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Subject: Stop Camp Evictions

As an ally to the unhoused community of Asheville, I must demand moratorium on camp evictions in Asheville. What happened in Aston park is just another example of what's wrong with the current policing system in Asheville. People are being lied to in so many ways. Our unhoused population is being lied to when told at previous evictions they could camp in Aston, and then being evicted once again. Rodger, whom I believe was a representative of parks and services, lied to people by telling everyone in the camp that if their tent poles weren't erected, it was legally allowed to be there. Shortly after, APD swarmed the area and proceeded to remove non-erect tents with Rodgers assistance. Asheville citizens are being lied to by city staff who claim that the remaining unhoused individuals who previously resided in Aston park were given shelter. And neglecting to inform the public about a young woman with mental issues that was detained by police after they refused to allow her community support to step in and deescalate her. Then committing her to a hospital, to be shortly returned to living on the street. The reality of living on the streets is far removed from anything perceived from within an office job with a generous salary. The reality is that having any sense of community is difficult to find, but vital to improve quality of life. While the pandemic still exists, it is imperative that people are allowed to shelter in place within whatever capacity seems appropriate to themselves. I support having people be given the option of shelter, but in reality, the shelters available are restrictive to these peoples way of life. Access has been voiced as a major issue within unhoused populations. Access to bus lines, access to healthcare, access to food and water resources, access to the freedom to associate with with people at their own discretion and freedom of gender and sexual expression. There are so many reasons why these individuals feel safer within their own communities rather than in the currently available alternatives. Everyone deserves to have some sense of safety and security. And for many residents of Asheville, these camps feel safe.