

MINUTES OF THE DAVIS CITY COUNCIL
Special Meeting of November 20, 2024

The City Council of the City of Davis met in special meeting session beginning at 6:09 p.m. in the Community Chambers Conference Room, 23 Russell Boulevard, Davis, California. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Chapman.

Roll Call: Councilmembers Present: Will Arnold, Donna Neville, Gloria Partida, Babu Vaitla, Josh Chapman

Councilmembers Absent: None

Other Officers Present: City Manager Mike Webb, City Attorney Inder Khalsa

Approval of Agenda D. Neville moved, seconded by W. Arnold, to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Homeless Services Ecosystem and Resource Deployment, Legal Landscape and Municipal Code Revisions Social Services & Housing Director Dana Bailey: Overview of department activities. Summarized 2024 street outreach data. Highlighted partner programs—Downtown Streets Team workforce development program and operations of Daytime Respite Center, Davis Community Meals and Housing—Paul’s Place resource center and transitional housing. City is exploring options to expand the ecosystem of care for housing insecure.

Police Chief Todd Henry: In June 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that enforcing camping ordinances was not cruel and unusual punishment and overturned an early decision by appeal court that barred cities from enforcing camping ordinances in most areas whenever the number of unsheltered people exceeds the number of practically available shelter beds. Governor Newsom issued an executive order directing state agencies and encouraging local government to enforce camping restrictions.

City has seen an increase in the number of unsheltered individuals since other jurisdictions have adopted and implemented policies related to encampments. Prior to June 2024, Code Enforcement would resolve approximately 2-4 encampments a month. Post June 2024, Code Enforcement is resolving approximately 7-8 encampments a month. An encampment clean-up can take anywhere from 2 hours to multiple days to complete and requires several Police Department employees.

D. Bailey: Response prioritization process: step 1 outreach and engagement, step 2 compliance, and step 3 enforcement.

Public comments:

- Daniel: Experienced being unhoused. Term homeless is somewhat objectionable. Staff presentation did not include current and future housing availability, nor numbers of unhoused individuals and their needs as well as people that cannot afford to live in town.
- Martha Teeter, DOVe and Davis Homelessness Alliance: Expand reach humanely—scale up crisis intervention by training volunteer responders, target support for youth especially LGBTQ and work with Yolo Child Family Organization to reduce youth violence, and have regional approach to addressing homelessness, align regional funding and advocate on regional level.
- Randii Macnear, Davis Farmers Market Manager: Support response protocols proposed by staff. Have had to take severe actions at the market, currently have 5 restraining orders. Happy to work together on issue.
- Doug Buzbee and Tracy Farver, Davis Community Meals and Housing: Support staff proposals. Reflects humane and compassionate approach, reasonable.
- Michael Shearer: Homeless individuals need alternatives and support, criminalization of homelessness and camping outside is a mistake. Should put more funding toward shelters and be flexible toward temporary solutions especially in winter.
- Ezra Dryer: Concerns about proposed ordinance against camping. Banning camping outright takes away an option for people.
- Michael Odysseus Gallardo: Camping equipment serves as survival equipment when living outside. Prohibition against camping equipment removes survival equipment from people that need it.
- Gayna Lamb-bang: Respite Center and Pauls' Place should not close on the weekend. Need more funding. Concerned where individuals would go if there is no availability anywhere if they are removed from encampment.
- Ellen Kalorik: Need to provide shelter for each evicted individual. Disappointed that ordinance does not provide assurance that individuals will be provided shelter or whether people will be penalized or imprisoned.
- Heather Caswell, Lynn Yackzan, and Ezra: Downtown business owners. Support city and partner agencies providing services. More frequent incidents downtown with mentally ill homeless. Need to be clear about boundaries and regulate people that go outside boundaries. Request city consider funding business safety.
- Alan Miller: Many fires at homeless camps damage infrastructure. Impact of homeless residents on neighborhoods. Need to emphasize public safety first.
- Matt Best, DJUSD Superintendent: Encourage council to act on staff recommendations.
- Sarah: Need more support for homeless such as maps of regular food.

