

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Support for Defund HPS protesters

From: Kim Selman

Sent: December 4, 2020 12:36 PM

To: Office of the Mayor <mayor@hamilton.ca>; Collins, Chad <Chad.Collins@hamilton.ca>

Cc: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Support for Defund HPS protesters

To: Mayor Fred Eisenberger

CC: Chad Collins

I am writing this letter in support of the Defund HPS protestors and to express my complete disappointment in the City of Hamilton, and specifically the Mayor's response to this peaceful protest. I join Defund HPS in calling for the Mayor to have a **public meeting** to discuss the crisis of homelessness facing our city.

I am a lifelong resident of Hamilton. I live in ward 5 and my business is located in ward 3. I have chosen to raise my child here. I have never been more disappointed in this city than over the last year. The lack of leadership in the handling of numerous issues is astounding but what hurts even more is the utter contempt that the Mayor and many members of Council show to its own citizens. The growing calls for equity and inclusion are dismissed as coming from the 'fringe'. You falsely lump together protesters / citizens who are speaking out on a broad range of issues (i.e. Pride, Wet'suwet'en pipeline, etc.) as one homogenous group. You dismiss the City's own public feedback process (i.e. snow clearing survey) as 'not representative.' What does one need to do to be considered a true resident that is worthy of having an opinion? Instead of taking the opportunity to learn from those who have a different lived experience than you, you have adopted a combative and dismissive approach. This is unproductive and damaging.

The Defund HPS movement has legitimate concerns. Disabled and racialized people are disproportionately affected by homelessness and police brutality. Yet when these same people ask for a meeting you respond by criminalizing them rather than taking the opportunity to have a public dialogue.

I understand that we are in unprecedented, challenging times. I also understand that policing is important but this does not mean that the police are above criticism. It also does not mean that bloated police budgets should go unchecked. Now is the time for resourcefulness and creativity. Now is the time to do things differently. We must challenge our institutions to do better. This is undoubtedly a massive task but the only way to start is to listen to your constituents. Have the conversation.

Sincerely,

Kim Selman