

To the Chair and Members of the Emergency and Community Services Committee

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Hamilton, ON

Part 1 "Cathedral Shelter Community Meeting" Dec 6 2021.

(I posted the first rough draft of the text below in "the chat" of the "Cathedral Shelter Community Meeting" Dec, 6, 2021 via Webex. I took the 24 hours since then to correct a bit my grammar, articulate better my thoughts and fix a few errors.)

I request that this project is halted until due diligence on the matter is completed.

I ask forgiveness if any of my assertions are incorrect. They are made in good faith and at the best of my ability, education & knowledge. Part 1 results from a herculean effort to obtain information from Good Shepherd, Councilor Nann, EOC and P. Johnson. If I fail to express clearly my thoughts and arguments, please contact me.

Stinson's safety and well-being have already greatly deteriorated this past year and this was caused by the opening of the "temporary shelter for men" at O.C. and the many encampments that appeared in our neighborhood at the same time. The social disorder around the shelter escalated to the point that Good Shepherd was obliged to hire private security to patrol the vicinity at night. The initial number of the shelter clients was 35. When the number increased to 45 clients, there was a new surge of incidents & high acuity behaviors in our neighborhood.

A LOW BARRIER shelter for 100 persons with active substance abuse will be detrimental for Stinson security, safety and well-being and this infringes our Rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This Part 1 questions the legality and/or due process that are necessary to use a building that was undergoing the process of study for a "heritage designation". Also, to use again the location to operate a homeless shelter after the original 2020 "emergency order" expired probably breaks other kinds of bylaws regulating this type of operation in a neighborhood historically burden with a unusually high concentration of RCF's.

City Staff and Good Shepherd have been working in this new venture for many months and if now "time is short" is due to the "culture of secrecy" reigning in City Hall. The community has being asking questions about the future of Old Cathedral for over one year and Ward 3 Councilor Nann and G.S. Director Saliccioli are our witnesses.

Arguments to support the need for an immediate investigation:

1. Old Cathedral Boys School was under study to be declared a "heritage building". The building was described in an Spec article as a "Real State -white elephant" in reference to the cost to remedy the asbestos present (estimated at over 4 million \$) and as such, a burden to its owner, the Catholic Diocese of Hamilton. **This rises the specter of financial gain and the possibility of collusion and conflict of interest between the Dioceses, Good Shepherd and City Hall resulting in the detriment to our neighborhood.**

2. The Emergency Operation Center, EOC, was activated when the Province declared an State of emergency April 2020 that ended June 2020.

3. **Paul Johnson bypassed the "heritage designation issue"** in 2020 by using his exceptional powers as head of the Emergency Operations Center, EOC, P. Johnson exceptional powers ended in June 2020 when Ontario lifted the State of Emergency, even if the EOC remained ready and in place in case of another "state of emergency" was declared. No new "Emergency State" has been declared.

4. Even if we asked Councilor Nann and other City Hall Staff countless times, it was never disclosed to the community the exact date when P. Johnson signed the emergency order, and as far as we know, he could have signed it a few hours or a few days after the Ontario Emergency State was lifted.

It is because, and only because, P. Johnson signed this Emergency Order that it was possible to open the temporary shelter for men without further process; and it is because the OC men's shelter is operational that the new shelter for women is being "recommended" by Staff. I question the legality of the lack of due process for the "new shelter" because the appointed time of the emergency order has expired.

5. Councilor Nann is fully aware that there were "issues" regarding Old Cathedral and the "heritage designation" since the Fall of 2020. At first she was greatly confused when we asked about the selection process of OC for the "temporary emergency shelter for men" & what other locations had being considered & why OC was chosen.

Later on, Councilor Nann told us that the process of location selection was cut short when GS Allan Whittle offered the OC location to City Hall.

Note that the negotiations between Good Shepherd and City Hall were kept secret and only after the "Emergency Order" was signed, Ward 3 Councilor Nann and then the public were informed.

Note that **Good Shepherd does not own the building and that prior to Covid Allan Whittle tried to secure OC for GS' operations two times prior to Covid and these 2 proposals were denied.** As the community began thinking of a re-purposing the building that would uplift the neighborhood we requested disclosure of the reasons why the Good Shepherd 2 grant applications were turn down. Our questions remain unanswered but we found out that one of the applications was for a "senior's hub". It appears to me that is a "seniors hub" was denied for Old Cathedral... **a low barrier emergency shelter for 100 persons**, some of whom suffer from active substance use, would have also be denied for this particular location if the proper procedures had been followed.

6. In 2020, we presented to Councilor Nann our concerns that once City Hall had invested so much cash to prep OC for the temporary shelter for men, there was a huge risk that City Hall motivation to close the building as a shelter will be gone. We were repeatedly assured that this would not be the case and that the shelter will close definitively by Dec 2021.

