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## Housing Now Protest Camp

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**Eva Gladstein** <Eva.Gladstein@phila.gov>

Sat, Jun 13, 2020 at 10:21 AM

To: Sterling Johnson <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>

Cc: Brian Abernathy <Brian.Abernathy@phila.gov>, James Engler <James.Engler@phila.gov>

Dear Sterling and Jose,

We have been told that you are representatives of the HOUSING NOW PROTEST CAMP on the Parkway. If you are not the right people to reach out to please let me know if there is someone else with whom we should communicate.

We have heard you say that you do not trust government and would rather be left alone. You know that is not possible. You won't be able to stay camping on the Parkway indefinitely.

We would like to work with you to find a pathway forward toward a peaceful, fair solution. That can only be achieved by talking to each other. We are asking you – or other representatives of the group to meet with us. We agree that we should conduct any discussions with full transparency, including release of statements to the press.

We have seen your demands and principles. We are coming to the table with a starting offer to show good faith that we are entering this conversation in earnest:

1. We have hotel rooms available right now for people who are homeless and at high risk of COVID – those who are 65 or older or have underlying health conditions; more hotel rooms will be available for other homeless individuals in the near future.
2. We respect your right to be self-governing. We will seriously consider acting on your desire to establish a temporary sanctioned encampment. Please tell us what your plans are for a camp that is safe for the people there and the surrounding community and locations you would like us to consider.
3. We are willing to issue an executive order regarding tiny home villages. We will work with you to set up the first such place.
4. We agree that the police should have less of a role with homelessness. We would like to hear from you what that means and see what actions we can take both immediately and long-term.

We will not be able to meet all your demands. But we can and will make life better for people of color and people who are homeless if you or other representatives of the group will work with us. Please email me back with your response so we can get started.

Regards,

Eva

Eva Gladstein (she/her/hers)

7/12/2020

Gmail - Housing Now Protest Camp

Deputy Managing Director for Health & Human Services

City of Philadelphia

Municipal Services Building, Suite 1430

[1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd.](#)

[Philadelphia PA 19102](#)

[Office: 215 686 3696](#)



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## Follow up to Protest Demands

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**Sterling Johnson** <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>

Mon, Jun 15, 2020 at 1:54 AM

To: Eva Gladstein <Eva.Gladstein@phila.gov>, Brian Abernathy <Brian.Abernathy@phila.gov>, James Engler <James.Engler@phila.gov>

Cc: Nadera Hood <nyhdearah@gmail.com>

Hello:

The residents want to speak to Mayor Kenney, Darrell Clarke and Kelvin Jeremiah. They require the meeting to occur at the camp. They want to have a real discussion about the demands as well as how we end homelessness.

Right now, the Camp's lead representatives can meet at 5:30 pm on Wednesday based on their availability. I've attached the edited demands. They are the same except to be more specific. They have requested that you address each of the demands.

Regards,  
Sterling Johnson

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Sterling K. Johnson

(415) 990-8546 | [sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com](mailto:sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com)



**Our demands.pdf**

372K



## Follow up to Protest Demands

**Sterling Johnson** <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>

Wed, Jun 17, 2020 at 2:23 PM

To: Eva Gladstein <Eva.Gladstein@phila.gov>

Cc: Brian Abernathy <Brian.Abernathy@phila.gov>, James Engler <James.Engler@phila.gov>, Nadera Hood <nyhdearah@gmail.com>

Hello:

It is assumed, but Wednesday will not work for us at this point. The residents have decided to have a press conference to discuss their demands today. We were contacted by Michael Lipuma and will discuss issues with him as well.

Is the Mayor available Friday or during the weekend to discuss further these demands?

To address misinformation that you have provided to news sources, the population has fluctuated from day to day. Some people found it to their liking, others did not want to be there. They are free to come and go as they please. Everything regarding the camp is voluntary and there is no coercion. Individuals are outside, and not in a congregate setting, they are being provided COVID-testing and medical assessments if they want them. This was a direct ask from some of the residents. They also asked that we not collect surveillance data. So we are not. We have spent a lot of time discussing the history of housing and homelessness activism with the residents. Listen to them.

Many of them come from the many displacements that the city has done in the last few months. They are not "service resistant". If they want to speak to homeless outreach, they are free to speak to them. We wish to deal with you, but it is hard to see you as acting in good faith when we've seen extremely ableist language come from your office.

There is a clear connection between race, gender, class, mental health and medical oppression. Many books have been written on the subject. I can suggest more for you. And to call us mentally ill shows how far you will go to discredit us and to uphold white supremacy.

<https://www.amazon.com/Protest-Psychosis-Schizophrenia-Became-Disease/dp/0807001279>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/side-effects/201005/how-schizophrenia-became-black-disease-interview-jonathan-metzl>

<https://www.amazon.com/Care-Work-Dreaming-Disability-Justice/dp/1551527383>

[https://www.amazon.com/Body-Keeps-Score-Healing-Trauma/dp/0143127748/ref=rtpb\\_31?\\_encoding=UTF8&pd\\_rd\\_i=0143127748&pd\\_rd\\_r=f961c4b3-e445-4856-8b62-6fdcd8c86de2&pd\\_rd\\_w=STj83&pd\\_rd\\_wg=rtl3P&pf\\_rd\\_p=341def9d-118d-40b1-a1a3-43a765074f73&pf\\_rd\\_r=374TRY8M3JS5WJ2GPHZK&psc=1&refRID=374TRY8M3JS5WJ2GPHZK](https://www.amazon.com/Body-Keeps-Score-Healing-Trauma/dp/0143127748/ref=rtpb_31?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=0143127748&pd_rd_r=f961c4b3-e445-4856-8b62-6fdcd8c86de2&pd_rd_w=STj83&pd_rd_wg=rtl3P&pf_rd_p=341def9d-118d-40b1-a1a3-43a765074f73&pf_rd_r=374TRY8M3JS5WJ2GPHZK&psc=1&refRID=374TRY8M3JS5WJ2GPHZK)

