September 1, 2023

City of London Community and Protective Services Committee

RE: Security Needs for London Cares Homeless Response Services

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing to address the escalating security challenges faced by London Cares Homeless Response Services in light of the escalated homelessness crisis in our city.

Over recent years, the City of London has witnessed a significant surge in homelessness, straining our resources and support systems. This spring and summer, London Cares reported experiencing an unprecedented level of violence, aggression, and desperation among the population they serve. Their staff members have been subjected to consistent and alarming risks, including physical assaults and threats with weapons. Without adequate security support, they may not be able to continue their services.

Halting these essential services would have grave consequences for the homeless individuals they assist, particularly those who are most marginalized and acutely in need of support. An increase concern within the communities they serve with more individuals having no place to go for support would also arise as a consequence.

Though we see security as an interim solution, just as we utilized security while occupying a hotel space for a period of three years, security personnel are currently playing a crucial role in safeguarding both their staff and participants. Their presence has deterred criminal activity on their premises and also likely in the surrounding neighborhood.

As our city strives to transition to the new Health and Homelessness whole of Community Response, the need for protective services will diminish. However, until that time, we believe it is imperative to continue providing security to ensure a vital service can maintain operations within our community.

We kindly request your support in ensuring the continuation of security services during this critical period of crisis in London.

Sincerely,

Chuck Lazenby
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