

**Bates, Tamara**

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**Subject:** FW: Ward 3 men's homeless shelter

**From:** Michelle Cho <>

**Sent:** September 8, 2020 7:36 AM

**To:** [clerk@hamilton.ca](mailto:clerk@hamilton.ca)

**Subject:** Ward 3 men's homeless shelter

Mayor and Members of Council

I, the undersigned, have been a resident of Hamilton, Ward 3 for 13 years. During a pandemic a population is as vulnerable as its most vulnerable members. The present situation in our community was created by decades of neglect of the duty to house with dignity vulnerable fellow Canadians. I have been informed that the City "owns" many empty apartment buildings.

To open the "temporary" emergency shelter as planned by City Hall at Main and Emerald St at the heart of our neighborhood, Stinson Community/Ward 3, creates the conditions for a serious outbreak of Covid-19: Pandemic+Stinson's high concentration of Community Living Facilities+New Good Shepherd Ministries emergency shelter= Outbreak.

Pandemic+Stinson's high concentration of Community Living Facilities+"Motel Cathedral"+ Tenting Encampments= Explosive Outbreak.

It is a logical prognostication that there will be interactions between our local vulnerable resident population, the vulnerable transient clients of the Good Shepherd Ministries and the vulnerable population of the encampments that need to access the services of "Motel Cathedral" as they have named the emergency shelter.

If after ignoring our warning, the new emergency shelter opens as it was announced, at the site of the Old Cathedral Boys School in September, The City of Hamilton, the Good Shepherd Ministries and all other parties involved directly and indirectly at the Provincial and Federal level, shall take action *NOW* to prevent the crises that it will manifest *in situ* and they shall urgently implement the following safety and security measures that Toronto was forced to take after the crises developed in their midst, as it was reported by CBC:

***"City says steps being taken to increase safety.***

*The city said local residents have shared their concerns with the city and it has taken steps to address community concerns. These steps include the following measures:*

- *Installation of 33 security cameras.*
- *Enhanced 24/7 mobile patrols.*
- *Four security guards at the Roehampton site around the clock.*
- *A community safety team of seven people between the Roehampton and Broadway Avenue sites who are picking up hazards, such as needles and monitoring and addressing inappropriate activity.*
- *Work with Inner City Health Associates to provide clinical health supports, including registered nurses and a physician, a virtual addictions physician clinic and day-time on call support, plus psychiatric clinical support.*
- *Meetings held regularly with the clients, which include reviewing the Good Neighbours Policy and their*

responsibilities as residents of the shelter.

- Educational signs posted in the building regarding conduct in the neighbourhood.
- Regular visits from Toronto police's community response unit." (Source CBC)"

The City of Hamilton, the Good Shepherd Ministries and other parties directly and indirectly involved at the Provincial and Federal level, shall take immediate action to **implement preventive Covid19 safety and security measures** to protect the Stinson Community and avoid the birth of the First Canadian COVID-19 Ghetto.

Preventing the community transmission of COVID-19 is a priority for all of us. We reviewed the following documents:

1. Ministry of Health. May 28,2020. Memorandum to: Mental Health and Addictions Service Providers. RE:COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.
2. Public Health Ontario, 05/23/2020. COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Congregate Living Settings.
3. Ministry of Health. May 24, 2020. MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers. SUBJECT: Additional Direction on Testing Strategy.
4. COVID-19 Proactive Surveillance Testing Update to York Region Long-Term Care/Retirement Homes and Community Living Facilities as of April 23, 2020
5. Public Health Ontario, 05/23/2020.Managing COVID-19 Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings.
6. Tenants Re-Engaging in Community Life. Homes for Special Care and Community Homes for Opportunity. July 17, 2020.

In the case that our warnings are ignored, as to this moment, then the protocols described in these 6 documents shall be followed to the letter at the Good Shepherd emergency shelter and in all the assisting living facilities in the Stinson Community area.

