

The Encampment Equation

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The term “End Homelessness” is an un-realistic, un-achievable goal. The best one can hope for is to alleviate the problematic effects of homelessness upon individuals and the community at large by addressing the issues surrounding homelessness with both a united purpose and common goals that are compassionate, acceptable and beneficial to all. Encampments may offer an un-conventional, yet realistic possible solution to a rapidly growing un-resolved present day problem facing not only Nashville, but cities and towns across our nation. Attempts at making encampments an acceptable official part of local government’s response to homelessness have been tried before by various municipalities, non-profits and well-meaning charitable and/or faith-based organizations, often resulting in disappointing failure and unsuccessful ineffective effort. They were not Nashville.

Assess the Situation

Before tackling any task or endeavor, “Assessing the Situation” is a critical, necessary first step prior to taking any actions that will affect the present living situations and futures of so many less fortunate members of society already struggling at a deficit low point in their life. An accurate assessment of the situation greatly improves the chances of achieving the desired successful outcome. There is no room for assumptive averages and un-investigated educated guesses. The accurate presentation of the facts and figures is vitally important in finding a solution to any problem or equation. Taking action without foreknowledge, understanding and careful consideration is a guaranteed recipe for failure. The pre-gathering of this important information and fact finding responsibility is best left up to a commission working together in a collaborative partnership for the good of all.*

Commission a Team / Collaborative Partnership

A commissioned team or collaborative partnership consisting of a cross section of committed capable members may include, but is not limited to the following: *(To be continued...)*

***Based on conversations with Chris Scott on 2/16/16, he communicated that the following steps need to be included in the assessment:**

- 1) Make a list of the *known* camps (the camps that are already on the radar of law enforcement officials).
- 2) Determine what kind of property they're on and engage the property owners when appropriate.
- 3) Identify the residents of the camps and assess their situation:
 - Obtain names and demographics.
 - Assess their needs (i.e. health care, recovery programs, sanitation services, etc.) and barriers to housing.
 - Match them with outreach workers and housing navigators.
- 4) Identify the leadership in existing camps. Have representatives from the camps and include them in the discussion and decision making.

Chris also recommended these steps after the assessment:

In collaboration with the property owners and camp representatives, offer a probationary period to the camps that comply with keeping the site(s) clean, keeping the violence down, and keeping out illegal drugs. Offer sanitation services, assist with access to water, and provide outreach support. Sanction the camps the prove themselves to be stepping stones to recovery and restoration.