[https://www.amazon.com/Rebellious-Mourning-Collective-Work-Grief/dp/1849352844/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?dchild=1&keywords=cindy+milstein&qid=1592417781&s=books&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/Rebellious-Mourning-Collective-Work-Grief/dp/1849352844/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=cindy+milstein&qid=1592417781&s=books&sr=1-1)

I have also attached the letter from academics and researchers that I am in community with, know personally, talk to constantly, have written papers with etc. and they agree with this approach. They have laid out solutions that are different, but they believe that there must be more resources committed to permanent housing solutions and that they are available now.

They are very aware of the timeline and the situation. We do not believe that you are prioritizing permanent low-income housing for people in this city. Again we wish to meet to discuss further making these demands realized. They are attached.

Already we have had one loss because the organizers and the residents believe in this mission more than anything. Housing is a

human right. We have experienced homelessness. We have experienced coercive medical treatment. We have experienced people telling us that what we think we want and what we really want are not the same. They want to have real conversations about transforming the system to understand people's experiences, especially their trauma and their grief. And understanding the connection between emotional pain and suffering and the ability to regain trust with yourself and with others.

We look forward to your response,

Sterling

[Quoted text hidden]

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## 2 attachments



**Our demands.pdf**

372K



**Encampment letter\_16June2020-300.pdf**

110K



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## Follow up to Protest Demands

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**Eva Gladstein** <Eva.Gladstein@phila.gov>

Wed, Jun 17, 2020 at 3:26 PM

To: Sterling Johnson <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>

Cc: Brian Abernathy <Brian.Abernathy@phila.gov>, James Engler <James.Engler@phila.gov>, Nadera Hood <nyhdearah@gmail.com>

Sterling – We received your latest email and attachments.

We understand that residents will be meeting with Mr. LiPuma.

On behalf of the Administration, the following individuals are available to meet with you at a mutually agreeable time: Eva Gladstein, Deputy Managing Director for Health & Human Services, Liz Hersh, Director of the Office of Homeless Services, and David Holloman, Chief of Staff for the Office of Homeless Services. The purpose would be to listen and gain a better understanding of your demands and share with you the steps that the City is able to make to address these requests. We are not available to meet on Friday or the weekend, but are available next week. We would prefer to meet at a site that is neither the encampment nor a City office and would work with you to come up with a mutually agreeable meeting place.

We have reviewed the demands again and I want to restate that we are coming to the table with a starting offer to show good faith that we are entering this conversation in earnest:

1. We have hotel rooms available right now for people who are homeless and at high risk of COVID – those who are 65 or older or have underlying health conditions; more hotel rooms will be available for other homeless individuals in the near future.
2. We respect your right to be self-governing. We will seriously consider acting on your desire to establish a temporary sanctioned encampment. Please tell us what your plans are for a camp that is safe for the people there and the surrounding community and locations you would like us to consider.
3. We are willing to issue an executive order regarding tiny home villages. We will work with you to set up the first such place.
4. We agree that the police should have less of a role with homelessness. We would like to hear from you what that means and see what actions we can take both immediately and long-term.

I also understand that some individuals are interested in testing for COVID-19 and medical triage at the encampment. Please confirm if this is correct, and if so, we will assist with making those arrangements.

Please let us know if this is acceptable and we can finalize the arrangements.

[Quoted text hidden]



Sterling Johnson &lt;sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com&gt;

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## Follow up to Protest Demands

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**Eva Gladstein** <Eva.Gladstein@phila.gov>

Thu, Jun 18, 2020 at 3:25 PM

To: Sterling Johnson &lt;sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com&gt;

Cc: Brian Abernathy &lt;Brian.Abernathy@phila.gov&gt;, James Engler &lt;James.Engler@phila.gov&gt;, Nadera Hood &lt;nyhdearah@gmail.com&gt;, Cynthia Munger &lt;cinmccconnell@gmail.com&gt;, Michael LiPuma &lt;mlipuma@lipumalaw.com&gt;

Sterling –

I am responding to your request for information on available hotel rooms. The City presently has two sites in Center City operating out of hotels. Detailed information is below. They are not able to accept individuals over the weekend, but can do so beginning on Monday, consistent with the guidelines and processes outlined below. We can walk people through the process if there is interest.

I am also repeating our offer from yesterday. On behalf of the Administration, the following individuals are available to meet with you at a mutually agreeable time: Eva Gladstein, Deputy Managing Director for Health & Human Services, Liz Hersh, Director of the Office of Homeless Services, and David Holloman, Chief of Staff for the Office of Homeless Services. The purpose would be to listen and gain a better understanding of your demands and share with you the steps that the City is able to make to address these requests. We are not available to meet on Friday or the weekend, but are available next week. We would prefer to meet at a site that is neither the encampment nor a City office and would work with you to come up with a mutually agreeable meeting place.

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**COVID Prevention Site:** Individuals who are at high risk for COVID – 65 years or older, or with any of the following underlying medical conditions – immune compromised, chronic illness or an underlying respiratory condition – are able to stay at this site. There is not a time limit on the individual's length of stay, and they are able to enter and leave freely. Space is available at this site and we expect to increase capacity in late July. Each individual is in a private hotel room with bathroom, television, and telephone. Three meals a day and snacks are provided. I am attaching a PDF version of the one pager that describes the program. The criteria and referral process is outlined in this step-by-step guide and the referral form is online.

