



TCT MINUTES: January 20, 2014

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PRESENT: Blaine, Lisa, Neal, Alan (*Note Taker*), Patricia, Vince (*Meeting Facilitator*)

AGENDA:

1. Planning commission meeting coming up.
2. St Leo's Ecology weekend
3. Financial report
4. Patricia on Bethlehem.
5. Vince's religious contacts.

PLANNING COMMISSION: The City Planning Commission will have a meeting on January 22 at 5:30 PM, 1st floor of City Hall. They are taking public feedback on the proposed city code for granting a use permit to homeless camps. KIRO broadcasted a story on spontaneous homeless encampments within the city limits and seemed to conflate these with organized tent cities. We thought that this report was not a good one and perpetuated some misconceptions about the organized tent cities, as well as the homeless themselves. Patricia sent a link to the KIRO report to Colin and Harry from the City of Tacoma, who had visited organized tent cities in Olympia and Seattle and had been favorably impressed with how well organized and run they were.



There are certain issues with the proposed regulations that we would like to address at the planning commission meeting. We feel that the City Planning Commission regulations should address public health and safety. But the City Planning Commission should not be regulating the tent cities on matters unrelated to public health and safety.

For example, one of our concerns is the space requirement between tents. We feel 1 foot is sufficient. Another example is the proposed requirement for a screening barrier around the tent city. The planning commission should not require a screening fence around the camp. There is no city regulation that says a homeowner must have a screening barrier around the property to shield it from public view. Therefore, the city use permit should not require that a tent city have a similar screening fence.

TCT would probably want to have one for our own safety and privacy, but that should be the decision of the TCT Executive board.

We also feel the code should not require TCT to have a background check for residents. We, of course, will have that in our own regulations for our own protection. For example, we would screen for sex offenders, and so on.

If a school sets up a resident dormitory within the city limits, the city probably would not require that the owners of a proposed school dormitory screen the residents for arrest warrants. That would be the decision for the dormitory operator to make.

Other issues to that we would like to address are the number of showers and the number of parking spaces. Some of the proposals are perhaps a bit of overkill. Considering the hypothetical school dormitory, the City Planning Commission probably would not regard the number of showers per resident to be a public health or safety matter as long as there were showers or other cleaning facilities available.

This is going to be a learning process for all involved. We will need a bit of a grace period while we work out the kinks and as the community sees how the tent city works out.

ST LEO'S ECOLOGY WEEKEND: Neal reports that TCT is invited to have a table at the St. Leo's Ecology Weekend event. This will be held in May. We decided to delay discussion of this until next meeting.

FINANCIAL:

1. Patricia reported on our fundraising activities.
2. Neal reports that he has made progress in finding a place to store things such as tents, cots, and other items necessary to run a tent city. He has been talking to people in a church called Pathway.
3. A person name Christina raised certain ideas about fundraising in some comments on our website. Alan wrote a response thanking her for her suggestions, inviting her to the meeting, and promising to bring it up in the meeting. We discussed Christina's suggestions briefly and will revisit them later.

BETHLEHEM: Bethlehem Church will delay voting on hosting a tent city this month. We will get more information about when they will vote on this later on.

VINCE'S RELIGIOUS CONTACT: Vince reports he will be able to contact all the Methodist churches in the area.

NEXT MEETING: Feb 3, 2014

Thanks to Patricia for proofreading these minutes and checking them for accuracy —Editor

Respectfully submitted: Alan OldStudent
