

From: Corey and Nikki Birch
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 6:23 PM
To: Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>
Subject: Re: Automatic reply: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to 705 Fanshawe Park Rd W - homeless hub location

I, Nicole Birch, give consent for the abovementioned email to be on the public agenda and become part of the public record.

Kind regards,
Nicole Birch

Letter to Council:

With regards to the upcoming vote on October 5th. Specifically, the Fanshawe Park Road location. Let's all be very clear, no one in this community is happy with what is taking place with unhoused individuals in our city. We would all like to see people obtain the shelter and help they need. This is not a "NIMBY" issue and frankly presenting concerned neighbours and businesses with this brush stroke is unfair and a way to easily disregard our concerns. If you can label us, we no longer have thoughts that should be valued and heard. All of us have the right to dignity and safety in our communities. Frankly, it is unjust that our community was not consulted or asked for feedback on this location. Is this the type of city we are, where decisions are made without democracy, without a fair and balanced look at both points of view? We would like the following considerations to be taken under advisement:

- This location does not meet terms that this hub would inhabit a location that would not require rezoning.
- There are no emergency medical services across the street – this is a walk-in clinic.
- Feedback that we would be able to discuss this as a community during the rezoning process is inaccurate – residents will not have a voice other than on whether this should be zoned for an emergency location. We will not be able to give open feedback or have concerns addressed at this time.
- The cost per bed does not meet the terms of the previous stipulations.
- The number of beds is contrary to what was stipulated in the previous reports.
- The hub is two doors down from a treatment facility for vulnerable autistic children (TVCC).
- Mastermind Toys, which is directly beside the Lighthouse Inn, hosts workshops for children and families.
- Long and McQuaid conduct children's music lessons next door as well.
- There are residential backyards that back onto this location.
- There are current residents at the Lighthouse Inn that it is questioned will be displaced from their housing.
- Black Pearl as a business is going to be severely affected, lose business and possibly will close because customers will not feel safe frequenting this restaurant.
- There is no assurance on safety for the community other than a security guard and advice we learn how to call 911 when we see concerns.
- When models in other cities are investigated safety is an ongoing issue.

- Disruption and safety concerns shut down a makeshift center in the Oakridge area in a matter of two months.
- There is confusion on the criteria of clients being served at this location, i.e., how many severely acute individuals vs. transitional clients.
- It has been stated that clients served at the hub will be transitioned to affordable/assisted housing creating a “flow” of clients that will go on to be successful in the community.
- Where are these supports as it seems the city is currently out of resources with extreme waitlists for housing.
- A “flow” of clients is unable to take place if acute cases disrupt or take over the spaces for less acute individuals.
- A “flow” of clients is impossible if there are no resources in the community thereby rendering this a facility that can only take care of 21 individuals.
- Affordable housing on Hyde Park was voted down, how is this consistent with the plan.

If the goal is to help the most people, this isn't the solution.

If the goal is to do something, as opposed to doing nothing, this is plain desperation without good sense.

If the goal is just to get 20 people off the street this winter, this is unjustified, as this winter will come and go before this hub is opened. Furthermore the 10 CMHA cold weather beds that are attached to this plan – there need to be 10 extra beds allocated to the cold weather plan if this is the issue stopping community members from having their voices heard.

We need a strong location that everyone can get behind. Let's return to the drawing board and find a more suitable option. It must exist.

It is highly concerning that none of us, businesses and residents, knew about this location until Wednesday yet we are not being allowed the platform to discuss our concerns and questions. We are 70K+ strong in this community. If our voices are not important to be heard how is this setting an example for the rest of the city?

At the end of the day, our ward 7 councillor Corrine Rahman has voiced that the results included in the latest report are not what was supported or what the public was originally consulted on. For these reasons above and from our Ward Councillors, which 6/9 have also voiced concerns, we kindly ask that you reconsider this specific location. There are many other locations, which are still located in the North End, that could be considered. For instance, has something attached to University Hospital been considered? As the other two hubs are associated with hospital/care, would this not be something to investigate further? Greater security would perhaps also be available with regards to women who are trying to gain distance from people in their past with allocation in a safe locked facility such as a hospital site.

We thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Nicole Birch

Fox Hollow Resident

From: Nicole Birch
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 9:01 PM
To: Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Diverted Homeless Members

Good morning,

My name is Nicole Birch and I thank you for considering my email and my concern. Deputy Mayor Lewis alleged that many people living on the street are being transported to London from surrounding communities and this is often against their will. It is fair to say that London is one of the largest cities in the region and London does offer a number of resources for the homeless members of our city. However, as word gets out about these resources, other cities feel that they can relocate their homeless to London, putting a strain on the resources of London. Deputy Mayor Lewis condemned this move by other cities and the organization associated with cruel relocation. In fact, Deputy Mayor Lewis wanted to send these homeless members back to their home communities. The concern that I have is that the proposed hubs will encourage surrounding communities to continue to relocate their homeless members. Since there does not seem to be a protocol in place to prevent the relocation of homeless members, how is the City of London going to prevent this? How will the City of London track both the homeless members and the organizations that relocate them? Deputy Mayor Lewis made it quite clear that these organizations should be held accountable. The fact that these hubs have been in the news recently, the City of London has inadvertently advertising an influx of homeless resources and that London is going to be resource heavy regarding the homeless community. In turn, it would appear that the City of London is financially capable of addressing our homeless crisis as we are spending large amounts of money despite the fact that so few will be helped with the current proposal. The current budget for this proposal does not suggest that the City of London can sustain this proposed program, much less adding another ten hubs. Please consider these concerns of mine as they were also raised by Deputy Mayor Lewis. I consent to have this posted in the agenda.

Regards,
Nicole Birch

From: Nicole Birch
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 9:03 PM
To: Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] An ignored voice

Good evening,

My name is Nicole Birch and I have recently shared a lot of my concerns with the homeless hub proposal, especially with the location at 705 Fanshawe Park Rd W. I agree that a sustainable project needs to be put in place for the homeless community of London. However, this particular project seems rushed at best and leaves a lot of questions unanswered. More so, some promises that were clearly outlined have been broken at worst, compromised at best. I am not a 'not in my backyard' person, I am not. I have been labeled as such because I am looking for answers and have a great number of concerns especially for the 705 Fanshawe Park Rd W. I do not know the answer to this systemic crisis and I do not feel that this is the solution that will be sustainable. And I feel that the community as a whole needs more. Everyone needs more support; everyone needs more communication; everyone needs more community. But as of today, this is all lacking for everyone.

Once the locations were announced and I raised concerns, if I received a reply, almost every time I got one from a council member, they directed me to podcasts including the mayor and the deputy mayor. At no point were the concerns I raised were addressed by either the emailed councillor and certainly not by the suggested podcasts. The lack of community involvement is greatly disappointing. The lack of communication is disturbing and treading into a totalitarian-like leadership. We are asking as a community to be educated about the hub and have our genuine concerns addressed. The flow of discussion and debate has been stymied by referring to a podcast and the democratic and diplomatic process is crumbling. I am very disappointed and will definitely explore my options in future municipal elections. True democracy requires open lines of communication and I encourage the council to proceed as such as we are supposed to be in a democratic society.

Thank you for reviewing my concerns and my emails. Please reflect on these and reconsider your previous vote favouring the hubs, especially at 705 Fanshawe Park Rd W. I give consent for this to be included in the agenda.

Kind regards,
Nicole Birch

From: Nicole Birch
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 9:10 PM
To: Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] How are we saving?