**Isolation/Quarantine Site:** This site is available for individuals who have been tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting test results, or those who have tested positive, and who are not able to safely quarantine or isolate at home. Individuals on Medication Assisted Treatment are able to stay at the site. The length of stay is limited to 14 days for those who test positive; those whose tests are

returned as negative are discharged. Social workers on site help the individuals identify housing options upon their discharge. Each individual is in a private hotel room with bathroom, television, and telephone. Three meals a day and snacks are provided. Individuals are required to remain quarantined in their rooms, but receive multiple calls and check-ins from health professionals and peers. Intake process starts after someone gets tested and the health or shelter provider contacts the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. We understand that FIGHT will be providing testing on site and they can assist with this. The Health Department conducts a health screen to make sure the individual is able to stay safely in a hotel environment and does not need more intense medical care. This is the Quarantine and Isolation Sites FAQ sheet. This is the Health Department guidance for the site, detailing how to obtain referrals. This is the housing request form for homeless and unsheltered persons in need of quarantine or isolation. This can be used as an alternative to the PDPH provider line, which is 215-685-6742 (business hours) or 215-686-4514 (after hours).

Again, if there is interest, we can help walk people through the process next week.

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**Guidelines for COVID 19 PreventionSPACE.5.14.20 (003).pdf**

134K





## Housing Protests

**Sterling Johnson** <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>

Mon, Jun 29, 2020 at 3:44 PM

Hello:

As you are aware, we have been negotiating with the city around housing with the protest at 22nd and the Parkway. The talks have been slow, but there have been some productive points.

As we see, there is no political will to hold the Housing Authority accountable. Jen Bennetch will be occupying Housing Authority property exercising first amendment rights to petition and protest. She was met today with the following notice from Larry Radican.

If your offices could assist in any way before there is escalation, that would be helpful.



**Larry Radican** 3:02 PM

to me ▾



Dear Ms. Bennetch:

This letter is formal notice that you do not have permission to enter or remain on the vacant PHA property next to PHA's Office Building. All of the lots that you are camping on are owned by PHA. If you attempt to remain on this parcel of PHA property, you may be subject to legal action, including arrest for criminal trespass and potentially other charges.

An identical notice is being delivered to you and the other trespassers.

You must cease and desist from these actions immediately.

Please be guided accordingly.

Sterling

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Sterling K. Johnson

(415) 990-8546 | [sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com](mailto:sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com)



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## Following up on today's conversation

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**Eva Gladstein** <Eva.Gladstein@phila.gov>

Tue, Jun 30, 2020 at 3:10 PM

To: Sterling Johnson <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>, Nadera Hood <nyhdearah@gmail.com>

Hello Sterling and Jenn – I understand that Dave Holloman spoke with you and other organizers of the JTD Camp today and arrived at a proposed agreement to peacefully and fairly support the residents of the camp. Please let us know within 24 hours if these terms are agreeable.

Thank you for your cooperation as we try to work collaboratively to advance our goals for increasing permanent affordable housing.

Regards,

Eva

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### **Proposed Framework for Agreement:**

The City of Philadelphia will:

- Offer intensive services to those staying at the Encampment through a “Homeless Connect” event to be held from July 6<sup>th</sup> – July 10 in close proximity, but not within the JTD Camp.
- Present at the site will be representatives of the Office of Homeless Services, Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, Department of Human Services, and Department of Public Health.
- City representatives will work intensely with camp participants to connect them to appropriate housing, health, and other services during this time.

Representatives of the JTD Camp will:

- Encourage participation of campers in the “Homeless Connect” event and otherwise facilitate their engagement with the services
- Begin to reduce the size of the camp immediately by removing tents that are not used for overnight habitation
- Communicate to camp participants that the camp will disband on or before July 11, 2020.
- Make their best efforts to leave the land in good condition – removing all tents, structures, and debris from the site on or before July 11, 2020.

Eva Gladstein (she/her/hers)

Deputy Managing Director for Health & Human Services

City of Philadelphia

Municipal Services Building, Suite 1430

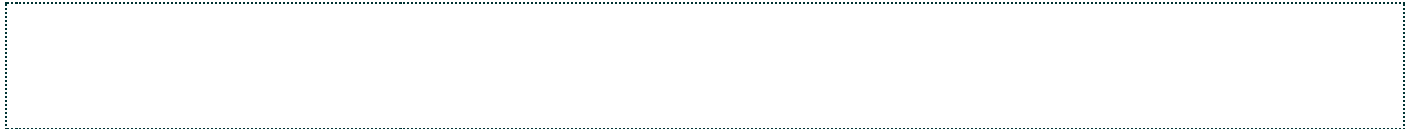
1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd.

Philadelphia PA 19102

Office: 215 686 3696

Cell: 215 520 2601

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Date: Friday, June 26, 2020

Time: 4:30 pm

Location: Three Logan at the Northeast corner of 18th and Arch. It is a former retail space. You enter from 18th Street.

Participants:

City of Philadelphia: Eva Gladstein, Deputy Managing Director, Liz Hersh, Director of the Office of Homeless Services, and David Holloman, Chief of Staff.

JTD Camp Organizers: Jen Bennetch, #OccupyPHA, Sterling Johnson, Black & Brown Workers Cooperative, Alex Stewart, Workers Revolutionary Collective, Tionna Frisby, JTD Organizer, George Matthews, JTD Organizer, Ronald Story, JTD Organizer, Beast, JTD Organizer, Archie Tindell, JTD Organizer, Indigo, JTD Organizer, Cynthia Munger.

