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The clock ticks and ticks.

This story isn't merely about some pretend protesters getting away with breaking the law.

It's about whether the folks at city hall can actually figure out how to handle an operation just slightly more complicated peanut stand and then locate the guts to pull off the job.

Well, howdy doody, a break in a cloudy sky.

It now looks like city hall brass are finally ready and willing to step in and give the squatters at Olympic Plaza 24 hours n

A decision could be made to send in the authorities to serve notice as early as Wednesday though others insist the back-a-foreheads could take until Friday.

This is the big blue playpen, not a place to look for miracles.

In either case, if things go sideways and the square root of diddly is the order of the day, the story will not die.

We will likely then get a closed-doors city council chinwag Monday where the politicians will exhale over when and how t the out-of-line tenters.

A majority of aldermen, at least nine, want to show the illegal campers the exit sign now.

For his part, throughout this two and a half weeks of plaza occupation, Mayor Nenshi has been a riddler.

He'd said it was fine the squatters stay for two weeks but after that they'd have to go because groups were renting the pla: echoed the deadline. The squatters could smell the city's weakness.

After all, hadn't the city allowed them to camp at Olympic Plaza violating a city bylaw after already handing over another Island?

The squatters called the city's bluff and found the city was showing a lousy hand.

Nenshi came under fire. Aldermen started taking pot shots at him. One figured he had buddies among the squatters. Five came out publicly for immediate action.

Nenshi asked the Occupy Calgary people to leave. They laughed.

On Saturday, the Muslims rented Olympic Plaza for a heritage day and were forced to share the place with the squatters.

They were not amused but said little because they didn't want trouble.

The mayor, who was also not amused, still avoided backing removal saying "politicians don't have personal strike forces."

He failed to mention the city bylaw folks can enforce the city bylaw against overnight camping.

By Monday, when Nenshi got a hug from a squatter and said the city was still negotiating and the city's emergency manager wanted to keep talking, he acknowledged the city has "a strong arm of enforcement" and "if we have to use it, we will."

Is that the flip or the flop?

One of the considerations holding the city back is reported to be the effect a forced departure of the campers could have on the city's reputation.

In case you've been living in hermitage the last couple years, there's been a whole lot of concern by some in this city over the city's image must become more like the alleged hipper sections of Toronto.

These individuals here, who are often heard to lament the lack of fusion cuisine, edgy boutiques and good nannies, fear a camper fleece will have the country's so-called opinion makers in T.O. crowing about how we haven't really moved beyond ourselves.

Anyhow, if it all comes to zip, Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart will bring a matter of "urgent business" to council Monday.

"We don't need fanfare. We don't have to bring in the strike forces of NATO and the United Nations. We have to direct council to bring this matter to a conclusion.

"These people are breaking the law. They've exceeded the time when they were supposed to leave. It's all wrong, dead weight negotiating with hijackers and they've hijacked the agenda and hijacked the plaza."

Colley-Urquhart is one of a few on council who also want a review of the city's bylaws to make sure they don't get into the city.

What does she think of the Olympic Plaza merry-go-round?

"Where are the adjectives? It's been remarkably unsuccessful. There's nothing to be proud on this one."

Ald. Jim Stevenson enters the fray Tuesday confirming "most members of council and administration feel the best way to deal with the plaza is to walk away quietly. Unfortunately some want to have their picture taken being dragged away."

As for moving them Stevenson doesn't waste syllables.

"Absolutely," he says.

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