

5.8 (c)

To the mayor and councillors of Hamilton's council:

Hope this finds you well. I write as a parent of 4 children and as a home-owner. I've lived my entire life here in Hamilton on Between the Lakes Purchase Treaty No. 3 lands. I write in regards to the recent article in the *Hamilton Spectator* (Teviah Moro, Bylaw officers tell people encamped behind Hamilton city hall to clear out, 6 May 2023) in which by-law was directed to send 31 compliance notices to people living in the encampment in the laneway from the back parking lot of City Hall behind Whitehern Historic House to MacNab Street South.

Against the mayor's response, as quoted, to by-law's notices, Council does not need to up-date its policy. The unhoused in the city require housing 'in a way that makes sense for people'. This is, also, more than 'a tough situation' and it thus requires more than a policy update from Council. Absolutely, garbage should be picked up; substance use cared for by a mobile safe-consumption site; fires tended to; and health and safety care should be connected to the mobile safe-consumption site. Finally, people and care are assets, not old houses and properties, so Whitehern should be expropriated so those in the laneway have a place to sleep: only then would that heritage be an asset. Of course, none of these options would have to be exercised if Council would act, instead of simply updating its policy, to expropriate a large percentage of the city's newly-built condominiums, as well as the HWDSB's vacant schools which they have offered since the spring of 2020 (HWDSB once again offers vacant schools to the city for temporary shelter or medical use, CBC Hamilton website, 10 December 2020), enough condos so that all who are on the waiting list for subsidized housing are housed and enough emergency shelter use of the schools.

I have contacted my ward councillor in this regard and asked Councillor Danko to oppose the clearing-out of encampments. I have not yet heard back from his office in that regard, neither yea nor nay. I remain hopeful, however, that Council can and will do the good thing, which is often not perceived as the 'right thing to do', and place care for people on their own terms above the needs of heritage assets and of the value of properties: Repeal the by-law notices; Expropriate any and all vacant property, whether condominiums, newly-built and empty, and vacant schools; and prioritize in all and any policy updates the equal dignity of all people.

Respectfully,

Joshua Weresch