Neutral Parties: Rasheedah Phillips, Esq., Attorney and Community Activist, Mike LiPuma, Esq., Attorney and Kendra Brooks, City Councilperson At-Large for the City of Philadelphia.

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Overview of demands (Jen Bennetch)
- Demands (From JTD organizers)
- Current status (Sterling Johnson)
- Responses to Demands. (City responds)
- Discussion
- Next Steps

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Sterling K. Johnson

(415) 990-8546 | [sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com](mailto:sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com)



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## Following up on today's conversation

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**Sterling Johnson** <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>

Tue, Jun 30, 2020 at 5:18 PM

To: Eva Gladstein <Eva.Gladstein@phila.gov>

Cc: Nadera Hood <nyhdearah@gmail.com>, "Liz.Hersh" <Liz.Hersh@phila.gov>, David Holloman

July 11 is not going to work as a timeline. We will leave when there is a plan for every person.

Today, we discussed the following:

1. Written description of DBH programs that lead to permanent housing.
  2. Written promise for two sanctioned encampments and a tiny house village
  3. Opening one other hotel.
- \*We still believe that two more should be open. The Days Inn Express and one more.

No one will go because they can't smoke in treatment. You need to Be getting rid of barriers.

We did not agree to anything. We do not agree to the timeline. In fact the timeline is dangerous and reckless. Each person needs a plan. We are waiting for more details of your programs. Please provide.

Thank you,  
Sterling Johnson

[Quoted text hidden]



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## Following up on today's conversation

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**Sterling Johnson** <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>

Wed, Jul 1, 2020 at 2:17 PM

To: Eva Gladstein <Eva.Gladstein@phila.gov>

Hello:

Thank you for your message.

### **Upshot:**

**As I experienced last week, the issues around mothers and children sleeping on the street and potentially having their children taken away just for not having a home are much more important than people's ability to watch their children play baseball. I refuse to center white comfort over black lives and their real material deprivation. You should do the same.**

A few things though:

### **RE: Smoking**

We are very aware of the Behavioral Health System and know it is not a choice to smoke outside of the facilities. Please check back with David Jones and Tom Farley regarding their policy. We are well aware, no person can simply go outside to smoke from a DBH funded facility. Even if a person is funded through CBH and they are in another county, that person cannot smoke or they will be discharged.

We also know that many people do not want abstinence-based recovery and so many of our people are helped by drugs. They need harm reduction services and housing that allow them to thrive in the community.

### **RE: Sanctioned Encampment**

We stand by the fact that we must have a commitment to two sanctioned encampments. We cannot ghetto resources in one place. That'd be against the Olmstead decision which calls for integrated community resources for people with disabilities. We've stated that we have been consulting with individuals in Portland and San Francisco as well as individuals from Partners in Health (Rwanda and Haiti) around public safety, public health and administration of encampments.

### **RE: the two issues of the overdose and the stabbing**

The overdose that occurred on site was due to cocaine and the cause of death was a heart attack. The Department of Public Health's focus on only opioids and not other drugs, like K2, PCP and Crack leave mainly black people without assistance. It's part of a constant pattern of racist policies that privilege white life and here you are using that person's death as a reason to shut down the site that provided quick attention to them. That is rather heinous.

Yes, there have been overdoses and drug poisonings. In the case of opioids, we have a large supply of nalclex that is being used. People's lives are being saved. We are saving you from the yearly embarrassment of yet another 1,000 people dying preventable deaths. This is all on your watch. In the case of other drug poisonings, there are residents and volunteers to monitor the person. We'd encourage executive action around smoking consumption rooms for people who use

drugs. If you are having problems with zoning, you have the power to fix that as well. You know the zoning code more than anyone.

The stabbing was a situation that occurs often in the community around resources and interpersonal conflicts that are resolved through violence. They are avoidable if we are able to provide permanent housing and other resources faster. We know that housing would have provided space for them. Most JTD camp residents blame the city for their neglect and inaction.

We, Occupy PHA, Worker's Revolutionary Collective and the Black and Brown Cooperative are the ones that have been reacting to such situations and finding space and resources for individuals along with thousands of community members showing up for this group of unhoused people. For this person that suffered the stabbing, we are working to find a solution that preserves their safety as well as listening to their wishes. For any person with children that comes by and the office of homeless services is unable to help, we have worked to make sure those children are safe and have a space not within the encampment.

As I experienced last week, the issues around mothers and children sleeping on the street and potentially having their children taken away just for not having a home are much more important than people's ability to watch their children playing baseball. I refuse to center white comfort over black lives and the real material deprivation. You should do the same.

**RE: Timeline.**

We are discussing this issue with residents to get their thoughts.

[Quoted text hidden]





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## Following up on today's conversation

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**Nadera Hood** <nyhdearah@gmail.com>

Wed, Jul 1, 2020 at 4:11 PM

To: Sterling Johnson <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>

Cc: Eva Gladstein <eva.gladstein@phila.gov>, "Liz.Hersh" <Liz.Hersh@phila.gov>, David Holloman <David.Holloman@phila.gov>

I just have a few things to add.