7. We also were promised that the community will be engaged in the conversation for the re-purposing of the building. We have robustly tried to engage in this process and every few weeks we have contacted Carmen Salciccioli and Councilor Nann and City Staff about it. No response. Months ago, Councilor Nann announced a Zoom meeting to re-start this process and then, abruptly she cancelled it...why? Was she informed then that this new secret plan was in the works?

8. We feel that the opening of a gender-specific emergency shelter for 100 women, trans-feminine, trans-masculine and non-binary adults in this location MAY fulfill the letter of the promise to close the men's shelter, but it breaks the SPIRIT of the promise and it is unethical and perhaps illegal.

9. We question the panelists "Cathedral Shelter Community Meeting" Dec 6 2021 if the intended date for the closure of this "proposed" shelter will be guaranteed June 2022. They mumbled and avoid a direct and clear YES!

Note: September 2022 the new St Patrick ELEMENTARY SCHOOL will open its doors one block from OLD CATHEDRAL!

The text below was sent to the panelists of the "Cathedral Shelter Community Meeting" December 6, 2021 via Webex. and Councilor Nann. I submit it now to Council to illustrate how badly it was organized.

Part 2

"Cathedral Shelter Community Meeting" Dec 6 2021.

NOTE: Most of these questions are not per se "follow- up questions". Most questions were asked and not answered during the short 60-minute meeting.

NOTE: We expect the panelists' **answers before Dec 9**, so that the City of Hamilton Emergency & Community Services Committee may be informed BEFORE the appointed meeting when they will consider this issue.

1. We were informed only a few days ago that the "temporary shelter for men" will be transmuted into a "temporary emergency shelter for women" until June 2022. There was plenty time for City Hall to find other building/ buildings to provide the much needed shelter/s for women.

Question: Were other locations/ options considered?

2. When we asked why City Hall Staff had been planning for many months to continue to use Old Cathedral as a shelter but only contacted a few community members Dec 2, we were given no answer.

Questions: Why was this communication delayed? Why so few neighbors were contacted?

3. This will be the second "temporary shelter" to be run from Old Cathedral, a building that was undergoing the process of "Heritage designation".

The community was told in the Fall of 2020 that the "temporary emergency shelter for men" would operate until June 31, 2021, but that "depending of Covid" it may remain open until Dec 31, 2021 and then the shelter will be closed and the building would be re-purposed with community involvement and consultations.

We pointed out to the panelists that the scientific prognostications indicate that Covid will probably remain for years to come, but not as deadly & in a manageable form like the flu. We asked if Covid will be used as an excuse to extend the operation of the OC new shelter after June 2022. The panelist's answer was ambiguous.

Question: Will the new "temporary shelter for women" at O.C definitely close June 2022?

4. "A LOW BARRIER shelter for 100 persons with active substance use" will be detrimental for Stinson security, safety and well-being and this infringes our Charter of Rights.

Question: Why is this number so high and why has City Hall decided to shelter 100 persons in one single building & in one single neighborhood?

As an example I point out that the new, Emma's Place has ONLY 15 beds!!!

5. When a neighbor asked where will be the shelter men moved to? There was no answer. I followed up her inquiry with this:

Question (i): Will be the men sheltered at OC be housed at 46 West Ave?

The reason I asked this yesterday and I ask again now, is because I am aware that after the initial use of 46 West Ave as a self-isolation site for covid-positive homeless men, it has been empty for a while. The panelist appeared to "evade" my question; a YES or NO would have being enough.

6. When the community pointed out that 60 minutes was an extraordinary short time for this kind of community meeting, and if we could have another meeting, longer and better organized, the answers was clear: NO

Question: Why No?

7. When we asked if the session was recorded so that we could share it with other community members who were not able to attend due to the lack of proper announcement, the answer was: No

Question: Why it was not recorded?

8. Councilor Nann opened the session but she avoided being part of the panel.

Question: Why?

9. One of the GS staff said that the community will not be permitted to visit the shelter. She claimed "privacy issues". I remind the panelists that when the "temporary emergency shelter for men" opened, **the community was invited to visit the facility**. Only another neighborhood lady and I accepted the invitation because everybody was scared of Covid. Even if this was in Dec 2020 before the vaccines were available and I have a grave heart condition & I was scared, I went anyway. I have visited other times Old Cathedral for meetings with Director Salciccioli and manager Daryl. This connection has proved beneficial for the shelter and the community.

Question: Will community members be barred from visiting the shelter?

10. GS was obliged to hire private security outside of the shelter to bring the social disorder under control, i.e., vandalism, fights, knives, trespassing, open drug use in the neighborhood, etc. The panelists mentioned that these security measures will continue. There was no time in the meeting to follow-up.

This security is ONLY at night and the open substance abuse continues during the day.

