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Council Member Mackenzie Kelly  
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February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear Council Member Kelly,

My name is Nyle Maxwell, former Mayor of Round Rock and current owner of five car dealerships in the Central Texas Area. Two dealerships – my Supercenter store and my Fiat/Alfa Romeo store – are within your jurisdiction and I employ approximately 200 individuals between the two stores. I am writing to you today in regards to the news that the Council is considering purchasing a hotel on Pecan Park across the street from my Used Car dealership to become a homeless shelter.

However, before I go into the hotel issue, I want to detail my personal experience as a small business owner dealing with the homeless at my Supercenter dealership. The homeless issue in the area has already exploded in recent weeks as I can attest to firsthand, and has already affected my business and my employees.

My Supercenter dealership is located at the intersection of Lake Creek Parkway and Toll 45. Directly across the street, under the overpass, a homeless camp has sprung up that has grown exponentially this past month and has become a source of crime and harassment to local businesses, employees, and customers.

Not only are there dozens of tents (stretching all the way along 45 from 183 up to the Lake Creek intersection), but also numerous shopping carts, wooden horses, and other miscellaneous piles of trash and paraphernalia. We estimate that approximately 20-30 individuals live in the encampment, along with a few dogs.

We have recently had three notable instances springing directly from this camp, and I will detail them below so you can understand the gravity of the situation for my business, my customers, and especially the employees who I am obligated to keep safe.

During the day, homeless individuals have begun coming across the street to use our restroom facilities. This past week our General Manager entered our restroom to find two gentlemen in the stalls yelling and screaming at each other. When they exited, he walked them to the front door and let them know that our restrooms were for customers only.

Not 15 minutes later, one gentleman returned – with a baseball bat. He used the restroom again, bat in hand, although Mike did approach him again and ask him to leave without a physical altercation breaking out. However, 30 minutes after that it was discovered that the man was sitting in our customer lounge area watching television, still holding the baseball bat. At that point Mike walked with him to the front door to be sure he left the premises. As you can imagine, this incident was both threatening and scary to not only our General Manager but also our customers and employees.

The next evening around 7:30pm one of our female sales associates was across the street at the gas station filling up a vehicle. While there, she was verbally and physically accosted by a group of homeless folks asking very aggressively for money. Mike Wilson visited the store to see the situation himself and witnessed approximately seven homeless individuals harassing each individual leaving the gas station for money and incidentals.

Finally, more than once we have found homeless individuals sleeping in unlocked, brand new vehicles (sometimes with their dogs). These have required police escorts to get them to leave our vehicles.

You can imagine how frustrated and angry I am at how this problem has grown out of hand and at the idea of a homeless shelter being built just down the road that will only exacerbate the issue. Of course I am worried about the millions of dollars of inventory that I have here at the dealership – but much more than that, I am worried about the safety of the customers who visit my store and the individuals who I employ. I care deeply about my employees and want them to feel safe coming to work.

To return to the topic of the hotel, a homeless shelter on Pecan Park will create a hugely unsafe environment in that entire area, just a stone's throw from Lakeline Mall. Lakeline is one of the few malls left in Central Texas and already struggling to survive – if there is a surge in the homeless population in the area along with the crime and safety issues that come with it, how will the businesses in that area survive? Shoppers of Northwest Austin don't need another reason to turn their backs on the struggling businesses inside and around the mall. Consider how many stores, business owners, employees, and livelihoods that this will affect.

I urge you to remember the businesses, the small business owners, and their employees who live and work in this area and not only reconsider the hotel proposition but take action to clear out the large camp that continues to grow at 45/Lake Creek Parkway.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Nyle Maxwell