

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Homelessness : PLEASE LISTEN!!

From: Doreen Stermann

Sent: December 4, 2020 11:04 AM

To: Eisenberger, Fred <Fred.Eisenberger@hamilton.ca>; Wilson, Maureen <Maureen.Wilson@hamilton.ca>; Clark, Brad <Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca>; Pearson, Maria <Maria.Pearson@hamilton.ca>; Farr, Jason <Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca>; Ferguson, Lloyd <Lloyd.Ferguson@hamilton.ca>; VanderBeek, Arlene <Arlene.VanderBeek@hamilton.ca>; Johnson, Brenda <Brenda.Johnson@hamilton.ca>; Collins, Chad <Chad.Collins@hamilton.ca>; Partridge, Judi <Judi.Partridge@hamilton.ca>; Merulla, Sam <Sam.Merulla@hamilton.ca>; Whitehead, Terry <Terry.Whitehead@hamilton.ca>; Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>; Pauls, Esther <Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca>; Danko, John-Paul <John-Paul.Danko@hamilton.ca>; Nann, Nrinder <Nrinder.Nann@hamilton.ca>; clerk@hamilton.ca

Cc: Roger Stermann

Subject: Homelessness : PLEASE LISTEN!!

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

I urge you to have a public dialogue with the protesters and those representing the homeless people in our city. Leadership requires compromise. I can not blame these advocates for wanting a public meeting since this city is not known for transparency. It has been this city's lack of transparency that forces citizens to distrust their elected leaders. Another reminder about the many scandals in recent years in this city and your secrecy around them that has forced advocates to want public meetings. Protesting is a response to not being heard or not having a voice at the table. There are numerous inequalities in our society. This pandemic has made it worse for those already living on the edge.

Asking for a 50% reduction in a police budget is a starting point. So negotiate! LISTEN!. Since the HPS has a surplus of \$171.5M there is room for reduction. This surplus has increased 3.8% from 2018: By reducing the HPS budget at the very least three things can be addressed: 1) reduce an inflated budget to the HPS department; 2) redistribute funds to housing for the homeless and 3) re-allocate funds to health departments. I believe that some funding can be reallocated to health departments better suited to deliver a response to those having a health crisis. Crimes require policing. Someone having a health crisis is not a crime! Obviously there is room for a reduction in the HPS budget. No one can deny that. If you were looking at your own household budget would you seriously keep a surplus and not adjust spending if your roof was leaking? Our roof is severely leaking. The house is flooded. People need a place of shelter. People will die this winter if they are not housed.

Winter is here. There needs to be immediate action to house people even if it is just temporary until the city builds more facilities. I see vacant buildings across this city that could be transformed. Sir John A MacDonald High School is just one such building. Empty stores in plazas could be renovated.

Decades of policies and cutbacks in many sectors (Federal, Provincial and Municipal) have brought us to this crisis in homelessness. As the saying goes "The chickens have come home to roost".

All levels of government need to come to the table. Feds, Province and Municipalities so that we can honestly strive for every city or town to be a place to grow up and age gracefully .

But start locally and listen. Listen with an open heart, with empathy. But listen.

Sincerely

Doreen Stermann
Ward 1
Hamilton