If we are going to use one stabbing and one overdose as justification to shut down one encampment and further as an excuse to not open another can we apply the same logic the shelter system, and the Philadelphia Housing Authority. Overdoses and violence including sexual assaults are normal occurrences in the city shelters, will shelters be

The Philadelphia Housing Authority is plagued with gun violence. In the month of June alone there were two shootings in Spring Garden Homes one a mass shooting, two shootings in Raymond Rosen, (two teens were shot one nearly 20 times) in Richard Allen and a nine year old was shot dead inside of a Queen Lane PHA house. You don't even want me to go into how many shootings happened in PHA Projects across the city this year. Are we shutting PHA down and stopping them from operating ever again??

A 16 year old was shot on his way home after an argument at PHA's Vaux High School. This is only Vaux's second year being opened and they only have two grades open are they going to be shut down??

While I agree that there are too many people at that location, that is the city's problem for covering up homelessness and trying to make it invisible.

How much violence occurs at the Hub of Hope and outside of the municipal services center, and underground in the transit system?? You are not going to put that on us, we are literally doing your jobs and risking ourselves and not getting paid for it.

Also I stand by the fact that the city's services are useless wastes of money and while I will not prevent anybody from utilizing them I will not encourage people to take services that are not permanent housing and I don't think tax money should be spent on anything other than permanent housing a lot of services are a waste of time and money and a scam to keep people paid. Besides we all know most people will not take those services anyway.

[Quoted text hidden]



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## Following up on today's conversation

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**Sterling Johnson** <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>

Wed, Jul 1, 2020 at 4:50 PM

To: Nadera Hood <nyhdearah@gmail.com>

Cc: Eva Gladstein <eva.gladstein@phila.gov>, "Liz.Hersh" <Liz.Hersh@phila.gov>, David Holloman <David.Holloman@phila.gov>

There are real concerns around the treatment system because it's still based in abstinence and not harm reduction. The fact that you have to have treatment to get into these housing programs is a real problem. We need a solution where someone will not AMA due to the smoking and vaping ban then end up back on the street. Here's one story where someone left treatment and then died because of the smoking ban.

<https://filtermag.org/treatment-smoking-ban-philadelphia/>

I met Bobby in 2011, when we were both residents in a local recovery house. Bobby was 19 years old and I was 37, so it's an understatement to say we had initial difficulty finding common ground. But over time we developed a close friendship, a bond which helped to lay the foundation for my recovery from opioid addiction and my path to wellness.

Bobby, whose last name I'm omitting to protect his family's privacy, exhibited a genuineness rarely seen in the addiction/recovery world. He brought a childlike perspective into a house of pain, which was a catalyst for healing. It was not uncommon to see men in the house struggling with depression, and Bobby would typically be the guy who showed up with encouraging words and a hug. For some strange reason, he seemed able to enter therapeutic relationships with people the rest of us were excluded from.

A few years back I suffered a recurrence of problematic use (also known as a relapse) and lost touch with Bobby. I later learned that Bobby, like myself, had become a father, and that this event sparked an episode of depression and insecurity that also led him to resume problematic use, as it had with me years earlier.

I eventually found recovery again and began working in the recovery/harm reduction space. This past summer, I ran into Bobby at the local syringe service program in Philadelphia. He described how he had been struggling with opioid use disorder, and subsequently with homelessness.

In the second half of 2019, I began to visit Bobby regularly on the streets of Philadelphia where he was living, discussing available treatment options with him.

Beginning January 1, 2019, city public health officials implemented a ban on smoking at publicly funded addiction treatment programs (including outdoor spaces). Philadelphia ranks second among large US cities for overdose death rates. Advocates have long been concerned about the unintended consequences of this policy—namely, a rise in patients leaving treatment prematurely and increased barriers to their seeking treatment in the first place.

The greatest concern, in the context of Philadelphia's **fentanyl-adulterated drug supply**, has been the increased overdose risk for patients who return to use, with lowered opioid tolerance, after a brief period of abstinence.

Every time we spoke, Bobby made it clear that he would not enter a treatment facility which prohibited smoking.

Bobby explained that he had entered a treatment facility in March 2019, three months into the smoking ban. But he had left against medical advice because the struggle to abstain from opioids and nicotine simultaneously had proven too difficult.

Every time we spoke, Bobby made it clear that he would not enter a treatment facility which prohibited smoking. One day I was sitting with him on an abandoned couch in a vacant lot where he lamented not being home with his children.

“I just want to stop. I don’t want to be out here anymore,” he said. “I miss my kids and want to be a good father, but it’s so hard and with this smoking ban, it’s just stupid and too much.” Although replacing cigarettes with vapes would have been a good option for him, the Philadelphia treatment smoking ban, unconscionably, also extends to vaping.

The last time I saw Bobby was late December. He was walking along Kensington Avenue with a large blanket around him, trying to keep warm in the subfreezing temperature. Even in the unbearable cold, he tearfully explained that quitting smoking was too difficult for him to consider while managing his opioid use disorder.

On January 31, I received a call telling me that Bobby had been found unconscious on the street. He was subsequently revived through CPR, but had been down too long without oxygen and suffered irreparable brain damage, resulting in brain death. Bobby then became an organ and tissue donor. He was 28 years old and had a young son and two daughters.

“We are continuing to make a significant investment in health outcomes for Philadelphians,” David T. Jones, the commissioner of Philadelphia’s Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services, told *Filter* last year. “We know that tobacco utilization is the #1 killer throughout the United States and we’re invested in saving lives.”

Smoking does kill in the long term, but people using fentanyl-adulterated street drugs are at risk of dying right now. In the course of my work, I have heard countless times from people experiencing homelessness and drug addiction that they will not enter treatment if they cannot smoke. They consciously and knowingly accept the risk of continued illicit drug use, preferring to preserve their autonomy rather than enter a nicotine-free facility.

