



Hamilton

**TASK FORCE ON CLEANLINESS AND SECURITY
IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE
REPORT 13-001
2:00 p.m.
Thursday, June 27, 2013
Council Chambers
Hamilton City Hall, 71 Main Street West**

Present: Councillors J. Farr (Chair), C. Collins
K. Drewitt (Vice Chair), T. Mines, J. Hawker,
M. Platts, S. Braithwaite

Absent with Regrets: M. Pocius – Medical

**THE TASK FORCE ON CLEANLINESS AND SECURITY IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE
PRESENTS REPORT 13-001 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:**

- 1. Correspondence from Michael Borrelli, Co-President of the Beasley Neighbourhood Association respecting Cleanliness and Security in the Beasley Neighbourhood (Item 4.2)**

That the item of Correspondence from Michael Borrelli, Co-President of the Beasley Neighbourhood Association respecting Cleanliness and Security in the Beasley Neighbourhood be received.

- 2. Gore Park Demolition (Added Item 6.1)**

That the City's Building department be directed to work with Budget Environmental respecting shrouding and any other possible opportunities for dust mitigation during the demolition of 24 and 28 King Street East.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF COMMITTEE:

- (a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (Item 2)**

The Committee Clerk indicated the following changes to the agenda;

5.3 Weeds around poles and sidewalk cracks and planter bins

5.4 pilot of rubberized tree base surrounds

The agenda was approved as amended.

(b) APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Item 3)

(i) April 11, 2013 (Item 3.1)

The Minutes of the April 11, 2013 meeting be adopted as presented.

(c) CONSENT ITEMS (Item 4)

(i) Front line staff – Municipal Law Enforcement (No Copy)(Item 4.1)

Chair Farr welcomed front line Forestry staff member Kerri Wilson, Forestry Investigator. She discussed the work done in her division and the challenges they face.

Committee members discussed pigeon problems and the dead tree in front of the Lister Builder on King William Street as well as another dead tree situated on James Street North. Members also discussed the oversight and protection of trees while development occurs.

The update from Kerri Wilson was received.

(ii) Correspondence from Michael Borrelli, Co-President of the Beasley Neighbourhood Association respecting Cleanliness and Security in the Beasley Neighbourhood (Item 4.2)

Committee members indicated that the police response after receiving this letter has been terrific and they have assisted in resolving most of the items of concern.

For disposition on this matter refer to item 1.

(d) DISCUSSION ITEMS (ITEM 5)

(i) Aggressive Pan Handling (Item 5.1)

Inspector Rastin indicated that in issues with aggressive pan handling and how it has been mitigated in part through the social navigator program. He indicated that they are reducing the rate and frequency of recidivism and the courts are now assigning the social navigator program as a form of

probation. He stressed that it is not illegal to be a pan handler; however behavior such as knocking on windows or standing in traffic is aggressive pan handling.

Inspector Rastin indicated that once an aggressive pan handler is identified police try to involve them in the social navigator program if that fails they will proceed to other measures that could include criminal charges.

The update was received.

(ii) Updates on Task Force Business (Item 5.2)

Inspector Rastin indicated that he had investigated the issue of lighting on John Street and the expectation is that lighting should be improved in this area in the early fall.

Glen Norton, Manager Urban Renewal provided an update on the work to expanding way finding. He indicated that staff are currently working on a Terms of Reference for consultants.

The Committee members discussed the need to introduce further Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs to direct people to Downtown Hamilton and include attractions that are Downtown.

The update was received.

(iii) Weeds around poles and sidewalk cracks and planter bins (Added Item 5.3)

Chair Farr expressed concerns that some planter boxes are not being planted. Committee members indicated some locations that were of concern and also discussed some areas where weeds in sidewalk cracks were of large concern in some areas. Chair Farr indicated that he would send a list onto staff.

The update was received.

(iv) Pilot of Rubberized Tree Base Surrounds (Added Item 5.4)

Chair Farr indicated his support for the pilot program for Rubberized Tree base surrounds and discussed that he would like to see the program expanded throughout the downtown.

The update was received.

(d) OTHER BUSINESS / GENERAL INFORMATION (Item 6)

(i) Gore Park Demolition (Added Item 6.1)

Kathy Drewitt discussed an upcoming demolition at Gore Park. She indicated that sidewalk hoarding will be placed on King Street. She expressed concerns around dust and noise as a possible result of the demolitions. She indicated the contractor Budget Environmental has identified that there will be three weeks of demolition and then another three to four weeks to level the properties.

For disposition on this matter refer to item 2.

(e) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

Councillor J. Farr, Chair
Task Force on Cleanliness
and Security in the
Downtown Core

Andy Grozelle
Legislative Co-ordinator
Office of the City Clerk

From: Michael Borrelli
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2013 10:22 AM

Subject: Cleanliness & Security in Beasley

Good morning Councillor Farr:

As Chair of the Taskforce on Cleanliness and Security in the Downtown Core, I hope you are able to take receipt of this letter I have written on behalf of the Beasley Neighbourhood Association concerning some issues going on in our neighbourhood. After a few recent experiences around Barton street, Megan encouraged me to pass along this note to you and the Taskforce before my term as BNA Co-President winds up, and I have cc'd our Crime Manager for Beasley as well.

