

The management plan being proposed by the city is reasonable and allows for a balance between the needs of the homeless and those of the general public. The bylaw establishes distances between encampments and designated areas based on safety, the environment, and sensitive areas, though the prohibition for St. George's Square is not clearly understood.

I feel that the tents in St. George's Square are being put there to ensure visibility for the public, which is not a valid reason for them to stay. This is a very highly visible part of the city and one that the general public would like to use, but the current encampment ensures that part of the square is off-limits. Rightly or wrongly, the public is scared of even walking through this area.

It is my understanding that there is adequate space in our shelter system, but some prefer to live in an encampment, which may be due to some of the rules associated with the shelters or their personal choice. So, they have made a decision to forgo the shelter system, and thus, it is reasonable that there are some ground rules for the use of public spaces owned by all. Society has some rules and norms that we all must live by, including those who are currently homeless.

Having a tent set up to store their belongings is not reasonable, especially when there tends to be a spillover of their belongings (or garbage) around the tent sites. The amount of garbage in some encampments, especially those on the fringes of the city, is excessive and

needs to be somehow addressed. I would hope that there are some expectations that if an encampment is set up, it will be kept reasonably clean. That may be garbage bins provided by the city or the city checking on these encampments every so often. I have reported sites with excessive garbage to the bylaw, but the typical response is that they are not sure what belongs to the inhabitants and what is truly garbage.

I hope that the council is not swayed by those who will be ardent in their opposition to this bylaw. The council needs to take into consideration all citizens of Guelph, even those who take a different approach to issues such as this, such as being quiet and not wishing to be visible.

Bill Summers