



POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF BURLINGTON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 10th, 2017

REMOVAL OF PERSONS TRESPASSING ON PUBLIC LAND ON SEARS LANE

After a review of the matter, the City of Burlington has concluded that it has both the authority and the need to disband the encampment of people trespassing on public land on Sears Lane. Department heads and key personnel are conferring to decide upon an appropriate time and the best means by which to do so. The camp will be disbanded no sooner than the end of this week.

Establishing domiciles on public land, such as those on Sears Lane, is an act of trespass. The city decides when to act on this law, as a matter of policy, by balancing compassion for people in dire straits with the safety hazards present at a given encampment. The underlying trespass violation is a sufficient reason to disband the camp once a concern about safety reaches a certain threshold in the judgment of the city.

In the case of Sears Lane, there have been allegations and reports of domestic violence, a dispute with a firearm, vandalism and arson of camper property, and drug dealing and use. Neighbors of the encampment have repeatedly voiced concerns about the conditions there. The police cannot quickly and safely respond to an encampment with no address, located in the woods. These concerns caused the city to determine the trespassing on Sears Lane was no longer tolerable.

The city will be in contact with the people trespassing on Sears Lane to make them aware of this pending action. The reason for disbanding the camp will be made clear to them again. They will be put in touch with a range of service providers. Shelter beds come open with regularity, and in the coming weeks the city's shelter capacity will expand with the seasonal opening of its low-barrier shelter. Property of value that is not removed from the lot will be stored for safekeeping by the city.

Brandon del Pozo
Chief of Police