kind of supports can it provide to help people find homes? Taking away someone's possessions because they are unsightly or unsafe, isn't a good enough reason for this by-law.

I don't like to see tents in my community, but the residents of those tents are not to blame, but they are the easiest to target. Let's find better, kinder ways to give people the dignity and safety they deserve. As a city known for compassion, we can find short and long-term solutions that will benefit people in need to have a safe and warm roof over their heads. We can follow examples of KW ie: Better Tent City as possible short term housing solutions. Halifax is another city that is finding short term solutions for encampments that respect the dignity of homeless residents. Let's get the best, most humanitarian options to deal with homeless encampments, vs punitive measures.

Thanks for your time.

Sincerely,

Sidney Sproule