From: Zach B
To: Grp. City Council and City Web Site
Subject: A reasonable step toward a difficult solution
Date: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 12:12:09 PM

Council members,

The city needs to realize the "Non profit" running the Pov has vacuumed up literally tens of millions of dollars of grant money. The city is simply dealing with another business, whose dangerous runoff affects our community. The Pov profits from opening their doors to hundreds of troubled people, but when there isn't profit to be gained these people are discarded onto the streets with nowhere to go but Missoula's parks and public spaces. This is not right. As all industries should be held accountable, the Pov should be held responsible for their unwanted waste even if that byproduct happens to be human beings. The Pov will not curb their behavior unless the city does something to hold them accountable for this socially irresponsible practice. The city should pass a measure declaring shelters must provide semi-permanent residence for those utilizing their services. Shelters would be forbidden from forcing their patrons off the property as a practice of daily operation.

Emergency shelters are a flowery idea but they are not a solution to homelessness. According to those conducting intake at the jail a shockingly common view espoused by convicted women is, "I'd stay at the Poverello, but it is too dangerous." Mind you these are often homeless addicts who consider their current living conditions SAFER than those of the shelter. The Pov plays at, "Covid relief" but these places aren't helping families affected by covid. The fact is violent drug addicts are dangerous, and by letting some through, they close the door on others. If the Pov truly wanted to help people, they'd realize these conditions are dangerous. By allowing anybody in, then kicking everyone out onto the streets in the morning they simply perpetuate a cycle of addiction which causes homelessness, and passes their overhead onto the surrounding community. Perhaps if the shelter were forced to provide more adequate services, they would cater toward those who they could help the most. The city can at least stop that small part of the problem.

Council can no longer ignore an egregious problem for which there are clear proposed policies to mitigate. This is why we elected you to represent our interests. The right thing to do is force the shelters to better provide their services and help people out of homelessness by requiring more services to a smaller number of people. That starts by forbidding shelters from kicking people out during daily operations.

Respectfully,
Zach Brackett