



June 18, 2012

Members of the Planning Committee
 City Hall
 71 Main Street West
 Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5
Attention: Vanessa Robicheau, Legislative Coordinator

Dear Mesdames & Sirs:

RE: June 19, 2012 Planning Committee Meeting Item 9.1 – Motion – Hess Village Paid Duty Program

On behalf of the Durand Neighbourhood Association (“DNA”), I am writing to express our concern about the above-referenced motion.

Since our presentation to the Committee of the Whole on February 9th, 2009 (a copy of which is attached for your reference), the anecdotal reports that we have received from our members and other residents in surrounding neighbourhoods about the impact of Hess Village have been positive. We have no doubt that any improvements have to do with the increased involvement of the Hamilton Police Service and its commitment to safety, crime reduction and improving the quality of life for the residents in the abutting neighbourhoods.

The DNA will not support any recommendation that would decrease the number of Paid Duty officers in Hess Village nor will the DNA support any financial arrangement that does not have the Hess Village bar and restaurant owners paying at least 50% of the cost of the Paid Duty program.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or concerns.

Yours truly,
 Durand Neighbourhood Association
 PER:

Sarah Matthews, President

cc. Sgt. Frank Miscione
 Alan Waterfield, Hess Village Community Liaison Committee

DNA Presentation to Committee of the Whole, February 9th, 2009.

Good morning Your Worship, Councillors, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you about the Smooth Herman's expansion, and more generally about plans for expansion in all of Hess Village. I am Sarah Matthews, President of the Durand Neighbourhood Association. The Durand Neighbourhood Association (DNA) was established in 1972 as a politically independent community organization and chartered as a not-for-profit provincial corporation.

The Durand neighbourhood is the inner-city district bound by Main Street West, James Street South, the Escarpment and Queen Street South.

Hess Village is situated at the cross section of 4 neighbourhoods: Durand, Central, Strathcona and Kirkendall. Nevertheless, this is a city-wide issue.

The future development and proposed expansion of Hess Village is a cause of great concern for our neighbourhood. The issues of safety, theft, property damage, noise – including screaming, fighting, and profanity – along with vomit, urine, and trash, are an increasing cause of distress.

We recognize that there is a delicate balance between social and economic concerns. The DNA understands the desire to have an entertainment district in this area and therefore does not object to the existence of Hess Village. However, there seems to be lacking any safeguards in place to ensure responsible development, particularly when it comes to licensed establishments in residential neighbourhoods.

I have spoken with Drs. Garach and Garach-Grewel who operate a dental practice in Hess Village at George St. and Queen, very close to Smooth Herman's. They have concerns about remaining in Hess Village because they are growing fearful of the people there. They have had rocks and bricks thrown through the windows of their dental practice during the night.

Laura Sergeant, a homeowner on Duke Street between Hess and Caroline, states that she "has experienced vandalism several times and has had her ceramic planters stolen – all discovered on Sunday mornings. It's the lack of judgment which comes with impairment that makes a neighbourhood close to a "night life district" vulnerable." She goes on to say that "I like big cities and vibrancy; but the hooligan and "mob mentality" that can accompany high density alcohol zoning is worrisome. When the summer patio scene is in full swing I often avoid driving down Hess because the atmosphere can be intimidating and one worries about violence in this context. My perspective is that creating a dense party zone may become a deterrent to the development of a healthy urban core; your average home owner may decide that it's safe and more appealing to go elsewhere."

Karen Montesanto of Caroline Street writes "Enough is enough. We already have to put up with racing cars and loud, drunk streetwalkers during the early hours of the mornings, especially on Friday and Saturday nights. Car mirrors get broken; garbage litters the streets from them. There is already too much alcohol in one place, too many cars, and too many offenders of drunk driving."

Martin and Janice Marezki, also of Caroline Street, state that "We are very concerned about noise and crime from Hess Street. We have been able to hear music coming from the Hess

Street establishments, and we live close to Aberdeen! It has been loud enough some weekends to keep our 4 young children from sleeping, which is unacceptable.”

Doug Harrison who lives on Bay Street across from City Hall writes that he is “concerned with the additional parking at City Hall that will come from expansion. We have a 7 year old grandson who lives with us. When the people come out of the bars from Hess and they have parked at City Hall, some of the people talk very loud and the profanity is very prevalent sometimes. There are a number of apartment buildings situated around City Hall, lots with young kids. It is amazing how the sound of peoples voices travel at night. Why are we going to exacerbate this problem?”

Hess Village is a wonderful success story. However, in the words of Winston Churchill, “The price of success and greatness is responsibility”.

In order to maintain balance in our neighbourhood, continued unfettered growth must be stopped. We are of the strong opinion that Hess Village has grown to a level of critical mass, opinions shared by the Hamilton Police Service and even bar and restaurant owners in Hess Village.

It is the DNA's vision to be an active, resident-based voice that successfully addresses priority issues affecting the neighbourhood to nurture a vibrant downtown community.

Consistent with this vision, we would like to see the success of Hess Village continue but in a different direction. We do not want this to simply be an area to attract 19-23 year olds, drinking to excess, with night club owners receiving the profit. With proper planning, the City could receive a huge return if it were to invest in Hess Village.

If Hess Village became a true entertainment district, not just a party zone, there would be many economic spinoffs into the Core. Hess Village needs to be an area where people feel safe. To do so we need diversity – a mix of ages, gender, etc. If the area's infrastructure were improved with increased parking, bike racks, taxi stands, garbage receptacles, public washrooms, benches, and approved areas for food vendors and street performers, a universal benefit would be achieved.

Hess Village is saturated with night clubs. A more holistic and inclusive approach is needed to allow this area to become a more exciting place for everyone - where the existing night clubs can continue to attract their demographic but the rest of us require much more. If a business wants to open in Hess Village, limits must be placed on their establishment; for example, it must be required to serve food and should not be permitted to serve alcohol beyond 11 pm.

Therefore, it is our respectful recommendation that:

1. The City stops all expansion in Hess Village until such time as a “Development and Expansion Plan” is created and responsible decisions are made to promote economic opportunity for growth while safeguarding the abutting residential neighbourhoods;
2. An Advisory Committee is struck to assist in the “Development and Expansion Plan” of Hess Village. This Advisory Committee could include business owners, the police, politicians, AGCO and residents, as well as other stakeholders. The creation of a Hess Village BIA should also be considered.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration. You are the visionaries for our City and on behalf of the DNA; we believe that you will lead us in the right direction. Thank you.