

Good evening City Council & fellow citizens:

My name is Amanda Cherryholmes and I work in Taft as the part time Program Director for Lincoln City Resource Center & Emergency Warming Shelter. I'm also the mother of a 9-year-old fourth grader who is a student at Taft Elementary right up the street from the Resource Center and my 5-year-old kindergartener gets off the school bus in the afternoon right out front.

Our children watch every single move that we make or don't make and learn how to deal with stressful situations by watching how we deal with stressful situations. Our children learn integrity because we show them what the meaning of integrity is. I'm sure all of us have heard the phrase "actions speak louder than words" and especially during the Christmas season, we show our love by giving gifts to loved ones and show extra generosity to those who are less fortunate. Since 1843, "A Christmas Carol" written by Charles Dickens has influenced parents around the globe for generations to tell their children the tale of Ebenezer Scrooge and to this day remains within the top 5 shared Christmas stories in the world. The tale of Ebenezer Scrooge takes the phrase "actions speak louder than words" to a whole new level.

Every non-profit agency is in constant need of more volunteers to keep their doors open, but if we have no one to pass the torch to because we never taught our children compassion for those less fortunate, what then happens to those agencies? What happens to the people desperately in need? What happens to the integrity of our children? A question we should all be asking ourselves, is if we are the example, we want our children and grandchildren to remember.

Ideas and solutions are two very different things. It has been publicly stated on multiple occasions that multiple solutions have been offered but none taken for one reason or another in regards to the location of the warming shelter. One of the ideas given was a building owned by the city in a zone that allows for an emergency shelter. However, at a recent community meeting when someone requested a description of the condition for the said building, a flat-out refusal to describe the building followed by a statement, made the claim that it was old news and didn't matter. It does matter. The building is a cinder block garage with no insulation, no running water, no bathroom, only one electrical outlet and required building modifications before use. Our purpose of the warming shelter is to prevent hypothermia not perpetuate it. Had the building been suitable to line up with our core mission of saving lives, we would have gladly taken the offer.

The latest idea of bussing our homeless to Newport upset Newport so much that they threatened to shut down their own warming shelter because they lack the volunteers & resources necessary to take on our city problem. As you can clearly see, there are valid reasons why both said ideas would never work.

To solve our community problem will take the entire community, bureaucrats and all. We all have to do our part and to make a claim that it is the responsibility of the citizens to come up with solutions and policies goes against the very definition of bureaucracy, which is an administrative policy making group in simple terms. It is incorrect to rely on the citizens to figure out workable solutions & policies to address their needs. It is also incorrect to expect the bureaucrats to solve all the problems of the citizens without their input and efforts. Solving this problem requires collaboration from all parties.

We know that there are issues that must be addressed outside of the Resource Center and hopefully Warming shelter walls but how to we address these issues? If someone witnesses a crime, such as public indecency or obnoxious belligerent behavior, they have a responsibility to report it to the police. If there is an area in a city that is known for troublemakers, it is the city's responsibility to properly staff those neighborhoods with more police officers who are city employees trained to handle criminals properly. It's surprising that this neighborhood hasn't already been properly staffed with more police officers considering that there are 4 bars, a liquor store, a pot shop and a gun store all within walking distance of the schools. Those businesses have all been there years longer than our Resource Center & Warming Shelter efforts. Perhaps this is why some criminals were already drawn to the Taft area.

We have a solid vetting system, 24/7 security cameras everywhere on our campus and solutions proven to succeed. It's time for us to come together and work together as a team. Please allow us to continue to do what we do best by saving and changing lives at Taft Hall, and please do your part to work on what you do best by creating better policies to keep your neighborhoods safe. Together we can move mountains.