

# Coronation Cronyism As Cold Howls at the Homeless

Speech to the Santa Cruz Community by Robert Norse 12-10-13

Will the City Council be allowing public comment on the appointment of the Mayor tonight? After all, denying this violates the Open Meetings Act. You know: each agenda item, particularly each one on which the Council takes action, be open to public comment. But we don't want to chill the gay proceedings tonight with the cold breath of reality outside and the cold cold scapegoating this Council has enabled for the last year. For homeless folks, of course, the reality of freezing temperatures, illness, and, according to one report, at least one death from hypothermia here three days ago. That's on top of the 4 Santa Clara county deaths last week.

Perhaps the Council hasn't used up all its money on Boardwalk giveaways, De Sal consultants, and Public Hysteria Task Force costs—to open up a building or two—say the one were in, or the Civic as warming centers? Will all Council members willing to endorse such an emergency measure, please raise their hands?

In the Sentinel, 8 mayors praised outgoing Mayor “Happy Talk” Hillary. She's just the latest in a long-line of responsibility-dodgers, who have refused to address the most basic and intractable civil rights issue in Santa Cruz: simple human rights for the poor who are outside. In freezing winter weather this becomes a more direct matter of survival against the cold. Past mayors have banned homeless activists from City Council (Tim Fitzmaurice), muzzled their own City Council's debate on emergency suspension of the lethal camping ban (Mike Rotkin), & even banned sitting in your car after paying for a parking lot space (Ryan Coonerty).

Bryant and incoming Mayor “Rattlesnake” Robinson have gone further. Tonight's anti-public assembly law. Deepening penalties for any infractions in the park. Declaring standing on a median illegal. Enabling the witchhunt against recyclers. Attacking homeless livelihood through the sidewalk shrinkage laws against performers, vendors, & artists. Silence in the face of police abuse: Officer Vasquez's face-smashing-into-the-concrete of Richard Hardy. Officer Hernandez's assault and battery with drawn gun of Jasmine Byron at the Salvation Army two weeks ago.

We need warming centers tonight. Open vacant buildings tonight. In a true public safety crisis, let me again as this Council---please raise your hands if you will introduce emergency measures tonight. Instead what is proposed: endlessly pitching money at the police and making political hay through dirges for dead police officers months ago.

This year the Robinson-Bryant Council has appropriated money and staff time Bryant's Bigot-Enabling Task Farce on Public Tranquility for the Privileged. Then last week unanimously—without a dissent—you all voted to accept their phony “Public Safety” report. Will any of you now vote to direct your Public Safety Committee restore the focus on real Public Safety: to stop abusing the people freezing outside, restore a little sanity and consider real issues of public safety like rape, assault, robbery, commercial fraud, and police violence? Raise your hands. Well, if it wasn't clear before, it is now.

For those watching the outgoing ceremony for “Happy Talk” Hilary and the incoming todo for “Rattlesnake” Robinson, please remember: All that evil needs to triumph is for good people to remain silent.