

Bobbie Walthall

From: Melinda <melin@sunflower.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2017 3:56 PM
To: Bobbie Walthall
Subject: Comment on CM Report Item 3

Hi Bobbie: I know it's late in the day, but if you could get this added to the CM Report, I would really appreciate it. Lisa suggested I do it this way, rather than trying to contact everyone individually.

Please let me know.

Thank you.

...Melinda

TO: Thomas M. Markus, City Manager
FROM: Melinda Henderson
CC: Bryan Kidney, Finance Director
Casey Toomay, Assistant City Manager
Mayor Soden
Vice-Mayor Boley
Commissioner Herbert
Commissioner Larsen
Commissioner Amyx
Commissioner-Elect Ananda (sent under separate email)
DATE: November 21, 2017
RE: Utility Billing Drop Boxes (City Manager Report, Item 3)

I am respectfully requesting that the above item on the City Manager's report regarding the discontinuation of the city utility billing drop boxes be deferred until it can be placed on a city commission agenda as a regular public comment item.

I had a good conversation with Bryan Kidney this afternoon, expressing some of my concerns, and he was helpful in addressing as many of them as possible.

I feel like we should attempt to get some good data on who the 600-ish are who use this service each month, and why, before totally discontinuing it. Some of those reasons could include:

They live paycheck to paycheck and have no checking account so they get their paycheck cashed at the grocery store and then purchase a money order to pay their bill. They can drop it in the drop box right there.

Maybe they don't have a car so they take the bus to the grocery store. Suggesting they take another bus trip to 6 E 6th to put it in the secure drop box is just making their life a little more difficult.

Maybe the cost of a stamp means the difference between an extra jar of baby food, or even some ramen noodles. AND WE PAY SALES TAXES ON FOOD. Which, of course, just takes even more money out of their pocket which maybe could have been there to purchase a stamp.

Suggesting they pay their bill online is great. If they have an internet connection. Don't suggest they go to the library because that, again, is adding more stress to their day.

I could go on, but I think you get my drift. I worry that all the possible ramifications to the least of our citizens wasn't factored in to this decision and I would like for it to be.

Yes. People like this do live in Lawrence. They're just invisible to most people. Which is why I'm advocating for a public discussion on this before any final decisions are made.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,
Melinda Henderson

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"The first lesson to be learned by every citizen who desires to bring about a higher life in our American cities is that he must take an active part in managing the affairs of his own city."

--Theodore Roosevelt, The Outlook Magazine, Dec 21, 1895