Furthermore, we have identified in those 6 documents many blind spots, weak areas and weak protocols that shall be corrected to prevent an outbreak. Immediate action shall be taken by Hamilton City Hall and all other agencies and entities involved:

1. The "flood" of Tenting Encampments that intends to set up in the vicinity of the new emergency shelter to access the services provide by the Good Shepherd Ministries should be stopped **immediately**. Members of the encampment "scouted" already the green space/parkettes including Bishop Park, Carter Park, Wellington Park, parkette off of West Ave S, business property at Main and Emerald, they have stated their intentions to set up camp in those locations a couple days before the Good Shepherd temporary emergency shelter (aka Motel Cathedral) opens for business someday this month of September 2020. We immediately fulfilled our pandemic civic duty to inform, by reporting to our new Councillor Nann, City Hall and other authorities. We received this worrisome information: "*I found out last night that **the company the city was using to rent the porta potties that were outside First Ontario, have cancelled the contract due to extreme damage, that is why there are no porta potties on Ferguson, because besides the company they were using, that city cannot find another company that will put them in that area.***"

We also take in consideration these paragraphs from the article CBC News Sept 1, 2020:

*"The city says a waste collection worker received minor injuries on Ferguson Avenue North around 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 25. More than 35 tents there house people who are sleeping rough."*

*"The city says its crews regularly collect waste from encampment areas around the First Ontario Centre and Ferguson Avenue North. Now, "the city is looking at the frequency of waste collection schedules in those areas," the city said, "and will be updating the advice it gives outreach workers to provide services to those areas."*

*"The encampments have been a divisive issue in Hamilton since they appeared with greater visibility during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are more than 50 tents downtown, mostly outside the temporary shelter on York*

*Boulevard and the Wesley Day Centre on Ferguson Avenue North."*

*"It's not new for people to be sleeping in tents around Hamilton, says Dr. Jill Wiwcharuk of the Hamilton Social Medicine Response Team (Hamsmart). People have convened around FirstOntario Centre and the Wesley Day Centre because there are resources like food and restrooms there."*

*"Temporary shelter moving from FirstOntario Centre to former boys school next month"*

Notice that the article does not mention the problem presented by human feces and urine, both bio-hazard materials that may carry the virus and contaminate shoes. City Hall shall provide more cleaning crews instead of less and the cleaning crews shall work under the protection of trained security teams.

2. A team of Covid-19 prevention experts shall be created to monitor the compliance to the pandemic protocols in all the Congregate Living Settings located in Stinson Community/Ward 3. The monitoring of these facilities shall be done often, at least once a week, and their inspection of the facilities to survey the implementation of Covid-19 protocols shall be unannounced to the managers of those facilities. We fulfilled our civic duty by reporting to our Ward 3, new Councillor Nann, City Hall and other authorities multiple times in the past weeks that the Covid-19 protocols are not being enforced by the care-givers.

Updates and new information on this subject **shall** be periodically shared with the community.

3. The Good Shepherd emergency shelter shall follow ALL the protocols outline in the 6 documents mentioned above. In addition, the City of Hamilton, the Good Shepherd Ministries and other parties involved directly and indirectly at the Provincial and Federal level, shall take immediate action to implement the following safety and security measures to protect the clients of the Good Shepherd Ministries and our neighborhood, the Stinson Community/Ward 3, from a Corona outbreak:

3.1. Good Shepherd shall provide 24/7 washrooms attendants: As the emergency shelter will shelter, by definition, a constant transient population of 45 plus men overnight + the numerous people who access the facilities during the day without spending the night in the shelter, there shall be 24/7 employees, in full Covid-19 protection gear, sanitizing the toilets and the showers after each use. The toilets need to be equipped with toilet LIDS to stop the Covid19 to be airborne after each flush and infect the surrounding area.

3.2. Cleaning crews to remove bio-hazard materials from the neighborhood, not only needles and condoms but human feces. Human feces and urine had manifested as a grave problem around the "tent encampment sites" in downtown Hamilton and in Toronto. The human feces collected could be tested for Covid19 and thus create a databank. Updates shall be made public.

3.3. To the basic screening & daily temperature check of all those who access the shelter shall be added obligatory Covid-19 testing to identify asymptomatic individuals. City Hall and the Good Shepherd Ministries shall provide the One Hour Covid-19 test already in use in other countries. This information should be entered in a databank. The data (not the names of the infected) shall be made public.

3.4. Daily sanitation of our sidewalks and public and private parking spaces with Eco-friendly products. Those neighbors that object to their portion of the sidewalk being sprayed may opt out.

3.5. Modification of the Pre-Covid-19 curfews currently used by Good Shepherd Ministries in their shelters to: The men that had secured a bed for the night, shall be permitted to come in during the night at any time but they shall not leave the premises until 9am.

