From: Bryan von Lossberg
To: Sherene Aun
Cc: Grp. City Council and City Web Site; Emily Armstrong; Jessica Miller
Subject: Re:
Date: Thursday, June 24, 2021 10:56:40 AM

Hello Ms. Aun,

Thank you for this report, and I am glad that you are safe. I can appreciate that it was an extremely disconcerting experience. I relayed this information to the City's Reaching Home Manager, Emily Armstrong. I know she has communicated about this situation with the Parks and Rec department, as well as the Poverello's Homeless Outreach Team. I am also copying Jessica Miller who is the Citizen Services Manager in the Mayor's office.

The City (and County) both acknowledge these challenging issues and continue to work actively to address them.

Thank you

Bryan von Lossberg (he/him)
Alderman, Missoula City Council - Ward 1
City Council President
(406) 552-7806

On Jun 23, 2021, at 8:53 AM, Sherene Aun <shereneaun@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear City Council Members,
I am writing to you several days after a traumatic experience convinced me that Missoula needs to take action right away.

I am an avid runner. I often spend hours running on Kim Williams trail and usually love every (painful) mile. But now I'm very scared.

As I was running on Sunday, I was passing an illegal encampment of homeless people along the Kim Williams Trail on the lower bike trail (close to waterline), a quarter mile past the Triathlon dedication bench. I am used to seeing this – something that, in itself, is disturbing.

But just as I came upon the large 4 person tent encampment alongside the trail, I noticed motion in one tent. It wasn't a person, it was a very large grizzly apparently rooting through the vacant tent eating food they had stored in the tent. I have seen many single person tents along this trail but never an encampment of this size where they had stored food in and have several open flame candles, a canoe ect.

I was only about 10 feet away. I know that you're not supposed to run from a bear, but what was I to do? I ran.

In fact, I ran faster and harder than ever in my life while praying that the grizzly didn't see me or didn't smell me or just didn't care. When I came upon others on the trail I warned them. I also called 9-1-1.

A police officer came. But they told me they could not (or would not) do anything to remove the illegal encampment or address the issue. I cannot understand this and it angers me as it is putting other citizens who enjoy the trail in danger when they keep

food in their tents.

I am not a heartless person. In fact, I have a master's degree in social work and work for a non-profit mental health agency. I know, and work with many homeless clients here in Missoula as well as being a Navy Veteran. All that wouldn't have meant anything had that bear injured or killed me and left my 14-year-old daughter without her only parent.

These homeless encampments are not only endangering we who use the trails, they are also endangering their occupants given the fact that at least one big bear knows about them and seems to think they're worth inspecting. What happens the next time another citizen encounters a bear eating out of those tents on the trail, will they be as lucky, or will it make national news when they are mauled and/or killed.

Please address this and other quality-of-life issues in our city. Being passive about these problems (or failing to even acknowledge them) is not the answer.

I have attached pictures of this encampment. Being a social worker, I am willing to assist in any way in order to address this issue. Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Sherene Aun
757-818-5242

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