



UPDATE: Answer "within the next month" on homeless bags in front of Madison CCB

Posted: Apr 20, 2015 11:29 AM CDT
Updated: May 05, 2015 11:34 AM CDT

By Greg Neumann **CONNECT**

MADISON (WKOW) -- Officials are closer to a solution that would prevent the homeless from leaving their belongings outside the City-County Building in Madison.

Monday night, a joint committee discussed the issue, and while members didn't come to a decision, they say they're working on a storage alternative that should be available within the next month.

MADISON (WKOW) --City and county officials say it's not just a public nuisance, but a security issue.

That's why the the City-County Liaison Committee (CCLC) is taking another crack at finding a way to get rid of bags full of belongings homeless residents have stacked up outside the City-County Building (CCB).

John Scott told 27 News he has been sleeping outside the CCB for about three weeks, with everything he owns placed amid a sea of trash bags.

"If we don't leave it here, somebody will probably just take our stuff and throw it away," said Scott.

Brenda Konkel, a former Madison alder who advocates for the homeless, believes the 30 to 50 people who sleep outside the CCB each night have few options.

"There is a storage down on Williamson Street, but it's nearly full and it's hard to get there with this much stuff to carry it down there everyday and then go back and get it and carry it back," said Konkel, who is referring to storage spaces at Sanctuary.

That's the dilemma facing the homeless, but the biggest issue facing the CCLC is safety.

"Being the anniversary of the Boston Marathon bombing - to know that a personal item sadly can be used as an instrument of death - we need to ensure the safety of everyone that comes to and from that building," said Dane County Supervisor Mary Kolar (District 1), who co-chairs the CCLC.

There are plenty of ideas on how to accomplish that.

"Other cities have used things such as trailers that other people can put their personal belongings in. It's like a check-in/check-out system. 'Here's my bag, this is my items,'" said Supervisor Kolar.

"There's also been some other proposals about at least having some sort of storage bins for people to put their stuff in in the downtown area," said Konkel.

But at this point all of those ideas may be only that.

"Mostly what we want to hear tonight is a report from the county safety officials on exactly what the situation is, what the options are and what their recommendations are," said Alder Mark Clear (Madison District 19), the other CCLC co-chair.

The CCLC meets at 5:45 p.m. Monday, less than three weeks after Mayor Paul Soglin 27 News he has given up on the committee being able to get anything accomplished on the homeless issue. Soglin said the committee has chosen to ignore the safety of the building's employees.

MADISON (WKOW) -- The City-County Liaison Committee will meet at 5:45 p.m. Monday to look at options on how to remove and keep the large number of bags left by homeless citizens from piling up in front of the City County Building (CCB).

"We know something has to be done," said Dane County Supervisor Mary Kolar (District 1), who co-chairs the committee.

But Supervisor Kolar did not elaborate on what options committee members would be evaluating tonight.

In November 2014, several homeless citizens who spend much of their time at the CCB lost belongings after two truck loads of their sleeping bags, blankets and other items were hauled from the building.

The trucks dropped the belongings off at a storage space operated by the group Sanctuary, but the belongings were later returned to the CCB.

Dane County officials said the belongings were removed because they were unattended, and creating a building security risk.

Supervisor Kolar noted that security risk still remains and is the biggest concern associated with the bags.

Greg Neumann will have more on this story on 27 News at 5 and 6.



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