Hi All,

I hope you and your families are doing well this Thanksgiving week. It's a time to pause and be grateful for all we have and commit ourselves to doing more for those who are struggling.

I am sorry to report that Pasadena recently missed an opportunity to do exactly that. The November 17th council meeting on safe parking for our unhoused residents was one of the most disturbing things I've seen in my almost five years on the Council.

Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/DRS-v8PEaAW/

Councilmembers Lyon and Cole and I supported approving a minor conditional use permit to allow safe parking at All Saints Church, which is a proven method for helping people who have recently fallen into homelessness (many of whom are still employed) back into housing by giving them a safe place to rest and get connected with services.

Mayor Gordo, Councilmembers Jones and Hampton did not. They refused to support my routine motion on a CEQA exemption that clearly applied to this situation. Because one councilmember was absent, this was enough to block the motion. Then they refused to continue the matter until we had all councilmembers present. Instead, at least 25 Pasadenans will continue to park on the streets of our neighborhoods without security, access to a restroom, or help finding housing.

Councilmember Lyon provided a helpful summary of the discussion and Dr. Juliana Delgado and Rabbi Grater recently wrote guest opinion pieces in Pasadena Now. As Dr. Delgado wrote, "The consequences are not abstract. Tonight, people will sleep in their cars in Pasadena. Some are in their seventies. Some work full-time. Some have children. Some are students like I once was. Some are simply trying to survive until they can afford a room or receive a voucher. Safe Parking does not create homelessness; it simply acknowledges reality. And it provides safety, stability, and a pathway out—not a permanent condition. Our City has already declared that Safe Parking aligns with our Housing Element, our Zoning Code, and our values. We cannot allow fear, misinformation, or procedural maneuvers to override compassion and the law."

-Jess

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