Thank you for all the continued support you offered to our little slice of downtown, and I look forward to continuing to work with you and the HPS in making Beasley safer for residents and visitors. Best,

Mike

To the members of the Taskforce on Cleanliness and Security in the Downtown Core:

With summer just around the corner, and the weather encouraging all Hamiltonians to get outdoors and enjoy our downtown, I would like to draw the Taskforce's attention to rising concerns among downtown residents that our streets are being re-taken by individuals participating in anti-social activities.

As the co-President of the Beasley Neighbourhood Association and a resident of John St. N, I have witnessed great leaps forward in the past 7 years as the neighbourhood has matured and seen an influx of young people and families looking for affordable accommodations. What used to be a particularly rough area of the downtown has improved dramatically, but challenges remain, especially with regards to 1) public drug use and intoxication; 2) the sale of illegal drugs on street corners, and 3) public solicitation by sex workers.

Based on my anecdotal observations while walking the neighbourhood at night, and conversations with residents and BNA members, the past two or three summers have been relatively quiet with respect to anti-social activities occurring in public, especially when comparing to the period 2006-10.

However, I have been dismayed to see a return in alarming behaviour and would like to share our concerns with the Task Force in the hopes that you might direct resources towards these issues:

1) **Public drug use/intoxication:** Always a concern in Beasley, albeit a relatively minor one, this issue appeared to be mitigated in recent years. However, it should be noted that the re-opening of a bar at the corner of John and Barton (The Corner Shot) has had an impact on this area of Beasley. While many residents (myself included) were happy to see this space used again, unfortunately the bar's patrons are not always the best behaved, and in recent months it has resulted in loud, substance-fuelled exchanges in public that sometimes threaten to devolve into violence. Furthermore, the alleyways near the bar are now being frequented more often by drug users and sex workers, and after a couple of years where condoms and needles were rarely seen in the alleyway behind the bar, these items are beginning to litter the alleys again.

2) **Sale of illegal drugs on street corners:** This was one of the more shocking observations made recently. While residents had noticed sketchy characters hanging out at street corners previously (especially the corner of Hughson & Barton and to the side of of the apartment buildings across from McLaren Park), it appears that drug dealers on Barton have become more brazen in recent months. One familiar face who walks Barton St. from James to Ferguson appears to be selling something to interested patrons, and communicates with some of the women who also share the corner at Hughson & Barton, indicating that he might also play a role in their business.

3) **The return of public solicitation by sex workers:** One of the biggest and most frustrating issues for residence is the apparent impunity with which sex workers operate on Barton St. The same women night after night wait at the same corner, occasionally speaking to men in cars that cruise through the neighbourhood, and often accompanying them in the car, or meeting them in the parking lot of Hamilton Strip (off John St.). This issue had been much improved in recent years, especially with the advent of the Social Navigator program, but just last week I was walking at 9:30pm and saw three different women working the corners from Hughson to Mary St. Judging by the attention they gave to passing cars, they were not waiting for a bus.

Saddest of all is the return of a very familiar face, a sex worker who was believed to have been set up with the Social Navigator program. For months I didn't see her around the neighbourhood, buoyed by the belief she was receiving help, but in recent weeks she has returned, this time frequenting the corner at John and Robert and the area around The Corner Shot.

Solicitation is a major concern because it turns the neighbourhood into a cruise-by area for johns, some of which have been witnessed (the same car circling the block) driving the wrong way up one-way streets in order to connect with the sex

workers. Some female residents have also complained about being confronted or harassed by the drivers of these slow-moving cars, as they are apt to approach any woman if they suspect she might be a sex-worker.

There is a strong concern among the residents I've spoken with that if these anti-social activities are seen to be tolerated during the Spring months, that they will be impossible to deal with come summer, when the weather will allow those working the streets to operate at all hours.

It is with this in mind that the Beasley residents and neighbours respectfully call upon the City and HPS to dedicate enhanced resources to staunch this flow of anti-social activity before it grows out of hand. We believe that the area of downtown around Barton St., from James to Wellington requires:

- 1) Enhanced coverage (i.e. more frequent visits) by the ACTION Team, including the many alleyways that surround Barton St.;**
 - 2) Follow-up by Social Navigators with past clients in the neighbourhood in order to identify any risks for recidivism;**
- and,
- 3) A proactive approach to dealing with solicitation on Barton St., including HPS contact with known sex workers, and an commitment to shutting down the cruise-by business at Hughson & Barton by targeting johns.**

I understand that dealing with Beasley's challenges is no easy task, however the BNA and concerned residents have indicated a willingness to assist the HPS and City wherever possible. In fact, the willingness by some to put an end to some of these anti-social behaviours is one of the main reasons why I implore the City and HPS to deal with these issues proactively--the BNA believes enforcement should be left to trained professionals and wants to be able to assure residents that personal intervention in attempting to stop these behaviours is neither a safe alternative, nor a necessary one.

Thank you for your time, and I sincerely hope we can tackle some of Beasley's challenges together this spring in order to set the stage for a safe and clean summer!

Best,

Mike Borrelli
Co-President, BNA
239 John St. N.