

More Municipalities Pass Bans On Unauthorized Encampments

by Submitted by Madison County State's Attorney's Office
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EDWARDSVILLE — On the same evening last week (March 5), municipalities on opposite sides of the County (Godfrey and Granite City) joined the growing list of Madison County municipalities that have passed an ordinance banning unauthorized encampments on public property.

This followed closely on the heels of Wood River’s ban (passed Feb. 5), and Alton’s groundbreaking ordinance (which was used as a model by the other municipalities), passed in November of 2023. Madison County State’s Attorney Tom Haine, who attended the Granite City Council meeting and spoke on behalf of the ordinance, commended the municipalities for taking a proactive approach to this issue.

“The passage of these ordinances to regulate and manage these situations reflects a commitment by these communities’ leaders to ensuring public safety, and assures the public that their public spaces will always be welcoming and safe places to bring

families and children,” Haine said. “The ordinances passed by these communities are the result of a collaborative effort, and they exemplify a thoughtful and community-oriented approach to addressing the challenges associated with encampments on public property. I hope other municipalities will also soon jump on board this project.”

The new ordinances, approved by the respective City Councils or Village Boards in the communities, establish guidelines for the use of public spaces and aim to strike a balance between compassion for those in need and the responsibility of community leaders to maintain the well-being and accessibility of public areas.

Granite City Mayor Mike Parkinson said: “I would like to thank the Madison County State’s Attorney’s Office and the City Council of Granite City, for working with my office to facilitate this ordinance aimed at enhancing our citizens' and visitors' quality of life. This ordinance prohibits public encampments, empowering local law enforcement to maintain cleanliness and safety in our common areas. Together, we are committed to a thriving and secure Granite City.”

Godfrey Mayor Michael McCormick said: “In conjunction with our neighboring communities, the Village of Godfrey has adopted an ordinance that is in the best interest of public safety, public health and the general welfare of our residents and visitors.”

Wood River Mayor Tom Stalcup said: “I appreciate the efforts of Madison County State’s Attorney Tom Haine for keeping the interests of the entire county in mind. It is in the best interest of public safety, public health, and the quality of life for all the citizens of our city.” Haine has encouraged all communities in the county to enact similar ordinances, and is working with the Madison County Board toward passage of such an ordinance to cover unincorporated areas of the county. The goal is to have a unified approach to the issue, rather than a patchwork of regulation or nonregulation.

“The proactive steps taken thus far by these communities align with Madison County’s commitment to addressing societal challenges in a comprehensive, intelligent and compassionate manner,” Haine said. “It’s important that our local officials and community leaders continue to collaborate and communicate to address this complex issue, while also taking clear steps to protect our public spaces and parks from unlawful encampments.