

Candidates Answers to *Audience Question #2*:

From Unknown: Residents have been told that the PPD's hands are tied when dealing with people living in their vehicles on Pacifica streets. Other than moving the vehicle every so often there are no regulations, no prohibition. The squatters present a health & safety risk. We are on the Internet as an okay place to camp. Other cities have prohibited living in the streets. What are your thoughts?

Sue Beckmeyer:

Waiting for response

Mary Bier:

The number of people experiencing homelessness in Pacifica is increasing. Friends and neighbors are using their cars or RVs for temporary places to live. I will continue to work with local businesses, law enforcement, churches, and community members to help designate areas and set time frames that allow folks who are vehicularly housed to rest safely and responsibly dispose of their waste. Our community can help to connect the vehicularly housed with local resources that can help them access basic necessities. Ticketing and towing these vehicles will only hurt our citizens who have fallen on hard times. Instead, we must focus our energy on helping these residents find permanent housing.

Bridget Duffy:

I have to correct myself on something I said at the forum.

I said, UNREASONABLY HIGH RENTS ARE CAUSING HOMELESSNESS.

I take that back, a corporate impetus to grow at the risk of its host, AND the actual people who raise rents on other, less fortunate people, to the point that they can no longer pay it, then watch them sleep in their cars while enjoying unprecedented profits, that is who is to actually to blame for homeless (fact).

We live in the richest country, and in the richest county in the USA, are we proud of what is happening here?

It would cost our city less money to claim eminent domain on an "at risk" Apartment building, and give these people a place to live, then it will be to try to police this problem. Truth

We should pass a protection ordinance to stem the tide of homelessness.

And we should house our neighbors like Jesus told us to.

We have been conditioned to think in black and white, but it is the rainbow, in between, that real life consists of.

Our government should resemble us.

Vickie Flores:

This is a good question. On one hand we should be sympathetic to those individuals who are living in their vehicles on Pacifica streets. I am sure this is not by choice but by circumstance. However the health risk & safety to those that live in this community has risen as well. Laws prohibiting these vehicles from parking overnight will just push the problem to another community just like it has been pushed to ours. Ticketing will only create a backlog of fines that will most likely never be paid. Some say using the cities empty lot on Francisco Blvd. is one way to ease the situation but I believe that some will protest as it will create a concentration of vehicles (and maybe more issues) in one location that may upset the local neighborhood. I think we need to focus more on getting these people back on their feet so that they can help contribute to the local economy. If they want to park on the street they should be working or volunteering in Pacifica. There are a lot of help wanted signs in this community. Each person should be signed in at the Pacifica Resource Center so we know that they are at least in touch with an organization that can help them. Let's find out who these people are and start putting names to faces and not just the vehicle they are living in.

John Keener – Incumbent:

Waiting for response.

Mike O'Neill – Incumbent:

Waiting for response.

Adonica Shaw-Porter:

Prosecuting homeless people for sleeping on public property when they have no access to shelter violates the Constitution's ban on cruel and unusual punishment. This decision came down from the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in early September when they unanimously overturned a district court decision in favor of the city of Boise, Idaho, in a case in which homeless people challenged two city ordinances that barred them from staying overnight on public property.

Furthermore, "The 8th Amendment prohibits the imposition of criminal penalties for sitting, sleeping, or lying outside on public property for homeless individuals who cannot obtain shelter. The court said, "as long as there is no option of sleeping indoors, the government cannot criminalize indigent, homeless people for sleeping outdoors, on public property, on the false premise they had a choice in the matter."

That said, on a local level I would be interested in investing in social housing. This housing would provide temporary shelter to no - low income households to help get them off the streets and give them an address so they might be able to attain a job or county benefits. In the interim I would support working with local churches to get the people and the families out of the car into a place to stay at night. Additionally, I feel we need to work with state and federal officials to determine the best course of action when dealing with the growing issue of homelessness.