Dear Sammamish City Council and Planning Commission:

I am a resident in Klahanie area, which is currently in the potential annexation area of Issaquah but it will be transferred to Sammamish according to the agreement between Sammamish and Issaquah. As a future resident of your city I am very interested in the proposed regulations that would affect the safety of our neighborhood.

I have the following concerns about the draft regulation for temporary homeless camp. I feel that it is not effective to protect the citizen in Sammamish unless these concerns are addressed:

1. It does not specify the requirement for liability insurances held by or entered between the encampment host, encampment sponsor, or encampment manager, as well as copies of any such agreements, obligations or policies. It is very important to have such insurance in place so the citizens are protected from property damages and injuries. Same as required for home owners and renters. Typically the hosts or sponsors are protected by a hold harmless clause with the encampment. That leaves the encampment the only party that city residents can recourse against should property damages or injuries happen. The encampments are known to have scarce financial resource.

2. No requirement for the stated process for people evicted or turned away from the encampment. It is a well-known fact that residents of temporary homeless encampment constantly being evicted for violation of code of conduct. The requirement for the stated process for people evicted or turned away from the encampment will ensure that those individuals are not left hanging in the neighborhood after being evicted. There is at least one report from Sammamish police that an individual was found camping at the perimeter of a local business after the person was evicted from Tent City 4 (http://sammamishreview.com/2014/04/02/police-blotter-april-2#more-25039).

3. According the the report from Sammamish Review (http://sammamishreview.com/2014/05/21/sammamish-city-council-questions-homeless-camp-regulations), some members of the Planning Commission suggested the encampment to be permitted to stay for four months that the extra month wouldn’t cause a substantial burden on the community. I strongly disagree. It is well-established regulations in all other localities and county that temporary encampment allowed to stay in a location up to 3 months. This requirement has been followed by all encampments for many years. The citizens in Sammamish should not have to endure the inconvenience and safety risks from the encampment for one extra month.

4. According to the same Sammamish Review report, City Council considers a change that prohibits marijuana in the encampment. I agree with this change because the encampment typically locates near residential area or childcare facilities where marijuana is not welcome. So the regulation would not create a loophole for marijuana usage.
5. The notification process before any public meeting should be 30 days or more instead of the 15 days required in the draft. 15 days are not enough for the public to prepare and make time to attend the meetings.

In my opinion the homeless camps serve neither the homeless people or the citizen of Sammamish. Since we allow them in the compliance of the state law, we need to have a regulation that puts the safety and well-being of the citizen of Sammamish the first, before the needs of the parties for special interests.

Thanks,

Chih-Hsuan Chang