It is impossible to identify how many of the city’s fatal overdose victims refused treatment due to the smoking ban, or how many were patients who

left against medical advice. They all matter.

But with Bobby, it was personal for me. He and I had many conversations about going into treatment, and many more about how the restriction on smoking was a deal-breaker. Bobby remained on the streets because of the ban, and he died on those streets as a result.

City officials neglected to consider the slow, progressive nature of personal change—or the absurdly high bar of expecting people to quit nicotine at the same time as other drugs.

His tragic death was entirely preventable, and it is an indictment on policymakers—one that I hope brings humility and repentance.



Harm reduction advocates have been **outspoken** against the smoking ban since its inception. The opioid-involved overdose crisis claims over 1,100 lives annually in Philadelphia. As Brooke Feldman **wrote** for *Filter* last year, this is a time when barriers need to be dismantled—not erected.

Lives depend on this. Children like Bobby's are relying on obstacles being removed so their parents' lives can be saved. Banning smoking in treatment programs—an activity in which a large percentage of people struggling with drug addiction engage—is a deeply regressive move that prompts head-scratching from anyone who has spent time in Philadelphia's drug-user community.

In their zeal for “investing in health outcomes for Philadelphians,” city public health officials neglected to consider the slow, progressive nature of personal change—or the absurdly high bar of expecting people to quit nicotine at the same time as other drugs. In assuming they knew what was best for people, they grossly ignored how personal agency and autonomy are the primary drivers of change.

Their paternalistic decision cost Bobby—among **others**—his life. It stripped two parents of their son and three small children of their father, and left a woman a single parent.

It is long past due for Philadelphia to repeal this cruel and counterproductive smoking ban.

[Quoted text hidden]

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**From:** Larry Redican <[Larry.Redican@pha.phila.gov](mailto:Larry.Redican@pha.phila.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, July 3, 2020 5:28 PM

**To:**

**Subject:** RE: Occupy PHA Response

PHA will not be able to meet with the encampment leaders under these terms.

Thank you for your efforts to broker a meeting. If they would like to meet with Kelvin virtually, that can be arranged but an in person meeting is out of the question.

PHA will not put staff (who may be vulnerable themselves or may have vulnerable family members at home) at risk by having an in-person meeting. The members of the encampment flout both the City and State health guidelines (both mask and gathering requirements). The unsanitary conditions at the site make it very likely that the presence of Covid-19 abounds.

For the encampment leaders benefit, I would like to list all of the things PHA has already agreed to even without a meeting.

- 1- PHA will follow an ejectment process for squatters that the encampment leaders illegally broke and entered into our vacant scattered sites.
- 2- PHA has agreed not to use our police force to remove the squatters who are in PHA units under no legal right.
- 3- PHA has agreed to work with the City to assist the illegal squatters to place those allegedly homeless people in appropriate living conditions.
- 4- PHA has agreed, where possible, to create affordable homeownership opportunities for some of the illegal squatters (working with appropriate City and community activists).
- 5- PHA has agreed that we will work to transfer some of our vacant scattered sites to local CDCs or 501(c)(3)s who can turn those units into affordable housing opportunities (rental or homeowners) ie. a community land trust for some number of units. These would be transferred with appropriate HUD approval and deed restrictions to keep the property affordable.
- 6- We have agreed to stand down from any attempt to remove the encampment for two weeks.

We hope this encampment is not just a political stunt and that they are as serious about addressing systemic racism in housing as we are. We would like to meet but not under the current demands.



Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

**From:****Sent:** Thursday, July 2, 2020 7:03 PM**To:** [Larry Redican](#)**Subject:** RE: Occupy PHA Response

	<b>CAUTION:</b> This Email is from an EXTERNAL source. Ensure you trust this sender before clicking on any links or attachments.

Hello:

We have been working with Kendra's office and so want her or a representative to be present.

We require the presence of the CEO, Kelvin Jeremiah and if someone should be present from Darrell Clarke's office, it should be the Council President himself.

At this meeting, we hope to make decisions, so that we can move forward. Without the right participants, it's a waste of all of our time and we will not be meeting.

If that will only happen later in the week, then we can wait.

Thanks,

**From:** Larry Redican <[Larry.Redican@pha.phila.gov](mailto:Larry.Redican@pha.phila.gov)>**Sent:** Thursday, July 2, 2020 6:11 PM**To:****Subject:** RE: Occupy PHA Response

PHA's Response:

1. A PHA senior management team would be willing to meet in person. I am not sure it can be Monday but I will see if we can arrange it. However, we commit to meeting early next week.
- 2.. We would agree to invite David Holloman, the Chief of Staff from City's Office of Supportive Housing. If the encampment wants someone from City Council to attend, we would invite the Council District Office in which they are protesting. If acceptable, we would arrange for that representative.

Laurence M. Redican  
General Counsel  
Philadelphia Housing Authority  
[2013 Ridge Avenue](#)  
[Philadelphia, PA 19121](#)  
215.684.1221

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From:  
To: "Larry Redican" <[Larry.Redican@pha.phila.gov](mailto:Larry.Redican@pha.phila.gov)>  
Date: 07/02/2020 04:56 PM  
Subject: RE: Occupy PHA Response

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**CAUTION:** This Email is from an EXTERNAL source. Ensure you trust this sender before clicking on any links or attachments.

Hi Larry,

**Here is the response:**

I think it is best if our teams simply met. We would disagree with your characterization of events.

1. We'd like to meet in person. We are right across the street from HUD.
2. We are talking to city representatives at every juncture of this process regarding our de-camping from the Parkway. The coordination between us and them is essential to us going forward. We will invite reps from a

city council person's office.