The number of clients will increase from 35 to 100. It is an unfortunate & a sad probability that rough men and drug dealers may be attracted to the vicinity of OC. And if this happens, it will gravely affect the safety of the neighborhood AT LARGE, not just in the immediate vicinity of OC. Sadly, something like this happened at the Claremont Access encampment where the number of men "visiting" the encampment was unbelievable; and even if 46 West Ave (covid isolation site) and 40 West Ave hired private security, the incidents of social disorder, theft, vandalism, and open drug use were constant until the encampment was cleared.

Questions: Will GS increase to 24/7 the security patrols? Will the security be increased to a 4-block radius around OC?

11. When the legality/ due process necessary to use a building that was undergoing the process of study for a "heritage designation" was questioned, the panelist drew a blank and ignored the questions.

Perhaps R. Mastroniani and E. John may not be familiar with the fact that **Paul Johnson bypassed the "heritage designation issue"** in 2020 by using his exceptional powers as head of the Emergency Operations Center, EOC. P. Johnson's exceptional powers ended in June 2020 when Ontario lifted the state of Emergency, even if the EOC remained ready and in place in case another "state of emergency" was declared. Even if we asked Councilor Nann and other City Hall Staff multiple times, it was never disclosed to the community the exact date when P. Johnson signed the emergency order, and as far as we know, he could have signed it a few hours or a few days after the Ontario Emergency State was lifted. **It is because, and only because, this P. Johnson's Emergency Order was signed that the temporary shelter for men was opened at all; and it is because the men's shelter is operational that the new shelter for women is being "recommended" by Staff and now we question the legality of the due process for the "new shelter".**

Perhaps Good Shepherd Staff, McFadzean and Kalinoski are informed, because they work for GS.

Councilor Nann is fully aware that there were "issues" regarding Old Cathedral and the "heritage designation" since the Fall of 2020. At first she was greatly confused when we asked about the selection process of OC for the "temporary emergency shelter for men" & what other locations had been considered & why OC was chosen. Later on, Councilor Nann told us that the process of the location selection was cut short when GS Allan Whittle offered the OC location to City Hall. Note that Good Shepherd does not own the building and that prior to Covid, Allan Whittle tried to secure OC for GS's use and the proposals were denied.

Since this issue is so complex I will submit the questions on this particular subject in "Questions-Part 1 [Note: I change the order of the emails, 1-2-3, in this submission for the sake of relevance]

12. Note that this [the questions below] was posted on the "chat" and ignored by the panelist. Note that this kind of information is vital when considering the impact that an operation of this type will have in the surrounding community.

QUESTION 12: Did City Hall senior staff consider & include in their recommendation to Council to open this new shelter the following Stinson data?

(12.1) Number of for-profit RCF's in the neighborhood?

(12.2) Police data of crime increase in our neighborhood from Sept 2020 until now?

(12.3) number of 911 calls in the radius of 5 blocks around OC in the same area and period of time?

(12.4) The Poverty Index of Stinson/Lansdale, the areas directly affected?

(12.5) Have they consulted with Councilor Nann about the feedback Ward 3 office received from the community from the fall of 2020 till now?

(12.6) Considering that the new Emma's Place will house ONLY 15 clients and the staff recommended new OC shelter will house an unprecedented 100 clients: Have staff prepared data on how these high numbers have affected other communities where similar shelters of this size are located?

(12.7) Was a "projection" prepared, based on scientific data, of how the presence of the low barrier shelter for 100 persons with active substance abuse will affect the Stinson/ Lansdale community's security, safety and well-being and infringe upon our Rights under the Charter?

Part 3

The text below was addressed to the panelists of the December 6, 2021 presentation.

1. Your announcement to the community about the meeting was lacking, beyond poor. The optics are that the panel was trying to minimize participation.
2. Just a handful of neighbors received your emails. The optics are that the panel was trying to minimize participation.
3. When I pressed you to urgently deliver fliers, you did but I only know of 3 people that receive the flier. I did not. The optics are that the panel was trying to minimize participation.
4. When I asked you to provide a phone line to permit the neighbors without access to the internet to participate, you sent the phone line # ...by email! And then Dec 6 the phone line did not work. The optics are that the panel was trying to minimize participation.
5. You avoided recording the meeting. The optics is that this was by design :
 - (i) this prevents us to share with to the rest of the community what transpired.
 - (ii) Without the recording, you were not obliged to inform Council on December 9 of our words.
6. Most of the questions that were asked on the "chat" remain unanswered. Now there is not a record of this. This perhaps explains why the session was not recorded.
7. When asked by a participant that given that the matter was of such great importance for Stinson/Lansdale safety and well-being, and given the fact that you only gave us 60 minutes, if there was going to be a better organized follow up session...your answer was simply: NO.

I will send you again tomorrow some of my questions, and I expect answers.