

Public parks, golf courses and green spaces must NOT be places where homeless camping is allowed. Reminiscent of the Fall of 2011 when the occupation of Chapman and Lownsdale Squares took place in Portland, it took slightly more than just four weeks of occupation to totally destroy the grassy grounds in these parks making them unusable by the public and costing the taxpayers a small fortune to restore.

Let me help you visualize what public parks, golf courses and green spaces will look like after an unknown "EXTENDED PERIOD" of homeless camping is allowed to take place. There will be trash everywhere with no accountability required by those who created the strewn mess. Grassy areas and vegetation, especially around big trees will now be hard bare dirt. Shrubbery, bushes and other plantings are broken and trampled down. There are scorched and burnt areas that are remnants from out of control camp fires. The parks are void of children on the swings and other playground equipment. The parks are also void of families wanting to enjoy the outdoors instead of being cooped up do to COVID. Golfers, especially senior citizen golfers, have no place to recreate. Adjacent waterways could easily be polluted. Allowing homeless camps in these open space areas is nothing less than turncoat scorched earth policy making.

Furthermore, temporary is rarely temporary, especially in Portland. Moving the camps out after they are established will be difficult. It will take a considerable amount of money and time for the ecosystems to recover.

Now think about allowing homeless camping around schools. Visualize the reopening of school buildings surrounded by homeless camp tents. Again, trash everywhere, damage being done to the landscape and fires being set. Think about what took place near Sunnyside school in Portland when a homeless person was running around waving a machete. Now visualize the children having to navigate this environment just to enter the school buildings so they can attend needed in-class learning.

Public parks, golf courses, green spaces and the areas on or around school grounds MUST ALL BE TOTALLY OFF LIMITS AND BE RULED OUT for housing the homeless!

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Parker
Northeast Portland