

Janet Stallman

From: Public Council Inbox
To: Mark Zink
Subject: RE: Drinking panhandlers 128th off ramps

Mr. Zink,

Thank you for writing to the City Council to express your concerns. Your email will be made part of a council agenda packet and included with Correspondence for the Record.
Thank you, too, for your volunteerism on behalf of the community.

Janet Stallman
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From: Mark Zink [<mailto:markczink@gmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, April 29, 2011 12:35 PM
To: Public Council Inbox
Subject: Drinking panhandlers 128th off ramps

Hi my name is Mark Zink and my wife, Colleen West, and I own a house at 12413 2nd Ave. S. in Burien.

I have been spending hundreds of hours in this neighborhood cleaning trash, graffiti and E-mailing anything I can't handle to the city of Burien. The Burien police have been a huge help cleaning up Arbor Lake park from the crime that was rampant there. The Parks Dept. and Public Works have also been doing a great job and are eager to help when I call or email requests as an advocate for this area.

Now, for the problem we are having. We have a group of homeless people that have been pan-handling the corner of 128th and SR-509 for years. These men live in houses in the area, sometimes abandoned houses, and completely trash them as they did at a house on the northwest corner of 2nd Ave. S. and 128th.

They are drinking in public at least 10 hours a day under the freeway on the sidewalk while they wait their turn to panhandle at the off-ramp, likely for beer or drug money.

They use a plastic milk crate to hide their full beer cans and to discard the empties full of "Steel Reserve 211" high-octane beer cans. When I can, I take these and recycle them and clean the trash up they leave daily. I also take the milk crate back to the convenience store on the corner of South 128th St. and 1st Ave S. and they bring it back every morning.

These men drive around in a light blue Toyota Tercel sedan that is about 1985 or so. The car is in mint condition. (I have been unable to remember the full plate # so far)

Last week, as they got out of the car at arbor Lake Park, I saw them throw a bottle of MD 20/20 on the ground as I was picking up trash and proceeded to go near the lake shore and smoke marijuana out of a pipe as they stared at me as if they knew nothing would happen to them.

CFT: 5/9/11

I have spoken to Officer Sgt. McLaughlin on several occasions and he tells me these people are "highly intelligent and know the laws." He says, "There is no way to get rid of them as we have no laws that say "no loitering" or "no panhandling" on the side of freeway on ramps."

I have seen them dozens of times drinking with the cans they keep just inside their jackets or under the milk crates. These people will not be able to get help for their problem unless they are court-ordered to treatment, but first they need to be cited for driving drunk and drinking in public.

Like I said, these people have been doing this for 3-4 years and some longer. This is the first impression we give people of our city. This impression says, "Come to Burien you can get away with anything." This is also not what we want our kids seeing, either. I am asking the city council to enact laws that will aid our officers to do their job.

In the meantime, you may get to save a life, as these people could be court-ordered into treatment at some point and possibly become an asset to a community somewhere. Thank you for your hard work!