





## KALE

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Chico News & Review

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## NEWSLINES

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Among them was the topic of public syringe disposal receptacles. It was the most inflammatory agenda item of the night, though debate was mild in comparison to prior meetings, which have drawn massive protests and dozens of speakers (see "Protests continue," Newslines, Feb. 20).

Five of the nine people who addressed the council spoke against the city installing any disposal containers. Kimberly Craven said she opposes syringe distribution, a program of the Northern Valley Harm Reduction Coalition. She told the panel that the coalition should be responsible for disposal, not the city.

"I refuse to live in a city and condone all this drug-enabling [behavior]," she said.

On the other side of the debate, Patrick Newman, of Chico Friends on the Street, noted that the state is experiencing a housing crisis and people are inevitably ending up on the streets. Society can choose to "go to war" with those people or implement measures to benefit everyone, he said.

"This is the grown-up approach to this. If you say you don't want to find needles around, then here we have ... a partial solution to that," he said.

The council voted 4-3 to hold a full discussion on the topic at a future meeting. Councilmembers Ory, Sean Morgan and Kasey Reynolds dissented.

In addition, the panel voted unanimously to have a conversation at a future meeting regarding how the city might help provide emergency shelter for homeless individuals, given Safe Space Winter Shelter's recent closure.

During his comments on the subject, Mayor Randall Stone said the city has been in property negotiations regarding a Work Training Center building at 2255 Fair St. He said several councilmembers are working on public-private partnerships, but it's all happening "behind closed doors."

"Now that Safe Space is closed for the season, we know that there's 60 people that are going out on the streets every single day in March. We know that we have people that are dying on our streets," he said. "I want the public to know what it is that we are doing now, what has been proposed, and what are some of the options."

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