

From: Kelly & Bert Oucharek
Sent: Friday, October 25, 2024 9:43 PM
To: clerk@hamilton.ca
Subject: Correspondence

Hello

Please include this correspondence regarding the temporary outdoor shelter in the next possible agenda.

Can you also advise when the next meeting is where this meeting will be addressed, where citizens can delegate.

Thank you
Kelly Oucharek

Outdoor Shelter Meeting

My name is Kelly, life long North End Resident, mom of 4.

We had hoped to dedicate a portion of the night to a Q&A, with our elected representatives, Councilors Cameron Kroetsch and Maureen Wilson, Mayor Andrea Horvath and city staff who authored the report, Grace Mater, Danielle Blake and Al Fletcher. As you can see, they are nowhere in sight, they were invited to share information and to listen to the community, they chose to do neither. Interpret that as you will; I see it as an unrelenting, blatant disregard for the personal experiences of the residents, particularly those who live closest to Barton/Tiffany. Instead of

coming to hear first-hand our lived experiences, all we got was another website to voice our concerns. We all can testify how effective the unsheltered email is. I hope that in 2 years' time, we remember this and elect change; and vote for someone who is willing to act on concerns of all citizens in their ward-not just those who are unhoused.

There may be some here who are comfortable with open drug use, criminality and what the encampment culture has introduced to our parks and neighborhoods and who are content with this project in their community. I ask is that you do not shame or minimize the experiences of those who don't. You don't know what their experiences have been, what they have witnessed nor how living near encampments for far too long has impacted them. Wanting a safe environment for ourselves, our families and our community does not make you unsympathetic to those who find themselves in unimaginable circumstances. I think you would be hard pressed to find anyone in this room who doesn't feel they deserve well thought out assistance.

I think the question most are asking is, is this location really the best the City of Hamilton could offer our most vulnerable population, a contaminated block of land across from a busy rail corridor, which also happens to be close to a school, student bus stops, businesses and residential neighborhoods. I believe they can do better.

This is not the first time the city has tried to ram a project of this magnitude down the throats of an unsuspecting Ward 2, without consultation. The scenarios are eerily familiar. Last year the city tried to designate another highly inappropriate spot for the HATS project, with no consideration for the impacts it would have on the surrounding community. This is no different than the Barton Tiffany project, not once did the city have the consideration to speak to residents most impacted. In fact, they have turned a deaf ear to the effects of the current Barton/Tiffany encampments for over 18 months. You may not know this, but the city went out of its way to investigate the impact that encampments have had on businesses by way of a survey, that was sent directly to the business community. It was a fair and sensible thing to do.

What wasn't fair, and definitely not sensible was that they did not extend the same courtesy to those who are directly impacted by encampments and the proposed outdoor shelter. I suspect they knew that once residents learned that a "low barrier" shelter means allowing those who actively use substances to roam the surrounding communities at night, they didn't want to hear the feedback. The report was forthright about prioritizing shelter for couples and people with pets; this information was in the body of the report; only two lines in the appendix was dedicated to the part about allowing drug use and not having a curfew. I think this was intentional.

I have lived within 4 block radius most of my life, affording me a unique opportunity to watch the North End blossom over the course of my adult life, to its current state of wilting and withering. Our ward, which had become a destination with a beautiful waterfront that all of Hamilton wanted to enjoy, has become an area people now actively avoid, it only took two short years for this current council to destroy many years of investment.

I am concerned for the city's lack of due process in regards to this. Due to the delay in releasing the report, the community was deprived of the opportunity to speak to council on the specifics. This is why we have built in this opportunity tonight, doing what the city should have done, prior to voting. You may not know that the city requires 48 hours- notice if you want to submit a pre-recorded speech or 24 hours-notice if you'd like to speak in-person or virtually. This report was released only 16 hours before, rendering residents unable to give any feedback, one might say this also was intentional. The timing was similar to the with the HATS project. Have no fear, the city clerk is making efforts to ensure change; under new policy, an item added late to the agenda will be bumped to the next meeting- but this does nothing to rectify our current circumstance.

Don't be fooled by the city's attempt to say these sheds will be an improvement on what is currently occurring at Barton Tiffany, Bayfront Park and parks in general. The current residents of Barton/Tiffany are trespassing and shouldn't be there in the first place. Central Park is a

completely non compliant area, most of Pier 4 is also. The current encampments you see at Bayfront are 100% non-compliant, either in location or form, the protocol has just not been enforced there. This mirrors what happened on Strachan St last year, when the area was commandeered by encampments, and the protocol wasn't enforced. We were told by our councilor to accept the HATS shed village as it would be a huge improvement to what its current state. The tents were cleared out after the HATS program agreed the site was unsuitable. As I understand it, the city's efforts to increase shelter beds, is so that the city can say there is enough shelter beds to remove tents from parks. Last week at a city meeting, Grace Mater was quoted as saying That's the desire for us, the reality is we know that when we talked about the impact on the protocol as we brought these increased shelter beds, the hope is that we will no longer need and have to have people sleeping in parks and allowing that, as we start to narrow options available, they take advantage of those shelter beds."

I will be honest, 4 months ago, I delegated in front of council, asking for them to consider sanctioned encampments, never in a million years did I

think they would try, yet again, to impose one on a residential neighborhood, knowing that other models the city has referenced are typically in light industrial areas. Our city owns a lot of land that would offer a buffer between the outdoor shelter and broader community. Last year, the city released a report on possible sanctioned sites and found several that met most or all the criteria, never once was Barton Tiffany mentioned. They were to be smaller, 25-50 residents, spread throughout the city, Confederation Park, Turner Park, Alexander Park, parking lot at Mohawk Sports Park to name a few. The vast expanse of some of these spaces also provides a larger buffer to adjacent homes. At a recent meeting, I heard ward 5 councilor Matt Francis, suggest that Barton and Tiffany would be a perfect spot for a sanctioned site because there were already encampments there-he conveniently left out the fact that the 16 acres of open space and parking lots of Confederation parks, was also home to encampments, RVs and people living out of their cars. I don't blame him though, he was advocating for his ward in the way we all wish our councilors would, but never will.