- Brett Lee: Ask city to open Respite Center on weekend. If needed, adjust days accordingly. Request Social Services and Housing Department to gently ask individuals to move if they are blocking businesses without needing to call police. Request city create a no loitering ordinance within proximity of public restrooms.
- Orin Jayh: Need more public bathrooms. Police perpetuate issues of homeless. Drug use is a mental health issue.
- Maryanne Kursch, DOVe and St Vincent de Paul Society: Need more shelter options. Homeless individuals have no place to go.
- Judy Ennis: Ordinance should not have fines, misdemeanors, and jail time. Agree that protocols are needed. How does ordinance compare to other jurisdictions and best practices?
- Kathy Pullis, Davis Picks It Up: Support efforts by city to clean up community. Need more trash cans and public restrooms. Issue of excess trash is continuous.
- Edward Johnson, Grace in Action: Social service system needs work. Need more people to help. Encourage mentorship.
- Shoshanna Zatz, Heart of Davis: Need shelter, especially if city is going to destroy encampments. Suggest city look at what other communities are doing before adopt ordinance. Consider safe parking and safe camping space.
- Ben: Oppose ordinance. Need year-round shelter.
- Suzanna Eckinaw: Oppose ordinance.
- Connor Gorman: Need to distinguish between behaviors. Harmful behavior should be addressed, but should not criminalize homelessness and survival strategies.
- Anna: Oppose ordinance. Should not ban camping. Incidents of encampment cleanups that resulted in important documents or medical devices thrown away.
- Barbara Clutter: Oppose ordinance. Should not remove encampments if shelter is not available. Should prioritize funding shelter, services, and affordable housing. Other alternatives are safe camping and safe parking.

City Council recessed at 7:46 p.m. and reconvened at 8:00 p.m.

W. Arnold moved, seconded by D. Neville, as follows:

1. Direct staff to prioritize and implement actions to create and widely promote an Encampment Response Protocol.
2. Direct staff to return with options/costing for potential expansion of services as City Council may deem appropriate.
3. Approve recommended changes to the encampment reporting system by community members.

B. Vaitla Friendly Amendment: Prioritize creation of a community navigator program and more robust outreach. Not accepted by mover and second.

M. Webb clarification: Staff to return to Council with cost, timeline, resource need, and feasibility information on items such as Respite Center hours and days, contract options for cleanup assistance, sanctioned camping, loitering ordinance, community navigators, downtown beat officer, and implementation of 3-Year Homeless Strategic Plan. Bring back to Council for discussion and action on prioritization and implementation.

D. Neville Friendly Amendment: Request information on Prop 1 funding for permanent supportive housing. Accepted by mover and second. Motion passed unanimously.

W. Arnold moved, seconded by G. Partida, as follows:

1. Introduce Ordinance Revising Camping Regulations in the City of Davis By Repealing Sections 27.02.160 and 27.03.090 of Chapter 27 of the Davis Municipal Code and Adding Article 26.11 to the Davis Municipal Code, prohibiting camping, occupying camp facilities, or using camp paraphernalia on designated public and private property.

2. Direct staff to return to Council with a check-in every 6 months

Motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Arnold, Partida, Chapman

NOES: Neville, Vaitla

B. Vaitla moved, seconded by W. Arnold, to task the Social Services Commission with providing recommendations on the membership of a task force to work on the implementation phase of the Homeless Strategic Plan. Motion withdrawn.

B. Vaitla moved, seconded by D. Neville, to task the Social Services Commission to create a subcommittee to work with staff on a procedure for appointing a staff task force to work on the implementation phase of the Homeless Strategic Plan, and further to consider the resource needs around a community navigator program. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 10:19 p.m.

Zoe Mirabile
City Clerk