

Chu says homeless in Sunset

Sunset Supervisor Carmen Chu is hearing complaints of increased homeless numbers in her district.

Joshua Sabatini, The Examiner

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SAN FRANCISCO - In her most aggressive political move since being appointed in September, interim Supervisor Carmen Chu publicly demanded that several city departments come up with a specific plan to address her west side district's homeless problem.

The District 4 supervisor is holding a community meeting Monday to address increasing complaints from her constituents that The City's recent efforts to clear Golden Gate Park of homeless people has increased their numbers in the adjacent Sunset neighborhood.

Last week, Chu requested city departments, including the police and the Human Services Agency, to come up with a Sunset-specific plan to combat the homeless problem in time for the meeting.

Chu met with representatives of the city departments Wednesday.

"We spoke at length about some of the things they have been seeing, what resources we could potentially take a look at," Chu said. "I feel good that I think that we are able to move in the right direction of getting some targeted services in areas where we know there is a presence."

Problem areas have been identified "along the Great Highway, near the ocean, along Judah, along Irving, very close to the park, along Lincoln Way as well," Chu said.

Chu said her request is also in response to the report last month of a German exchange student stabbed by a homeless man in the Outer Sunset.

It's unclear whether there are actually more homeless in the Sunset, Chu said, adding that she is hearing that from residents and merchants.

Monday's community meeting — at 7 p.m. at the Sunset Recreation Center — will include representatives from city departments, she said.

Chu took over as interim supervisor Sept. 25, appointed by Mayor Gavin Newsom after he suspended Supervisor Ed Jew from the seat and charged him with official misconduct. Chu previously worked in Newsom's Budget Office.

Newsom responded to Chu's concerns last week, saying, "There was a homeless problem in the Sunset before we stepped up enforcement in the park," and adding that it was "naïve" to think that increased efforts in the park would not prompt some homeless to move to other locations.

Newsom said The City has budgeted for the hiring of additional homeless out reach workers, which would also focus on the west side.

According to the 2007 homeless count conducted in January, there are 6,248 homeless people in emergency shelters, hospitals, treatment centers and jail, as well as those on the street. Of those counted, 2,771 lived on the streets, with 70 counted in District 4, one of the three lowest totals of all 11 districts.

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