

September 24, 2019

Michael Van Pelt, President and CEO
Cardus
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His Worship Mayor Fred Eisenberger, and
City Councillors and
Janette Smith, City Manager and
Office of the City Clerk
Hamilton City Hall, 2nd floor - 71 Main Street West
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

RE: Proposal for the Adaptive Re-Use of Balfour House/Chedoke Estate (PED19168) (Ward 14)

Your Worship Mayor Eisenberger,

It was good to speak with you and many other City of Hamilton representatives by phone yesterday.

In response to your request, I have taken the time to review all of the documents noted below that guide the day-to-day operations of the City of Hamilton. I can confirm that Cardus complies with all of these:

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html>

Ontario Human Rights Code: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>

Ontario Employment Act: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/00e41>

City of Hamilton Equity and Inclusion Policy:

<https://d3fplf1m7bbt3.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/media/browser/2016-03-11/equityandinclusionpolicy-summary.pdf>

Cardus Record

I would like to add that Cardus has an impressive record in terms of building an open and tolerant society in Canada.

We lead some of the most respectful and thoughtful discussions on faith and public life in the country. Given the tenor of political rhetoric in North America, I hope you will see that Cardus has contributed to healthy dialogue that crosses political, religious, and philosophical divisions in a true effort to bring together people from different perspectives and backgrounds in deep pluralism. For example:

- Cardus was invited by the Conference Board of Canada to present on workplace diversity standards to the Human Resources leaders of Canada's largest companies: [Conference Board of Canada's Council on Inclusive Work Environments](#)
- In November of 2017, our Dr. Andrew Bennett (Canada's former religious freedom ambassador) was invited to testify before the House of Commons heritage committee as it studied the issue of

Islamophobia. [In his testimony](#), Dr. Bennett described the hatred of Muslims as something “that is bred from three evils: ignorance, indifference, and fear,” arguing that all three evils “must be addressed at the level of our own communities.” He also condemned other hatreds, such as those based on race, sexual orientation, or religious belief.

- Cardus celebrated Canada’s 150th anniversary with a series of multi-faith activities, one of which was a summit of millennials of various faiths from all over Canada, resulting in [a joint open letter](#) and a [beautiful commemorative book](#).
- Cardus has been an outspoken critic of Bill 21 and the outsized harm it would cause to minority groups in Canada, including through this [op-ed in the Globe and Mail](#).
- In November of 2018, the Cardus Religious Freedom Institute (CRFI) held a symposium at the Ottawa Torah Centre on the intersection of civil law and Jewish law, and published the papers of [three prominent Jewish experts](#).
- In January of 2017, the CRFI published a paper by [Muslim legal scholar Faisal Bhabha](#) on the intersection of multiculturalism and religious freedom.
- Cardus started a literary prize [for faith-inspired writing](#). The first winner for poetry was Rowda Mohammed, a Somali-born Canadian Muslim poet.

Cardus Philosophy

Cardus’s mission is to apply the wisdom of 2,000 years of Christian social thought to contemporary issues. Our core belief is that every human person has dignity and worth because they are created in the image of God. All of the work we undertake seeks to promote the dignity of every person, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, race, or creed.

Our belief in the dignity and worth of all people is evident in our work:

- We have funded and participated in [research with the Angus Reid Institute](#) that concluded “Visible minorities, Indigenous Canadians, those with mobility challenges, and LGBTQ2 individuals are all noticeably more likely to deal with social isolation and loneliness than the general population average.”
- Our research with the Angus Reid Institute has paid special attention to the concerns, challenges, and experiences of [immigrants to Canada](#).

In closing, I am willing to meet or speak with any councillor or staff member to help make your near unanimous decision on Balfour a reality!

Respectfully,



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Enclosed: Excerpts from [Canada 150 Millennial book by Cardus](#):





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What are you bringing back to your community as a result of this experience?

The Faith in Canada 150 Millennial Summit provided me with a new appreciation for how other faith groups struggle with both faith in the public square and the challenge of being faithful during an era of secularism and occasional hostility toward faith groups. Sometimes, when we are singularly focused on our own issues, we are unable to see the others dealing with the same challenges. There was a sense of commonality and ally-ship at the conference, and I left feeling as though I could offer my community a fresh perspective.

How has your view changed regarding the role of faith in common and public life?

I would not say my view of faith in common and public life has changed. Instead, I would say I have gained a new understanding and appreciation for how other Canadians live their faith publicly and interact with the public square. The summit's spirit of sharing and storytelling helped me understand how challenges I had only considered from my perspective, and that of my community, affected others and how they too sought to address them.

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How would you say the Canadian approach to faith in public life could improve over the next 50 years, in time for Canada's 200th anniversary?

If Canadian society could move from a stance of tolerance (sometimes a little grudging) to one of true pluralism and acceptance, that would be a meaningful improvement for Canada's 200th birthday. Too often, we adopt a stance of tolerance for the 'other' as opposed to true acceptance. In a pluralist and multicultural society such as Canada, we should strive to truly embrace the differences in our communities and utilize them as a vehicle for sharing and growth. While Canada is undoubtedly a world leader in fostering pluralist values, there is still plenty of room for improvement. If we as a community could truly learn to embrace our various parts and their differences, I believe it would make for a far stronger whole and a stronger Canada.

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Dear Canada,

We write to you on the eve of the 150th anniversary of Confederation to affirm the role of faith in the formation of Canada in its past, today, and in future generations to come.

We, delegates of the Faith in Canada 150 Millennial Summit, have taken hold of the opportunity that 2017 has provided to reflect on the role that faith communities and individuals of differing faith traditions have had on the formation of our nation.

We, young millennial leaders of faith, have devoted the days preceding this significant anniversary for our country to contend with questions that we feel merit consideration in the formation of the next 150 years of Canadian history:

For many centuries, faith has shaped the human landscape of Canada. It has shaped how we live our lives; how we relate to our neighbours; how we fulfill our social responsibilities; and how we share a common life together as Canadians.

What is the public square and who inhabits it?

Can faith be truly public?

Can a common life be built based on genuine disagreement?

What do religious communities contribute toward the formation of the common good?

How do we demonstrate through action the link between friendship and faith to our non-religious peers?

WE HEREBY AFFIRM:

We take this opportunity today to affirm our hope that Canada's next generation of faithful leaders will move beyond tolerance to cultivate a more vibrant expression of pluralism, founded on the resolution to live peaceably in diversity. Such genuine pluralism

admits both public and private expressions of faith even when our beliefs differ from one another. We affirm that we desire a genuine respect for the inherent dignity of the human person regardless of what faith or non-religious belief they profess. It is our hope that public expressions of faith will contribute to a renewed commitment to cultivating a vibrant, pluralist Canadian society.

Furthermore, we hope that it will encourage a renewed acceptance of the continuing role of faith within Canadian public life.

WE PLEDGE:

1. To celebrate the role of faith in the formation of our rich and diverse culture.
2. To remind Canadians of the contributions religious faith has made to our common life.
3. To tell stories about the role of faith from our past that resonate through our present and toward our future.
4. To encourage and inspire communities of faith to greater participation in and celebration of Canadian life.
5. To help build a network of leaders across private and public, religious and secular institutions who recognize and seek to nurture the place of faith in our life together.

WE WILL AFFIRM AND CHAMPION the role of faith in our common life as Canadians in the spirit of friendship, ensuring that individuals and communities of faith retain an active role in the formation of the spirit and life of this nation.

This open letter was affirmed at the Faith in Canada 150 Millennial Summit at the Ottawa Offices of Cardus, Canada's faith-based think tank, June 30, 2017.

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