




Office of the City Manager

August 26, 2013

To: Mayor and Councilmembers  
From: Christine Daniel, City Manager   
Subject: United States Postal Service Update

This memorandum provides the Council with an update on the encampment at the United States Post Office (USPS) on Allston Way. As you know, on July 27, 2013 a protest to oppose the sale of the Berkeley Post Office building on Allston Way commenced. A table was set up on the south east corner of Allston Way and Milvia Street to provide information to the public about the USPS' intention to sell the Berkeley Main Post office building and to express opposition to that sale.

Shortly after the Save the Berkeley Post Office (SBPO) group set up their table on July 27th, unaffiliated individuals began erecting tents on the USPS property and a camp was formed. During this time, criminal incidents related to the encampment began to occur. A stabbing occurred on Thursday August 15, 2013 involving individuals participating in the encampment. After that, the main SBPO group decided to change strategies and leave the USPS property. Unfortunately, the criminal activity has continued and escalated since that time. Incidents include: physical assault, several arrests for weapons possession and a serious dog bite. In addition, local businesses have reported harassment of customers and activity that is affecting their operations. Please note also that Berkeley High School resumes classes on Wednesday August 28<sup>th</sup>. A summary of the incidents is included at the end of this memorandum.

The City encourages the community to exercise their First Amendment rights. However, activities must be conducted in manner that ensures everyone is safe. The City has been in contact with USPS representatives who indicated that the USPS did not intend to take any action with regard to the activity occurring at the encampment. Rather, the USPS provided the attached letter late Friday August 23, 2013 requesting the "Berkeley Police Department to remove and/or arrest persons camping on the grounds of the Berkeley Main Post Office under the applicable state laws...." The letter included a warning notice that USPS will distribute to people at the encampment notifying them they have made this request and that, "persons who fail to remove their tent or other items on US Postal Service property will be subject to arrest." Berkeley police plan to accompany USPS personnel when this notice is delivered to document that proper notification has occurred. Next steps beyond that have not yet been determined.