

Mr. Mayor and Members of the Fircrest City Council:

**RE: The proposed changes to Chapter 22.58 FMC regarding the storage of recreational vehicles on one's property.**

As you are aware, I have previously testified on this matter at public hearings before the Planning Commission and the City Council. For your consideration during the November 20, 2017, study session, here is a summary of my testimony, some additional thoughts and my community listening system idea to deal with "blue tarp" issues.

- Ordinances should have a nexus to protecting public and private property and providing for the safety of people.
- Ordinances need to be enforceable and enforced. These proposed amendments present clear enforcement problems and will generate new complaints if not enforced.
- Requiring a six foot vegetation screen on one side of a recreational vehicle stored in the front of a home makes no sense for two reasons: 1) Motor homes, campers and most trailers are taller than six feet; and 2) recreational vehicles parked in a front driveway are visible from all directions.
- The complaint regarding a blue tarp covering a RV which initiated the proposed changes is not resolved by the amendments. Specifically, tarps are not addressed and the one circumstance that would discourage covering a RV with tarp – occupancy – is limited.
- Such restrictions on one's private property are not appropriate for a municipality, but are characteristic of a home owners association that people acknowledge when establishing residency.
- A great deal of staff time, Planning Commission member time and Council member time has been diverted to this HOA-like proposal and away from substantive matters of city government.
- Corbin Walters' costs for compliance were shocking to me and his well-kept property defies any justification for him to incur these costs.
- Councilman Blake Surina's idea to provide RV storage on city property is generous, but I would caution the city about undertaking this responsibility based on my experience storing a motorhome on Fort Lewis property. The RVs were inside a locked security fence with lighting and occasional police drive-bys. Nevertheless, one night several RVs were burglarized of TVs, DVD players and other electronic equipment. The thieves only had to risk visiting one site to make a sizeable haul – one stop shopping for them.

**Community Listening System – Preserving and Enhancing a Sense of Community**

At the October 24, 2017, council meeting I proposed a community listening system of trained volunteers to facilitate the resolution of neighbor-to-neighbor, nonactionable concerns and disputes. I believe Fircrest has the talent among its residents to provide this service in a safe, nonjudgmental environment to work through concerns, underlying issues and options to finding a resolution acceptable to both parties. I offer my assistance in pursuing this idea and would expect other volunteers to come forward if requested through Town Topics, the city's web site and other outreach efforts.

Resources for exploring this idea and volunteer training would be the Municipal Research Council, the Pierce County Dispute Resolution Center, Resolutions Northwest in Portland, Oregon, and Six Rivers Dispute Resolution Center in Hood River, Oregon.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments.

Sincerely,

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