

Homeless Urban Campers Karen Taber

Unfortunately, our neighborhood is experiencing an uptick of homeless urban campers that have been identified primarily as drug addicts. Consensus among law enforcement and community leaders is that they have chosen us in order to stay close to their drug sources in the Little Five Points vicinity. Apparently, heroin is cheap and easily available.

Homeless Categories

CHRONIC (50%) drug addicted and/or mental illness

ADVENTUROUS (40%) “crusty kids, trustafarians, train hoppers”

SHORT TERM or “INVOLUNTARY” (9%) job loss, domestic abuse

CRIMINAL (1%)

These campers are breaking laws and causing public health and safety issues, including sleeping on private and city/state property, theft, drug use, public urination and defecation, public sex acts, and littering. They leave behind enormous amounts of trash, including mattresses, rugs, carpet, couch pillows, bed pillows, bedding, food waste and drug paraphernalia, including needles. They have been sighted on private property using water spigots, sleeping on porches or in backyards, rummaging through trash bins, and stealing from cars and unlocked storage sheds.

When the police are summoned to the most problematic areas listed below, they simply move from one location to the other.

Behind Shell station on Moreland

Behind vacant dry cleaners on Moreland

Bass Recreation Center (next to the Wrecking Bar)

DOT swaths on either side of Moreland Ave

Freedom Park between Marta station and Lake Ave

PATH across from Carter Center

Private (hidden) vacant lot on Alta Ave (so far, this is under control)

Efforts to improve this multi-faceted problem are in “slow” motion, as there are no simple answers. Informative meetings have taken place so far with our IPNA Board members and the Little Five Points Business Association, L5PBA.

A future meeting with our City Council is in the works to discuss the following.

1. Seek a possible amendment to revise the antiquated “urban camper” ordinance written in 1996, in an effort to empower law enforcement more effectively and efficiently, similar to other large cities.
2. Seek assistance from local agencies and homeless task forces.

How can YOU help?

Call 911 to report illegal activities by these groups

Share these incidences with me via email for data collection purposes
k2taber@comcast.net