

April 12 meeting, Wapato comments, Wendy Willingham

Dear Chair Kafoury, I and many others are astounded that you would refuse to consider using Wapato for at the minimum a temporary shelter for the homeless. Sure, it might cost some money, but we just don't have any other immediate options. Just yesterday yet another possible "shelter" project was announced, but that was only a donation and will need many more cooperative dollars from other sources. Who knows if it will even happen, or when if it does.

One of your reasons was that the residents aren't "close" to services? Set up a small medical clinic there on site, or provide transit passes. It's a short walk to the Yellow Line, then one bus transfer to downtown. Or a shuttle to downtown could be provided (work with a nonprofit or there might be businesses that would be sponsors of a bus or might offer vehicles to use).

The county wasted millions on an empty building. Why quibble about a few thousand to deal with this emergency situation? The city should join with you to assist with financing to help make it happen. Plus, you already have in hand an interested developer. (and, why should you take a \$5 million counter offer, down from \$10.5 million)

People (many of them liberal softies, like me) are getting fed up. Their children are playing in parks where there are needles on the ground. People fear leaving their homes in some areas due to aggressive campers. Many wake up to find fecal matter on their porches or in their yards. How is this fair to anyone who wants a decent quality of life in our city? And how is it fair to not provide shelter when a building stands empty?

Don't get me started on the effect on tourism. Many are shocked at our homeless situation. I was downtown yesterday and there was a tent right on the W. Burnside sidewalk. What do you think is in the tourists' minds? Hmm, lovely city, must tell my friends about it. Ha!

Multnomah County has an opportunity to be a hero and really help here. PLEASE DO SOMETHING!

Wendy Willingham

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