

January 16, 2023

Dear General Issues Committee Members,

To many of you, introducing myself as Chair of the Board of Directors for the Dr. Bob Kemp Hospice (DBKH) will not be new, and to others, I am pleased to meet you by way of this letter. To all of you, congratulations on your recent votes of confidence from your constituency and a very happy new year.

I do hope that most of you are already familiar with DBKH for we have been serving the dying and bereaved in the Hamilton region for 30 years with excellence. In a year that marks our 30th anniversary, it is our plan to fill gaps in hospice palliative care by reaching even more Hamiltonians and Ontarians that desperately need our help finding dignity, joy and comfort in their last chapter. In addition, we plan to grow our services so as to assist an even wider group cope with loss of all kinds. Never has loss be so critically put to the test as during our collective COVID experiences.

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the entire board of directors of DBKH to write you today and it's a privilege and honour for the General Issues Committee to be considering a request for acquisition of land so that we may build a critical pediatric hospice on land that is currently city owned, located behind Wentworth Lodge at 41 South St. W in Dundas.

Please consider this letter as well as a motion from Councillor Alex Wilson, a briefing note from DBKH leadership and other supporting material as a request to officially move into the exploratory phase of our organization working closely with city staff to test the viability of this acquisition.

As many of you know, it has been a dream to provide this critical infrastructure to our community. After years of readying ourselves, the time is now for that dream to move to reality. There are, at any given time, 500 children in Southwestern Ontario that desperately need hospice palliative services, yet there are currently no such services in Hamilton or the Southwestern Ontario region (save Toronto downtown). It is an extremely unusual case in Canada, and in fact North America, that a world-class children's hospital such as we proudly have with McMaster Children's Hospital does not have these services. In the rest of Canada, all children's hospitals have hospice services and supports available. This project will be a gem for Hamilton and will be known as a state-of-the-art facility offering the most compassionate care to seriously ill children and their families.

I will leave it to my leadership team to outline the case for you in more detail, however, I would like to draw specific attention to the fact that this project is not a new concept for Hamilton and the region. Not only has the "train left the station", but it is in fact far down the track. We have taken extraordinary measures to ensure our readiness, including, an unprecedented joint venture partnership with Hamilton Health Sciences and McMaster Children's Hospital, operational planning, community outreach, private and public sector engagement and robust governance.

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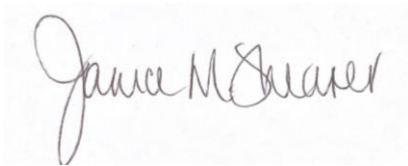
The result of this planning is that the facility will offer a residential component for end-of-life and respite care with a 10 bed hospice and will provide significant engagement opportunities for the community at large through a grief and bereavement mental health centre of excellence, clinics, day programming, visiting volunteer programs as well as community events and impacts.

It is my belief that this location would serve our community in so many ways, including proximity to McMaster Children's Hospital, accessibility, a serene and tranquil environment, and a place where the broader neighbourhood and your constituents will be able to avail themselves of services, supports and even engagement in unique and fulfilling ways. I am myself a resident in Ward 13 and know the depth of passion and compassion our neighbourhoods hold dear for the provision of quality, barrier-free and accessible supports for all families at times of personal need.

Getting your endorsement today, while a first step, is so meaningful, and to be sure, we are poised to work with you, your staff and the city to ensure this fit is not just appropriate, but something you will be proud of for decades to come.

If I may be of any further assistance to your decision making, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at any time.

With the deepest gratitude,



Janice M. Shearer
Chair of the Board of Directors
Dr. Bob Kemp Hospice Foundation Inc.

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