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To Mayor Amarjeet Sohi
City of Edmonton

December 19, 2023

Re.: Edmonton Moms Stop The Harm families calling for the resignation of Chief Dale McFee

Dear Mayor Sohi

I am writing to you on behalf of the Edmonton members of Moms Stop The Harm to call for the immediate resignation of Dale McFee as Chief of Police for the City of Edmonton. His heartless plans to evict unhoused people from encampments, the only homes they have, without a coordinated response from social service agencies and all levels of government, is a severe breach of trust. We have lost confidence in McFee's ability to act as Chief of Police in our city.

Edmonton prides itself in being a caring, kind and compassionate city for all citizens. We work in collaboration to solve problems and to find solutions. But McFee's plan to turf people out on the street without transitional housing and social support is the opposite of what this city stands for.

Many of our families have or had loved ones living on the streets of this city. We understand the risks and know the issues. Some of us were able to support our loved ones with their substance use and/or mental health challenges and get them the help they needed. However without sufficient available help many had to arrange funerals instead. We speak from lived experience that gives us deep insight and a perspective that many other citizens may not have.

Nobody wants people to live in encampments. It is not the solution. Affordable housing IS a major solution. But as long as such housing is scarce and other real solutions are not in place, encampments can not be removed. A letter from over 200 health professionals (dated December 18, 2023), calling for an end to the sweeps and adoption of real solutions, (see attached) , highlights the issues. Encampment sweeps can result in many negative outcomes including injuries, more drug poisoning deaths, spread of infectious diseases and the disruptions of 'established communities of support' that exist within encampments.¹ Sweeps disproportionately harm the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, youth/seniors, pregnant people and can inflict further colonial trauma to Indigenous people who are over-represented in encampments.

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¹ See <https://x.com/momsstoptheharm/status/1736772869752078526?s=2>

² See <https://x.com/momsstoptheharm/status/1736772869752078526?s=20>



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The proposed encampment sweeps are taking place in the context of a worsening housing and drug poisoning crisis. With an increase in homeless people in Edmonton and rising drug poisoning deaths Chief McFee has demonstrated that his heavy handed approach has, to date, irreparably harmed rather than helped people.

When there is no room at the inn, it is not the time to kick people out of the stable, especially right before the holidays.

While yesterday's court ruling on encampments³, has ensured some safeguards, including the notification of affected individuals and social agencies, there is no guarantee on how sweeps of other camps will be conducted under the current leadership.

We call for the immediate resignation of the Chief and the appointment of an interim chief who is willing to work with the community for the wellbeing of all citizens.

Regards,

Petra Schulz, Co-Founder, retired board chair
Lorna Thomas Co-founder, retired director Edmonton, AB
Angie Staines, Director at Large, Co-founder 4B Harm Reduction
Angela Welz, retired director, Edmonton, AB

Cc: Edmonton Police Commission, Councillor Sarah Hamilton, Councillor Anne Stevenson

³ See

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/judge-allows-but-slows-down-edmonton-homeless-camp-removals-1.7062623>