

From: [Jillian Pim](mailto:Jillian.Pim)
To: [April Saginer](mailto:April.Saginer)
Subject: Fwd: City Commission Homeless
Date: Wednesday, September 03, 2014 7:45:23 PM

----- Forwarded message -----
From: "Gail Tapscott" <gailtapscott@att.net>
Date: Sep 3, 2014 2:33 PM
Subject: City Commission Homeless
To: <Jillian.pim@gmail.com>
Cc: "Jeff Weinberger" <redwein@netzero.com>

To be read at Sept 3. City Commission

From Rev. Gail Tapscott and Rev. Craig Watts

Commissioners and citizens, Regrettably I am unable to be with you in person tonight as the meeting room is not really accessible to a person using a walker who might also have to venture to the ladies room. This is a separate matter which I intend to take up with the city as it discriminates against yet another group of citizens- i.e. the permanently or temporarily differently abled. I have been before you many many times over the years to defend the rights of our homeless citizens to be granted the right to have as decent a life as possible under their current circumstances. The newest ordinances coupled with the ones already passed are morally and ethically bankrupt. Every world religion dictates that our spiritual and by implication moral and emotional well being is deeply affected by how we treat the most marginal and helpless people in our communities. While I doubt that anyone on the commission thinks they feel this way and some of those representing the business community have declared they don't also- the end result and the appearance of the kinds of ordinances that you have been considering demonstrate a view that being homeless, hungry or just poor is a choice and a crime. The amount of negative local and national publicity that has been generated by these Homeless Hate Laws is certainly doing nothing for the image of Ft. Lauderdale as a desirable place to live in or visit. Moreover, it shows a city government missing out on a wonderful chance to be a true beacon of charity and enlightenment rather than a poster child for cruelty and inhumaneness. Rev. Watts and some other clergy and I are planning a considerable escalation of the response of the local faith community on this issue and we will also be asking you individually and collectively to start meeting with us and other faith leaders to try to incorporate a more ethical perspective into your deliberations on this issue. I especially am horrified everytime I hear a business representative or other "concerned citizen" bring up how tourists and locals are fearful of and threatened by the homeless. The homeless among us are in much more danger from local citizens and especially young people who have been poisoned by the bigotry of their parents to hate those who are different. I am sure all of you recall the horrible murder of several homeless by the teenage boys of so called fine families in our community a few years ago- a terrible tragedy for all concerned. I urge you to do the right thing so that you can sleep at night and face the judgement of those citizens and even business people with a more sound moral compass than many who have so far been heard before this commission.