



## **ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3E**

**TENLEYTOWN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PARK FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS**

c/o Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home 5425 Western Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20015

[www.anc3e.org](http://www.anc3e.org)

### **Resolution Regarding Homeless Encampment in Front of Tenleytown Library**

**Whereas**, on any given night, there are over 7,300 individuals without homes in the District of Columbia;<sup>1</sup>

**Whereas**, more than 15,000 people are homeless in DC over the course of a typical year, one of the highest rates of homelessness in the country;<sup>2</sup>

**Whereas**, the District of Columbia has the highest homelessness rate by far of any of the neighboring jurisdictions, and DC experienced the largest local percentage increase in homeless people in the region, accounting for 752 additional literally homeless persons during 2011-2015,<sup>3</sup>

**Whereas**, two trends are largely responsible for the rise in homelessness over the past 20-25 years: a growing shortage of affordable rental housing and a simultaneous increase in poverty resulting from eroding work opportunities and a decline in public assistance;<sup>4</sup>

**Whereas**, a lack of affordable housing and increasing rental prices are obstacles to preventing and ending homelessness in the District;

**Whereas**, since 2002, the District has lost 50% of its affordable housing while annual rent has increased by \$3,000;<sup>5</sup>

**Whereas**, numerous outstanding community organizations in the District of Columbia assist homeless individuals and families with food, shelter and service needs such as Thrive DC, Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, Central Union Mission, Friendship Place,

**Whereas**, while ANC 3E applauds the Mayor's recent focus on ending homelessness for families, this initiative does little to address the homelessness of single men and the increase in the number of single men sleeping in public space in Tenleytown;

**Whereas**, ANC 3E has repeatedly urged city agencies to assist the homeless men congregating in Tenleytown including in an encampment in front of the Friendship-Tenley Library;

**Whereas**, after more than a month of repeated contacts by ANC Commissioners and concerned citizens, the city has failed to get these homeless men into a better alternative than remaining encamped in public space in the neighborhood;

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<sup>1</sup> The Community Partnership For the Prevention of Homelessness

<sup>2</sup> Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, 2012

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/pub-documents/v15bWlk20150514094353.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://nationalhomeless.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Why-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

**Whereas**, many families and individuals have observed the Tenleytown homeless violating numerous laws, including public drinking, stealing chairs from neighboring businesses, and harassing pedestrians;

**Whereas**, respect for the Constitutional rights of these men and compassion for their situation does not require turning a blind eye to violations of DC law;

**Whereas**, public space is intended for use by *all* of the public, and as a practical matter the homeless encampment in front of the Tenley-Friendship library has expropriated that space for their own private use making it unavailable for others;

**Whereas**, this activity detracts from the vibrancy and livability of the neighborhood, making it less desirable for business and residential investment;

**Whereas**, it is an unacceptable status quo that these homeless individuals to continue to move from one encampment to the next in the Tenleytown neighborhood;

**Whereas**, ANC 3E firmly believes these homeless individuals deserve assistance including substance abuse, mental health counseling and supportive housing;

**Whereas**, although ANC 3E supports Friendship Place and the service it provides in Tenleytown to numerous homeless individuals, the needs of homeless residents is primarily the responsibility of city government and the city should provide a better alternative to these homeless individuals than moving from encampment to encampment in public space;

**Be it resolved**, ANC 3E calls on the city take action to address the homeless encampments in Tenleytown and to provide appropriate assistance to allow these individuals to sleep with a roof over their heads, and be it further

**Resolved**, ANC 3E supports the Mayor's plan to end homelessness for families, including the call to move residents of DC General equally to all eight wards, provided that the Mayor works with communities to select appropriate sites for housing these residents, and takes into account the relative existing number of homeless individuals served in particular neighborhoods in each ward.

The resolution passed by a vote of 5-0-0 at a properly noticed meeting held on October 7, 2015, at which a quorum was present, with Commissioners Bender, McHugh, Quinn, Hall, and Wallace in attendance.

ANC 3E

By Jonathan Bender, Chairperson