

## **Recent Community Attention and Discussions Concerning Persons Experiencing Homelessness**

By Starling Sutton

During the past three years, public acceptance of our neighbors without homes or jobs; living and sleeping on our sidewalks, in our parks, vacant structures and heavily wooded properties has significantly declined as their numbers have increased. Most current criticisms primarily come from downtown businesses and merchants directed toward The Well Day Services Center, downtown on Gloucester Street just east of Norwich. There have been both community and governmental responses to the situation.

A respectable number of those who feel infringed upon by The Well and its clients want these people gathered up and placed out of sight. Thanks to others involved, this compassionless suggestion won't occur in Brunswick and Glynn County. Both city and county governments, including police, fire, planning departments and lawyers have diligently researched issues and **compassionate** actions of other like-sized Georgia cities to find solutions that may work for our community.

Additionally, three public forums have been facilitated:

1. Historic Brunswick Neighborhood Planning Assembly
2. City Commission: Legislation enacted:
  - a 6-month moratorium on new or expansion of existing shelters,
  - an initial Urban Camping Law
3. Community-wide all-day seminar sponsored by the City of Brunswick and Glynn County Manager.

These forums have had the benefit of input from homeless persons to directors of agencies that provide services in physical and mental health, job training and assistance in finding jobs.

We'll keep you updated but **we all need to be involved.**

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