

**Pilon, Janet**

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**Subject:** Laneway Concerns in Dundas

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**From:** Sheila Ashcroft-Shupe

**Sent:** June-26-17 3:55 PM

**To:** clerk@hamilton.ca

**Subject:** Laneway Concerns in Dundas

Good Afternoon,

I am writing this letter to you in advance of the Wed. June 28 council vote on the sale of the unassumed alley in Dundas between Victoria and Alma streets, (heretofore being referred to as a "laneway" ) to ask for your support for a No" vote or at least a motion to pause a decision on the issue until further discussion on the subject can take place either due to legal issues or issues with the statutes of the Cross-Melville Heritage District.

I know that this issue may not seem important to those citizens who do not live in Dundas, but this unassumed "alley" is an unspoiled, quiet tree-lined laneway that has been here for more than 160 years without incident and is a quiet respite from noisy and busy Sydenham Street which, as you know, is a major north and southbound artery in and out of Dundas.

Sydenham Street is also a significant and popular training hill for world class cyclists inclusive of Canadian cycling medalist Clara Hughes. Recently safety traffic calming bars were installed along its eastern side in the hopes of protecting pedestrian travel, but unfortunately cyclists now report this has made it even more treacherous than it was before. At the committee meeting on Monday that my husband and I attended along with dozens of other concerned Dundas residents, our councillor Arlene Vanderbeek summarized 2 and 1/2 hours of citizen input over the closure by indicating the committee was going to proceed with the sale to a private citizen for the nominal fee of \$2 stating that all of a sudden there was a major travel safety concern for walkers in the alley where it meets Alma Street, despite there never having been any incidents of safety problems in this area in anyone's memory ( and I have lived in Dundas for over 60 years ) . I believe she even mentioned that consideration was being given to perhaps widening the sidewalks on Sydenham in the future to make the street safer, which given my comments above would only make it narrower than it is now especially considering that the approach to Dundas is a steep incline with a fairly sharp turn at the bottom of the hill directly in front of an elementary school.

Anyone who has spent any time in Dundas at all could see through this "red herring" safety concern that Ms Vanderbeek and the committee were floating as the major issue for approving the sale. Children and pedestrians who travel through the alleyway have been doing so for decades without incident. The supposed reason for the sale brings to mind the comments of John Snobelen , the Ontario Education Minister of the 1990's in the Mike Harris government who stated that to enact change in Ontario's education system the government of the day would have to "create a useful crisis" where none existed.

Len Medeiros, the individual who has put forth the request to buy this laneway is arguing that his privacy is compromised by living on the laneway although he bought his property knowing it existed. He also flaunted the law by covertly building a fence and paving a portion of the laneway on land that he did not own without permission on property that is subject to the provisions of the Cross-Melville Heritage District. I have many friends who live in the heritage district and it is extremely difficult to make even minor changes to the houses and landscape of this beautiful part of Dundas without proper oversight. I applaud and respect this strict adherence to rules that require going through the proper channels to keep the character of old Dundas true to its history. It is ironic in a sense that he would bypass proper protocol when likely the charm of this area was what drew him in the first place to buy in this district. Mr Medeiros owns more than one home in the area.

There are well over 650 signatures that want this laneway to stay open.

Those who spoke about keeping the laneway public did so because we are trying to preserve a way of life.

Certainly the City of Hamilton is not gaining when the cost for the alley is \$2.00. In fact, if indeed widening Sydenham Street sidewalks is being discussed it would then entail spending even more taxpayer money to correct a concern that does not

exist. The sale of this property only serves to make the life of one rather wealthy citizen more comfortable. The rest of us are left to mourn its loss.

I urge you, please, to vote 'no' to this sale on Wednesday. At the very least 'pause' the vote so that there can be an authentic and meaningful dialogue on why this sale needs to happen.

Respectfully,  
Sheila Ashcroft-Shupe