Good evening,

My name is Nicole Birch and I am grateful that you considered my email and my concern. I am trying to understand Deputy Mayor Lewis's argument that tries to justify the cost of the homeless hub beds. He stated that an emergency bed costs \$500 000 to run for a full year while the hub beds will be approximately \$111 000. Does this mean that the plan is to remove the emergency beds for this would be the only way to recoup the savings that are suggested. Otherwise, I feel that now, as a taxpayer, I am expected to pay for a portion of the emergency hospital bed as well as the homeless hub bed. I do not see how the homeless hub bed is removing the cost of the emergency hospital bed. From where I am standing, regardless if I am a Fox Hollow resident or not, I am concerned that there is a potential that emergency beds will be taken away to recoup the \$500 000 that Deputy Mayor Lewis is claiming to save or at least not spend. Unfortunately, my son has been in and out of Victoria hospital for several years and, I admit, that there are a great number of homeless people in the emergency. However, a good number of them do not qualify for any of the currently suggested hubs (ie. white adult men). More so, a great number of people who are using the emergency services at Victoria hospital were not homeless. Granted I did not check their identification but it was safe to assume that there were people with homes having a medical crisis. It would appear that regardless of the many people that enter the hub program, the emergency beds will continue to be used. So, based on the math that suggested, we will save \$500 000 by establishing these hubs since the hub residence will no longer be using these emergency beds, approximately 5 beds will have to close to justify the spending \$2.5million (approximately) for 705 Fanshawe Park Rd W at the very least. Now, please correct me if I am wrong, I find it hard to believe that despite having a place in the hub, a hub resident would still use an emergency bed if they encountered a medical crisis. If for example the hub resident had a rupturing appendix, they would have to go to the emergency room and use an emergency room bed. I do not think that the yet to be established walk-in clinic opposite to 705 Fanshawe Park Rd W could handle such a crisis.

Additionally, what data is there to support that those going into the hubs were in fact the ones occupying the emergency beds? I am at a bit of a loss to understand the flow of finances and the proposed savings.

Overall, the point is that the Deputy Mayor Lewis is trying to justify spending \$111 000 per bed in a homeless hub while saying that "An emergency room bed is half-a-million dollars a year, so in comparison, this is about a fifth of the cost." But I do not understand where the savings are that he is claiming. The emergency beds will stay open regardless if the homeless hub is opened or not, thus still costing \$500 000/year. This seems arbitrarily linked and is not linked directly to each other. So, when the surface is scratched on this argument, the connection is spurious or causally connected at best. Thus, it is a poor argument to lend to this proposal.

Please consider this concern as you reflect on the proposed homeless hubs. I give my consent to have this included in the agenda.

Regards,
Nicole Birch

<https://london.ctvnews.ca/deputy-mayor-defends-111-000-average-annual-cost-to-operate-each-bed-in-london-s-homeless-hubs-1.6572787>

From: Nicole Birch
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 9:12 PM
To: Council Agenda <councilagenda@london.ca>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Children at 705 Fanshawe Park Rd W.

Good evening,

My name is Nicole Birch and I am happy that you consider my email and my concern. I am reaching out as I am concerned about the location of 705 Fanshawe Park Rd W. It has been

discussed that children may be moving into the proposed location. As a parent of the Fox Hollow community, I am genuinely concerned about the safety of the children that may move into that location. The current hotel is mostly asphalt and does not provide a suitable space for children to play. The location does not have a playground or grass yard to play in. The closest playground is Vista Woods Park, nearly a kilometre away. Furthermore, the proposed location is set on a busy street where most cars and trucks are travelling well over 60 kilometres per hour. Also, there is a great deal of traffic turning in and out of the strip malls and stores surrounding this location. Drivers are not always aware and tend to drive quickly in and out of the driveways. I personally avoid walking in this area due to the rushed drivers, trucks, and buses. Riding bikes in that area could be very dangerous and walking to the park is loud and intimidating for little children.

Additionally, the elementary schools in this area are reluctant to take on new students even from within their boundaries. So, where are the children supposed to go to school? And if this location is transient as it is suggested, how fair would it be for children to get shuffled around schools throughout the school year?

Please reflect on this concern of mine and reconsider another more appropriate location for this homeless hub. I give permission to have this added to the agenda.

Regards,
Nicole Birch