3.6. Washrooms at the emergency shelter should remain open 24/7 for those who have not secure an overnight bed thus minimize the use of public and private spaces as latrines, especially vital during the Second Wave. There shall be facilities attendants 24/7 to sanitize the facilities after each use.

4. We do not support a "police state" but **we support all temporary pandemic** emergency measures that can assist us the Stinson Community, to survive this crisis. Police presence shall greatly increase, cars, bicycles and drones, during the pandemic.

September 1, 2020, a black drone was spotted flying over Victoria Ave South between Main and East Ave. at 3am; as we are aware that it is unlawful to fly a private drone over Victoria Ave South, the neighbors assumed it was a Police drone.

5. Emergency financial assistance for the neighbors of the Stinson Community:

5.1. Compensation for the cost of upgrading and protecting our homes and business with surveillance cameras and flood lights.

5.2. Tax forgiveness from the day the emergency shelter opens until the day it closes, to compensate the neighbors from the hardships, the added burdens and the extraordinary Covid-19 risks imposed upon us.

5.3. A fund shall be created to compensate for damage to property.

6. In the case that a Covid-19 outbreak occurs in our Stinson Community/Ward 3 following the opening of the emergency shelter:

6.1. A fund shall be created by City Hall and by The Hospitaller Order of St. John of God (The Good Shepherd Ministries) to compensate families for the death of a family member arising from any circumstances related to a resident of temporary emergency shelter or tent encampment.

6.2. A fund shall be created to support Stinson surviving residents that become "Covid-19 long haulers".

6.3. A fund shall be created by City Hall and The Hospitaller Order of St. John of God (The Good Shepherd Ministries) to compensate for any loss of income due to an outbreak of Covid-19 in our Stinson Community-Ward 3.

7. Other questions presented by the Stinson Community neighbours( the proper prevention Covid-19 answer to all questions is YES):

- will the men be wearing masks outside the shelter?
- will there be supervised sanitation stations tables at all exits/entrances 24 hrs per day, as the men are presently allowed to leave at anytime of the day or night when they so please.
- will the men be made to stay 6ft apart outside, and will there be 24hr outside staff to reinforce this.
- will the Good Shepherd be giving out free masks, and hand sanitizer to those coming in and out from the encampments to take back to the tents.
- how often will Covid-19 screening be done of the staff, residents and all those accessing the emergency shelter services.
- have they hired specific cleaning staff, trained in covid cleaning, 24hrs a day at the high touch points.
- will the bikes that will be kept inside of the building be sanitized before entry by a specific cleaning staff.
- will grocery carts full of unsanitized stuff be allowed inside the building, if so, will there be a specific trained staff designated to this if grocery carts full of stuff are NOT allowed in the building where the secure, locked place be that they will be kept.
- will the residents be obliged to sanitize their hands before and after smoking.
- will contact tracing be done for not only the sleep over men but daytime men as well?
- will temperature checks be taken from anyone going inside during the open door daytime policy?
- will the neighbours be informed of a covid outbreak before it hits the media?
- where will a person be isolated once a confirmed covid test comes back?
- is there a 24hr phone number for residents to call directly into the shelter if so, how will this number be made known to the community?
- What are the daytime contact numbers for management from the Good Shepherd?
- What is the emergency contact for Brother Reginald Howson, Provincial Superior of the Order of Hospitaller Brothers of St. John of God that runs the Good Shepherd Ministries.
- Will a constant and visible police patrol of the neighborhood, in bicycles and cars, be deployed.
- Will the military, with so much experience assisting other countries in crisis, be called to assess the risks of the present situation and to assist with proper protocols or better still, be called to assist identifying alternative safer locations for the emergency shelter and for a safe tent encampment.
- If Stinson is hit hard by an outbreak, will the military be deployed as they were when the seniors long-term care homes suffered the outbreak due to negligence and poor preparedness.

- It was stated that this will be a "temporary emergency shelter" and that it will be "probably closed by June 30, 2021". Will the City of Hamilton and Good Shepherd Ministries provide daily briefings regarding the selection of the new location and daily briefings regarding the advance of the work-renovations done to prepare it.

**It is your duty to keep us safe. Act now**

**Michelle Cho**