

Sherri Riedemann

From: Courtney Shipley
Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 7:52 AM
To: Sherri Riedemann
Subject: Fw: Downtown Today

Dear Sherri,
Please attach this correspondence to item 3 on last night's agenda.
Thank you

From: Craig Owens <craigowens@lawrenceks.org>
Sent: Friday, March 3, 2023 11:25 AM
To: Chuck Magerl <cm@freestatebrewing.com>
Cc: City Commissioners Email <commissioners@lawrenceks.org>
Subject: Re: Downtown Today

Chuck, good morning. An overdue thank you for this email and an apology for not acknowledging and responding much earlier. I appreciate that you elevated it and that the commissioners passed it along. There is no good excuse but the truth is that I immediately read it and investigated with our PD what happened. I mentioned it in several staff meetings and then moved back into trying to address the issues underlying the terrible event you describe. Your communication did have a significant impact even though I did not communicate it to you. My intention was to write back, but I knew that would be a 45+ minute reply and my schedule just ate that opportunity up.

Again, no good excuse for not at least acknowledging it. It is not typical of me, but glad you got it back on our radar. You can count on better in the future.

First, I am sorry you and your guest and your employees experienced such a traumatic event. It has a negative effect in every direction and is not characteristic of what we want for our downtown or community.

The city is increasing our response and that we are working with the county and community partners to address the crisis in housing, mental health, addiction and crime. Assuming the individual who created the disturbance you describe is in psychosis, they need treatment. The State of Kansas has typically been tasked with building capacity for this along with private medical networks. Douglas county has taken some very aggressive positions to build capacity locally, and the Bert Nash center is an incredible resource and scaling up to address the local mental health needs. But, the needs are far outpacing the new capacity. Not just in Lawrence, but nationally.

In this incident I am glad our police were called and were prepared to respond appropriately according to the circumstances. I am proud of the incredible diversity of skills and training our officers have built to deal with a much more complex landscape and expectations.

Your suggestion to expand the skills and capabilities of all of our staff is part of our plans and is happening through mental health first aide training and other similar exposure and preparation.

You have talked about our efforts to address homelessness. It is what I spend a large amount of my time doing. I do believe we have very good plans and will be making a tangible difference to eliminate chronic homelessness in Lawrence. You will be hearing about some of these steps in the next days and weeks. A huge step we will be announcing soon is the development of a Pallet Village that provides climate controlled individual shelters and will be available to any who are currently camping. This and capacity increases we are working with the Lawrence Community Shelter to provide will make a big difference in the next few weeks.

I pledge to be more accessible as we work through this and we are build capacity to communicate much better rather than just responding.

I am sorry you and your guest and your employees experienced such a traumatic event Thanks for your continued engagement.

If you'd like to meet to talk more in detail about any of this I will be happy to schedule something

Thank you again for your continued investment and commitment to your city and obvious dedication to making it better. We are in shared space.

Craig

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 17, 2023, at 2:47 PM, Chuck Magerl <cm@freestatebrewing.com> wrote:

External Email. Be careful with links and attachments.

- City of Lawrence IT Helpdesk

Craig,

Please grant me just a moment to share a story from downtown early this afternoon. A family from out of town had come to Lawrence to treat their KU student daughter to a birthday lunch and to show their teenage son what to look forward to if he decides to attend KU. As they parked on Massachusetts Street, they noticed one of our frequent downtown psychos screaming his demons out to the world. While the family came down the sidewalk to enter our restaurant for their celebratory outing, the psycho decided he needed to be more direct with them. The mother and daughter quickly dashed in our front door, while the father and son took a slower protective approach to our door. As the teenager got to the door, the psycho stepped in front of him and was screaming at him loud enough for literally everyone in a full restaurant to take alarm.

Our manager was nearing the host desk already, and he immediately moved to step between the teenager and the psycho, and commanded the teenager to step back onto the sidewalk, and asked the psycho to come walk with him and we would help out. It may have been a very foolish stance, particularly since we know virtually all of them carry weapons, but it worked this time. Our manager slowly walked the psycho down the sidewalk to the north, allowing the teenager to rejoin his family inside.

This is a problem that warrants much greater urgency from our community. Putting our employees in this situation is not safe. Putting citizens on the sidewalks downtown in this situation is not wise. The stories being shared of this activity in Lawrence is detrimental to our community and to the aspirations of our City and the University.

Public safety must be prioritized downtown. Additional resources must be allocated, and all City employees must be directed to take an active role in this effort. For instance, meter readers could be commanded to report disturbances and concerns, rather than simply suggesting we should call the police.

The police did respond professionally, taking statements from the family and our staff. The psycho was arrested on battery charges. The damage with this instance is not isolated, nor is our response adequate. It will be valuable to hear what changes are being launched in the coming weeks to protect our community this spring.

Chuck Magerl

Free State Brewing Co

o: 785-843-4555 | c:785-393-5017

636 Massachusetts Street

Lawrence, Kansas 66044

[Freestatebrewing.com](http://freestatebrewing.com)