

Steven Hagen

From: Dannai Clayborn
Sent: Friday, October 29, 2021 4:56 PM
To: Steven Hagen
Subject: FW: Concerns about 2700 - 2900 block of Billings
Attachments: 2021 September 10 Battershell Billings Letter.pdf

From: Sean Logan <SLOGAN@helenamt.gov>
Sent: Friday, October 1, 2021 3:49 PM
To: Dannai Clayborn <DMCLAYBORN@helenamt.gov>
Subject: Concerns about 2700 - 2900 block of Billings

Hi Dannai,

I am interested in bringing this up in commission comments to see if there is any interest in addressing concerns expressed by property and business owners in the 2700-2900 block of Billings Avenue. The letter that originally prompted me looking into this has a solution recommended by the author. This solution has been used in the past to address such a problem and I will ask if the commission is interested in looking into this. I have attached Mr. Battershell's original letter, dated September 10, 2021 and below is an email response that I sent to several business owners after having visited the area last week. Also included below is an email I received from Michael Spotorno, business owner in the area, who shared his concerns. I believe we all received Mark DeBoer's email this morning. Could you please let the mayor and commissioners know?

Thanks,

Sean

Sean Logan
Sat 9/25/2021 11:16 AM



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To:

• jalea@briwax.com

Hi JaLea,

It was nice to have met you and your husband yesterday. Thanks for taking the time to meet with me to tell me your story. I have attached a scan of Mr. Battershell's original letter describing the plight of the business and property owners in the area. At the commission level, we have heard the difficult tale of the homeless from the many charitable groups in the community who deal with them on a daily basis. Up to this point, as a commission, we really haven't heard from those business and property owners who have been adversely affected by the presence of people living in public rights-of-way. Mostly what we have heard has been anecdotal accounts from folks who have driven by such encampments and are disturbed by what they are seeing. But, to hear from those whose safety and livelihoods are being negatively impacted on a daily basis is an essential part of the story that we need to help us move toward solutions.

My understanding from what you said yesterday is that you and your husband have been operating the Briwax business for several years now. It has been within the last year or so that problems have increased. In many cases, you and your staff have had to personally deal with problems as they arise. In addition, periodically, you have asked for help from the City of Helena Police Department. Your difficulties, similar to what Mr. Battershell described in his letter, include property theft (sometimes you've been able to personally recover), being accosted for a variety of reasons by those camped in the area, trash disposal, and defecation/urination on both the south side of Billings Avenue and behind your building, among other problems. These have caused you great concern for your safety as well as the safety of your staff. By the disposal of trash and frequent public defecation/urination, the general public health in the area is adversely impacted. All of the above has had a negative impact on the day-to-day ability to safely conduct your business. You summarized your tale by sharing that when you invested in the business in the Helena area three years ago that you didn't sign up for this.

I heard a very similar story from Angie Lewis and her staff at Precision Embroidery. Her story differs in that she has a customer base that frequents her store (as opposed to your wholesale-type business) and have also been adversely impacted by the transient population.

I think Mr. Battershell's solution is a viable one to address the ongoing problems experienced by the nearly 30 businesses in the area. It has been used in the past to address similar problems in public rights-of-way. I will address it with the City Manager and/or Commission in the near future.

Thanks for letting me know your story. As Helena business owners and taxpayers, you have an expectation that the City of Helena will effectively addresses your concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact the police department at their non-emergent number (406) 457-8866 or, if your safety is in danger or you observe criminal activity, 9-1-1. If you feel that you have concerns that aren't being addressed, I'd recommend contacting City Manager Rachel Harlow-Schalk at rschalk@helenamt.gov. Feel free to also cc the city commission at mayorandcommission@helenamt.gov. Also, feel free to contact me any time individually at slogan@helenamt.gov or call (406) 431-8725.

Regards,

Sean Logan

P.S. In addition to the codes that Mr. Battershell cited that come to bear on the situation on Billings Avenue, I would add 7-8-5 of the Helena City Code and have pasted it below.

7-8-5: PARKING OF TRAILERS, RECREATIONAL VEHICLES, AND BOATS; TOWING:

A. Unless a permit has been issued pursuant to [7-8-5\(C\)](#) or (D), trailers, recreational vehicles, boats, or other stored items may not be parked or stored within the public right-of-way between November 1 and April 15.

B. Any trailer, recreational vehicle, boat, or other stored items parked or stored in violation of [7-8-5\(A\)](#) may be towed and stored at the expense of the registered owner.

Michael Spotorno <michael.spotorno.e9ye@statefarm.com>

Wed 9/29/2021 4:45 PM

To Whom This May Concern:

I am writing in regard to the individuals who continue to camp across from our business along Billings Avenue behind Walmart. This is an eye sore for the community of Helena and a strict policy needs to be put into place to discontinue the allowance of this practice. The following are concerns for my business and for my clients:

Clients are panhandled

Business is panhandled

Drug deals transpire in front of our business

Sanitation – these individuals walk through our parking lot so they can relieve themselves behind our building

Witnessed an individual chasing birds with a machete

Some of my clients are scared and feel unsafe being in this area

My office alarm has gone off during the middle of the night due to somebody trying to force themselves in through my door

Garbage and trash left as a result of their laziness

Using the grass along the sidewalk as their personal bathroom

There should be no tolerance of these individuals camping along Billings avenue, let alone any city street.

Michael Spotorno State Farm Agent

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