

Occupy Regina rally at City Hall - Wednesday, November 9 @ 12 Noon

On November 7th, City of Regina bylaw enforcement officers stopped by the Occupy Regina camp to informally ask the protesters to pack up and go home on the grounds that they were concerned with the health and safety of the protesters. They also threatened Loraas Disposal with bylaw enforcement if they didn't remove the clean outdoor toilet provided by a national humanitarian agency, thereby denying the campers access to basic sanitation. In a Council of Canadians press release, activist Jim Elliot said, "The United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to affirm 'the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights.'"

From the beginning, participants in Occupy Regina have gone to exceptional lengths to comply with all relevant laws and safety codes. In previous meetings with City officials, Occupiers were explicitly informed that the City would **not** enforce the Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw in this case and they were asked not to submit a permit for their camp.

Several components of the bylaw appear to violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, particularly in respect to public assembly and freedom of expression rights as outlined in Section 2 of the Charter. Furthermore, by denying access to sanitation and by threatening several homeless campers with eviction, the City may be in violation of Charter guarantees to life, liberty, and security of person, as was recently found by the BC Court of Appeal with respect to a similar case.

At 12 noon this Wednesday, November 9, representatives of Occupy Regina will host a rally at City Hall to demand an apology for the City's recent removal of their toilet facilities their claims of concern for their health and safety. Furthermore, they will formally request the city manager to waive the parks bylaw for the duration of the protest, as the bylaw stipulates is his right, and ask for the public power outlets in Victoria Park to be turned back on. The Occupiers are also concerned with health and safety for the camp, and are more than willing to work with the Fire Department and the Qu'Appelle Health Region to work towards compliance.

The Occupy Regina movement also points to the principles of the recent Design Regina campaign, which called for City initiatives on such things as affordable housing for all, environmental sustainability, transparency, and active engagement in direct democracy. The protest itself is such an engagement which is concerned with these principles. As such, they request self-proclaimed Occupy supporter, Pat Fiacco, to engage with them as a valuable, yet untapped resource.

In Solidarity,
the 99%