

I have a personal reason for speaking tonight, it's a combination of empathy and self-defense, both impulses informed by work we do with the vulnerable communities in our city. I'm part of an emergency homelessness taskforce, coordinated by Doug Kress, Health and Human Services, and a second more focused ad hoc group working to provide supports for the homeless families housed outside of the city who send their children back here for school. In addition to this I'm now more or less on speed dial for several health care clinicians – 'I have a patient, billable time is up, she's just been put out on the street and speaks no English, can I send her to you?'

I'm not unique in this, CAAS, under the leadership of David Gibbs, is working hard to try and provide enough eviction prevention services. Others are experiencing the same pressures. Looking beyond the immediate interests of our immigrant communities and speaking as a member of Somerville Overcoming Addiction, I think that the surge in opiate overdoses and the underlying sense of hopelessness and sense of no future fueling this is just another part of the larger problem of rapid, callous, and profit driven development.

I have a sticky on my computer that says, "running out of thumbs and band aids" a sentiment that is widely shared by those of us involved in one way or another with direct services in the city. Somerville will change over time, but I'm convinced that we can control both the quality and pace of change and, at the same time, sustain a livable and welcoming city that offers excellence and equity. An inclusionary requirement of at least 20% would be a good place to start.

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