3. This is more than Occupy PHA.

Regards,

Occupy PHA, Workers Revolutionary Collective and the Black and Brown Workers Cooperative, Residents at PHA Camp

**From:** Larry Redican <[Larry.Redican@pha.phila.gov](mailto:Larry.Redican@pha.phila.gov)>

**Sent:** Thursday, July 2, 2020 2:29 PM

**To:**

**Subject:** RE: Occupy PHA Response

PHA can meet some of the demands. Here are PHA's suggestions on how to move discussions along.

(1) PHA can do a meeting (on Monday) if that meeting is virtual. PHA can discuss arrangements, if necessary, to facilitate a virtual meeting.

(2) PHA will agree to use the ejectment process for squatters in PHA's scattered site units. PHA will work with the current squatters but we cannot simply allow for the continued or expanded occupancy of vacant scattered sites because of serious safety concerns. If the unit being squatted in is a RAD units where PHA has transferred the federal assistance to a new unit, there may be a pathway for affordable home ownership or transfer to a not-for-profit community group for affordable housing purposes (provided the unit does not have an intended reuse). PHA wants to be clear that allowing for continued illegal occupancy would be to violate federal housing regulations. Moreover, PHA does not want to make this a new practice where units are broken into and are given to people who are not already in line on PHA's waitlist.

(3) We are willing to give the encampment 2 weeks, as a sign of good faith. During that time, PHA/City will stand down and will not attempt to involuntarily remove them. That gives us all an opportunity to discuss and negotiate their voluntary removal. The encampment leaders must also agree not to further damage any PHA property and/or equipment and to stop verbally harassing our employees.

Laurence M. Redican  
General Counsel  
Philadelphia Housing Authority  
[2013 Ridge Avenue](#)  
[Philadelphia, PA 19121](#)  
215.684.1221

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From:  
To: "Larry Redican" <[Larry.Redican@pha.phila.gov](mailto:Larry.Redican@pha.phila.gov)>  
Date: 07/01/2020 08:14 PM  
Subject: RE: Occupy PHA Response

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[attachment "image002.png" deleted by Larry Redican/PHA]



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## Following up on today's conversation

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Eva Gladstein <Eva.Gladstein@phila.gov>

Tue, Jul 7, 2020 at 4:48 PM

To: Sterling Johnson <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>, "Liz.Hersh" <Liz.Hersh@phila.gov>

Sterling –

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, the City responded to your communication of June 30<sup>th</sup> with a proposed framework for an agreement. I am writing to re-iterate that proposal which clearly states our intent to enable homeless residents in the camp to enter a pathway towards permanent housing. It also commits the City to establish a Tiny House Village, and the addition of hotel rooms to serve as COVID Prevention Spaces. We will also commit to rescheduling the meeting that was to take place last Friday with DBHIDS leadership.

I also wanted to clarify again that none of the individuals who work for the Mayor sit on the Board of Commissioners of the Philadelphia Housing Authority or have any direct authority over that agency. It is a federally funded and regulated entity, with a corporation set up through state authority. While we have encouraged PHA to communicate directly with the organizers of the protest, we cannot direct them to do so.

Below is our recommended framework for an agreement and our response to the last set of demands.

Please respond within 24 hours if there are specific changes you would like to recommend.

Regards,

Eva

### **Proposed Framework for Agreement:**

The City of Philadelphia will:

- Offer intensive services to those staying at the Encampment through a “Homeless Connect” event to be held from July 6<sup>th</sup> – July 10 in close proximity, but not within the JDT Camp.
- Present at the site will be representatives of the Office of Homeless Services, Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, Department of Human Services, and Department of Public Health.
- City representatives will work intensely with camp participants to connect them to appropriate housing, health, and other services during this time.

Representatives of the JDT Camp will:

- Encourage participation of campers in the “Homeless Connect” event and otherwise facilitate their engagement with the services
- Begin to reduce the size of the camp immediately by removing tents that are not used for overnight habitation
- Communicate to camp participants that the camp will disband on or before July 11, 2020.

- Make their best efforts to leave the land in good condition – removing all tents, structures, and debris from the site on or before July 11, 2020.

### **Written Response to last set of demands:**

#### **1. Written description of DBH programs that lead to permanent housing.**

Attached you will find a written description of DBH programs that can be a pathway to permanent housing. If we mutually agree to a "Housing Connect" event as offered in our email yesterday, workers from DBHIDS will be available on site to make assessments as to the level and type of care that would be appropriate. This will include Certified Peer Specialists and/or Certified Recovery Specialists, who can then support the individuals as they access care. To be clear, behavioral health programs are one of the pipelines to permanent supportive housing, but it not the only pathway, nor is it a guarantee. Some of it is up to the individual's choice as to whether they commit to recovery at this time and for those who can, employment. New housing opportunities are accessed through DBHIDS, DHS and OHS programs and access is based on vulnerability to COVID, chronic homelessness and disAbility. Our plans for this year include approximately 800 permanent housing opportunities. These housing opportunities are a mix of different types of housing – Single Room Occupancy, efficiencies, shared housing and rapid rehousing. We are identifying sites that can accommodate couples.

#### **2. Written promise for two sanctioned encampments and a tiny house village**

We will commit to the development of at least one tiny house village. This will be a pilot and we anticipate it would house about 25 individuals, based upon the size of the lot. We are currently reviewing City-owned land that can be used for this purpose. As stated previously, we would issue a Request for Proposals for a non-profit to operate the site, and would welcome any nonprofits with whom you are associated to apply.

