

PUBLIC LANEWAY OBSERVATIONS

Although we appreciate the opportunity to speak to this issue, we are unable to make a verbal presentation to the committee on June 19, 2017. Instead we are circulating our written submission to all of the relevant parties.

We are not directly impacted by the decision to close the laneway (we don't live in the immediate vicinity). Nevertheless, we are taxpayers of Hamilton and residents of Ancaster in particular and feel we must provide our thoughts on the sale of **"PUBLIC"** Laneways in Hamilton.

My wife lived beside the laneway in question throughout her childhood and for a total of more than two decades. She has many fond memories of a laneway which she used every day throughout those twenty five years for various reasons. As a child, she went to school through the laneway, played baseball and football with the neighbourhood children, walked from the side door of 31 Victoria Street through the laneway to go shopping downtown and visited back and forth with friends always using the public laneway. There was never any hint of danger or safety concerns during those decades. Our point is that the laneway has always been used by the people in the neighbourhood for recreation and transportation in a walkable, bikeable and friendly neighbourhood laneway. For my part, I, too, have fond memories growing up with a laneway in central Hamilton and with never a hint of danger. The closest we came to unsafe conditions were sitting on our backyard fence watching the rag and bones man go about his daily activities.

We met many new friends who also used the laneway and this "short block" as Jane Jacobs would call them, brought people together and, in fact, was an important neighbourhood connection. The **Public** Laneways were shared and loved by all who used them and they still are fifty years later. We should be celebrating our public laneways. Instead we are selling them. It is unbelievable to many of us who live in walkable communities that beloved **"PUBLIC LANEWAYS"** are to be sold to private interests for the princely sum of two bucks. In what world can a city privatize a public piece of property, close it to the public and basically give it to a developer or other landowner for his/her own use? Many cities are celebrating their public laneways, sponsoring laneway tours and even holding Laneway Festivals (Sydney, Australia). This is called people and community building and should be the direction taken by the City of Hamilton.

In conclusion, we along with hundreds of others disagree with the public works staff recommendations. This Public Laneway is not an unsafe, dangerous place to be and we wonder about the rigor, accuracy and professionalism of the so-called traffic study. It is interesting to note that there were never any safety issues with the laneway until someone wanted to purchase a piece of the public property. We are asking the Public Works Committee to turn down the staff recommendations and listen instead to the thoughts, feelings and ideas of the hundreds of residents who live in the immediate vicinity of the public laneway in question.

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June 16, 2017