

Fwd: Fairfax Town Council meeting agenda request - Doc Edgar Park camper activity

Cliff Koch <cliff.koch@gmail.com>

Sun 10/1/2023 11:58 AM

To: Fairfax Town Council <fairfaxtowncouncil@townoffairfax.org>

Begin forwarded message:

From: Cliff Koch <Cliff.Koch@gmail.com>

Subject: Fairfax Town Council meeting agenda request - Doc Edgar Park camper activity

Date: September 30, 2023 at 6:59:04 PM PDT

To: habrams@townoffairfax.org.

Dear Ms. Abrams,

My name is Cliff Koch. I am writing also on behalf of my wife Patty Koch. We are residents of Fairfax, and live on Hickory Road, a two-minute walk from Doc Edgar Park on the corner of Cascade & Cypress Drive.

We have noticed a person has started to camp overnight in the park. Neighbors have directed us to a recent Town Council meeting video where homelessness was discussed. We were forwarded an email where Councilmember Blash had reported that residents near the ballfield were suggesting that a homeless camp near them should be moved to Doc Edgar Park, and that the people who have now started camping there may have been aware of that suggestion.

It has also been reported that the Town recently erected a fence, closing off the homeless camp area near the ballfield after a fire was set there by a camper. That implies that the Town is willing to evict campers and prevent people from occupying certain Town property, in spite of State laws to the contrary. The Council may have found a valuable loophole in the law. If so, one solution to the Doc Edgar Park camp is to similarly erect a fence around the park before any fires are started, and declare that the park is only open during daylight hours. The fence could probably be removed after the "closed at night" rule starts being enforced by FPD. It is unlikely that a camper would be willing to only use the property during the day, and would find a more suitable place to camp.

A more suitable place for campers might be the lawn outside of the Town offices (next to the Fire house). Make it more inviting for campers, by adding electrical outlets, more toilets, showers, etc. It could be considered a safe place for campers because of the proximity to FPD and paramedics at the firehouse, and is only a block or so from public transportation.

I haven't told you why the Town allowing or encouraging a campsite at Doc Edgar Park is going to have a negative effect on homeowners and tenants in the area, and I shouldn't have to, but the voters of Fairfax have been left out of a few very important Council decisions recently (road markings and rent control are two) so I will outline the negatives here: this neighborhood has a large number of children who travel past (and sometimes to) Doc Edgar Park, many times without their parents, as they are on their way to or from school or recreation. Many children and adults take their dogs to the park, and families frequently relax there in small groups. None of these visitors should have to be concerned that an adult stranger is living a few feet from a vulnerable child or adult. I don't believe there are any public bathroom facilities in the area, so that is a health concern for residents and campers.

I imagine that if the Town feels constrained from offering the campers a safer location, that the next best thing is to establish a 24-hour police sub-station in the park, so that we can feel that our children are being protected.

I would like very much for you to put this issue on your next Town Council meeting agenda, the earlier in the meeting the better, so that we won't need to be away from our homes late in the evening while unknown campers are nearby.

Cliff and Patty Koch