

Paige MacWilliam

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: January 12, 2023 4:18 PM
To: Paige MacWilliam
Cc: Duncan; mayor@northcowichan.ca
Subject: Updated with spellcheck. : No to warming shelter by the school

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Not to sound cold, but I'm not sure this is a good idea. I was at the community centre today and there were two people passed out on the ramp up to the gymnastics entrance where kids are actively participating in gymnastics. A lady was eating garbage out of the garbage bin right in front of it, and stood there, blocking the pathway for at least 20 minutes. She then went up the ramp, sat down, and laid down. A guy she was with had came over to her, pulled up her pant legs and started injecting drugs into her as she was telling him to make sure he hit the vein. This is all well My kids were watching and outside trying to pass her. They did not move or even care that little kids were standing there and they were lighting drugs on a spoon which had a very strong smell that we all inhaled as we walked by to get inside the building.

I get people need to be warm but I'm not thinking this is the place.

I do not feel it is appropriate to have the warming shelter by the school for another one of the reasons below. I've had many negative experiences with homeless in that area which is unfortunate.

Another time we were walking by, my kid was walking from Quam to meet me at the library. She was with her friend and on the way there was someone passed out at the crosswalk. She thought he was dead, but he was twitching a little bit, but he was gray. She was very concerned and ran faster to find me to come to see if she should call 911. When I got there, he did appear to be near death. Coincidentally, as I got there, a cop was driving by patrolling. I waved him down and it seemed that he thought I was trying to cross the crosswalk and motion at me to keep moving and he tried to drive away. I then waved him down more assertively to where he came back and told him about what was very apparent in front of us, as he wasn't seeming to do anything about it. He then dealt with the situation and we went on our way.

This is very traumatic to a teenage girl and her friend and not OK that she has to witness this just to go to the library after school and she is afraid to meet me there now. She loves books and won't even hang out at the library.

Another situation is that on her way to McDonald's during her lunch break at school she saw a guy with a needle hanging out of his arm who also again looked dead. She had to go tell one of the duties about what was going on.

Kids should not be seeing this. This is normalizing unacceptable behavior. They see things, graffitied, desecrated, vandalized, and a lot of theft all around them.

How are we going to expect teenagers to behave? If what they witness is society accepting people destroying the area in a multiple amount of ways?

I see often on neighbourhood groups, parents being upset. The teenagers are out vandalizing things but it's becoming normalized because no one is doing anything when the homeless population do it.

Another example in the same area is that when I went swimming with my kids someone stole our shoes, including my children's shoes, we had to leave with bare feet in the freezing cold weather because of that. That cost me almost \$1000 because I have specially made orthotics that were likely trashed because they mean nothing to someone who just wanted shoes. And this makes my child afraid. Now I can't leave their things unattended. Even shoes. I shouldn't have my kids afraid of things they shouldn't be afraid of because of this.

And guess what there's another example, we went to a hockey game guess what happened? Our car was broken into. They stole a child's backpack with their report card, some tools that were hidden amongst the seat, and of course, vandalized the car in the process. Only thing visible was the bag. A child's bag. This cost us a lot of money as we did not have theft insurance on the vehicle. The vehicle is still not fixed as it's hard to find some parts for it and costly. I actually drove down and spoke to a group of people in your warmlands because the bag that was stolen was my kid's friend's bag with his report card and bus pass and I felt bad if he had to replace his bus pass so I tried to get that back. The homeless guy told me "oh you mean the car that was broken into by the community centre" so he knew exactly what I was talking about and then I said I just want those certain items back and to call me if she needs any more information. Well, eventually, we ended up getting some of the stuff back because it was discarded in the SUTTON parking bush area. And incidentally, the police ended up throwing away very important keys that we could not replace, which also was another expense and the homeless assumed that it was no big deal because we have insurance said they assumed everyone had insurance they said "oh you have insurance right?" as if that was their excuse for taking the items.

Another example is that, we went to the community centre for a family activity on sponsored by the library in the gym. When we arrived we stopped in the bathroom outside the library. A lady was falling into the walls while cleaning her clothes. I had to use the bathroom badly so my kid waited in the corner. The lady tried to give my kid random things, which could be nice but she got upset when my daughter said, "no thank you". I went and told the staff because I was worried the lady was going to pass out and get hurt. She was kicked out of the bathroom and tracked me and my kids down telling us we were bad people and that she was going to harm us. She then tried to spit on us. This could have cost us getting Hep C had she had it and got spit into our eyes.

I feel it's insanity to even contemplate having this group of people outside our most valuable resources for the community and our kids. It is demonstrating very negative experiences on my children and I am just one family and one example. I am sure there are a lot more examples just as bad or even worse.

You need to move this situation elsewhere. We need our space back. We should be able to walk the streets and enjoy the activities in the area. We can't even use the track. My kids are afraid to use the pool and to even walk in the community centre alone. I had a big whiff of drugs inhaled just by walking my kid to activities. What if that was fentanyl and my kid inhaled it?

Who is going to be responsible when an innocent person gets injured or dies? Because of this bad idea. Also, the safe injection sites and homeless shelter need to be moved as well ASAP. You can't put one population's needs above another's especially when the others pay taxes. I guess they need a place to be and go and I understand that they have mental disabilities, but as a parent who is already struggling with kids with mental disabilities, some of them stemming from anxiety surrounding the issues coming from this homeless population and theft. It is not OK to make their life worse. They still have a chance at a productive life and it feels like this city is ruining that. Why does one group matter more than another. Especially when the other group is our next generation.

Please reconsider and move this somewhere else. This is not the answer. People need to be jailed when they do things wrong. We can't have them out in public destroying businesses and future generations. You need to come up with a better plan. This plan is not working. It needs to be fixed.