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October 2, 2018

Mayor Don Jensen
Mayor Pro Tem Mike Wallin

Councilmembers Botero, Makinster, Vydra, Wallis and Moon

RE: Proclamation of Emergency regarding homelessness

Dear Mayor and Council:

On Thursday September 27th, in response to the ongoing issue of homelessness in our community, and in particular in response to how the increase in the number of the homeless is affecting our city parks, I met with my department heads to formulate short term and long term strategies to address both the needs of the homeless, and the broader community. At my direction, a press release was issued to outline my plan for responding to this emerging issue. At the September 27th City Council meeting, Council gave me direction to, among other things, coordinate and communicate with the Cowlitz County Department of Health and Human Services for the immediate protection and enhancement of public health, safety and welfare and to take other such necessary actions as needed to protect and enhance the health and safety of all area residents.

As you are aware, homelessness is an issue facing communities throughout the United States. While being sensitive to the needs and rights of the homeless, we must simultaneously preserve the quality of the services, including our public areas and parks, that all citizens value. With regard to our parks, these areas simply do not contain the facilities needed to provide adequate shelter to the homeless. Yet, we find an increasing number of the homeless using parks to provide their housing (through temporary make-shift encampments) and sanitation (by using park restroom facilities), and at a level beyond our capacity to serve. Consequently, it is necessary to declare an emergency so that this situation can be addressed.

Consistent with LMC 10.60.010, I am declaring a public emergency exists. In my judgment, immediate action is needed to protect the public peace, safety and welfare. I will be working with my department heads and other local governments to develop and implement strategies to address this issue.

In addition, I am requesting that the City Council meet to consider the ratification and confirmation of this proclamation at the October 11, 2018 City Council meeting.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kurt Sacha". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kurt Sacha
City Manager