Given the experience of this camp in which there was an overdose death and one stabbing on site and another in the vicinity in less than 3 weeks, we cannot make a commitment to repeating two more – or even one more - without some serious discussion about lessons learned, how safety will be promoted, and engagement with the hosting community of neighbors and local elected officials. We can commit to a serious conversation and exploration of potential sites.

#### **3. Opening one other hotel.**

\*We still believe that two more should be open. The Days Inn Express and one more.

We are committing to 3 hotels: the current COVID Prevention Space, which will transition to a larger hotel in the fall; and two more hotels where lease negotiations are being finalized. These are exclusively for people who are most vulnerable to COVID as defined by the CDC, those over 65 and/or with chronic health conditions.

No one will go because they can't smoke in treatment. You need to Be getting rid of barriers.

The COVID prevention sites allow people to smoke outdoors, just not in rooms. The Isolation/Quarantine site will be transitioning to a larger facility in August with outdoor space and residents will have the ability to go outside for smoking breaks and recreation. DBHIDS and OHS programs allow smoking off the premises. DBHIDS programs also provide smoking-cessation support and harm reduction such as Nicotine patches. There is also always the options of outpatient treatment.

**We did not agree to anything. We do not agree to the timeline. In fact the timeline**

**Is dangerous and reckless. Each person needs a plan. We are waiting for more details of your programs. Please provide.**

We agree that each person needs a plan. The purpose of doing a "Housing Connect" event is to begin the development of a plan for each homeless individual at the camp. Developing a plan is a two-way street. People have to commit to their

own journey of recovery. It is a process that is worked out with a housing case manager and and/or DBHIDS supports.

Eva Gladstein (she/her/hers)

Deputy Managing Director for Health & Human Services

City of Philadelphia

Municipal Services Building, Suite 1430

1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd.

Philadelphia PA 19102

Office: 215 686 3696

Cell: 215 520 2601

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**From:** Sterling Johnson <[sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com](mailto:sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, July 7, 2020 12:14 PM

**To:** Liz.Hersh <[Liz.Hersh@Phila.gov](mailto:Liz.Hersh@Phila.gov)>

[Quoted text hidden]

[Quoted text hidden]



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## Following up on today's conversation

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**Eva Gladstein** <Eva.Gladstein@phila.gov>  
To: Sterling Johnson <sterling.k.johnson@gmail.com>

Wed, Jul 8, 2020 at 5:39 PM

Hi Sterling,

Thank you for getting back to me.

We remain hopeful that we will receive a draft plan from you imminently with the stated timeline of closing the camp next week, as you had stated previously.

As we have said before, many of the very legitimate issues you have raised will take time. Our hope is that now that you and other organizers of the camp have raised the level of awareness of the issues around homelessness, are getting some real wins and attention to the issue, that the end of the camp is the beginning of an era in which there is new urgency and collaboration to get these goals accomplished.

1. You have gotten the City – both administration and Council - to the table at a whole new level of engagement
2. You have moved the Tiny Home agenda from back burner to urgent imperative with a timeline and plan.
3. You have helped older and vulnerable people from the street move into COVID protective housing.
4. You have ensured that more vulnerable people are tested for COVID.
5. You have engaged volunteers and supporters around ending homelessness, creating a new network.
6. By the end of next week, if you agree, everyone in that camp will have a plan and a place to go right away – if they choose.

I have taken the liberty of interjecting the answers to your last specific set of questions into the framework that we provided previously, below. I also wanted to confirm that there is already a meeting time set up for tomorrow with DBHIDS leadership, yourself, and Dave Holloman to discuss the barriers to treatment.

### Proposed Framework for Agreement:

#### The City of Philadelphia will:

1. Provide a "Homeless Connect" event to be held from July 14<sup>th</sup>– July 16<sup>th</sup> in close proximity to, but not within the JDT Camp. City representatives will include the Office of Homeless Services, Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, Department of Public Health, and other providers.
2. Ensure that each person at the camp who wants to engage has a plan for moving forward by July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020. City representatives will work intensely with camp participants to connect them to appropriate housing, health, and other services. The pathway to permanent housing is component of the plan for each person based on what set of services they enter – treatment, emergency housing, safe haven, etc. It is individualized.
3. Commit to a regular meeting schedule to plan a sanctioned encampment with a small group of leaders. The plan will address the identification of a site that is acceptable to the community and district council person, has a safety



and security plan, a plan for utilities, trash, sanitation, etc.

4. Provide 250 rooms in COVID Prevention Space (hotels) for people over 65 or with serious underlying health conditions that make them more vulnerable to COVID. Currently there are 90 rooms; an additional 150 rooms will be available by July 27<sup>th</sup>
5. Establish at least one Tiny Home Village in FY21 operated by a nonprofit that includes people with lived experience of homelessness in a meaningful way in its operation and decision-making.
6. Seek and accept the input of people living in the camp and leadership into how the new federal CARES ESG funding should be used.
7. Work with leaders of the camp once peacefully disbanded to expand the availability of affordable housing for people experiencing homelessness.

Representatives of the JDT Camp will:

1. Encourage participation of campers in the "Homeless Connect" event and otherwise facilitate their engagement with the services
2. Begin to reduce the size of the camp immediately by removing tents that are not used for overnight habitation
3. Communicate to camp participants that the camp will disband on or before July 17, 2020.
4. Make their best efforts to leave the land in good condition – removing all tents, structures, and debris from the site on or before July 17, 2020.

We look forward to your response, including any specific changes that you would recommend to this framework so that it can serve as the basis of our agreement.

Regards,

[Quoted text hidden]