

March 3, 2024

To the Chair and Members, of the Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee

At this current time, as I write this, there is no report to read. All there is to go by is the following, "meeting has been called to consider the continuation of life preserving services for vulnerable Londoners." Its Sunday, and can not find information online, providing more details of this meetings agenda, and from what we understand, if the public would like to submit an item to the Tuesday meeting, then it needs to be sent to the clerk by Monday morning by 9am. Because this SPPC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday March 5 for 9:30am, followed later by a City Council meeting, held later that same day.

We have concerns, and questions.

We would email our local Ward 13 Councillor. But he has mentioned in the past, about the many emails he receives, and we are sure that by the time he read this organizations email, this matter will have been decided upon, voted on, and closed.

From what local Media has published, we assume that this SPPC meeting will be about extending additional funding for London Cares, and its drop-in service.

We asked that funding. For London Cares drop-in services, Not be provided.

The Midtown Neighbourhood is directly across the street from the London Cares location at 602 Queens Avenue.

Things have drastically changed since a year ago. The Midtown Neighbourhood is now hosting two Cold Winter response program sites, for vulnerable people. Operated by Ark Aid Street Mission. With one location at 566 Dundas Street, (My Sisters Place) with a nighttime program and the second site 24/7 located at the former Bishop Cronyn Memorial Church, located on the corner of Queens Avenue and William Street. Where services for vulnerable people are also being provided for.

These winter response programs, just like the past winter responses program, that Ark Aid Street Mission operated in this neighbourhood, back in 2020, (when at that time, the site was 415 York Street, where trailers were used.) Were and are only Temporary and not permanent sites, from Midtown residents understanding.

What this all means is that there is now even a higher over concentration of a high acuity population in the neighbourhood. And it is being felt in a big way.

From what we have witnessed, when individuals leave the 602 Queens Ave, property. They are no longer a concern of London Cares, but they do become the concerns of the residents and businesses.

The neighbourhood is now dealing with a higher increase of vandalism, garbage, open drug use, and antisocial behaviours displayed by individuals. If you asked anyone what their thoughts were on the area, you would hear a response, that is more negative than positive. This is what Midtown Community Organization is trying to change. Trying to change the narrative and take a negative and turn it into a positive.

However, it is not easy, when the city keeps funding programs and services that are for the vulnerable, and places many of these services, in to one geographic area that is within a one Kilometer radius of Adelaide and Dundas Street.

Where are the facilities for the vulnerable Londoners, in Ward 11? Or Ward 6? or even Ward 9? Homeless, and vulnerable individuals are their too, and its unfair to expect the disadvantage, vulnerable people, to travel all the way down to this area of the city to get services.

The city has a homeless problem and there are many vulnerable people throughout the city. This is a city-wide matter, and solutions should also be city wide.

Please keep in mind that Midtown, is already presently doing a lot to help the wider city community by hosting the following permanent services for the cities vulnerable. Such as.

Mission Services- Men's Mission 459 York Street.

Carepoint and Counterpoint Harm Reduction Programs, 446 York Street. (Operated by Regional HIV/Aids Connection.)

My Sisters' Place 566 Dundas Street. (Operated by CMHA Thames Valley)

Clinic 528 Dundas Street.

If this committee, wishes to extend the funding, then they need to start thinking about the concerns of the local stakeholders, Midtown businesses and residents who call this community home.

As an inner core neighbourhood, we would really like to know what services and programs the city has for the local Midtown businesses, residents. For example, when it comes to helping clean up the graffiti that some one spray painted on their property.

Also, has any thought been taken to having a report created, explaining what the impact is to the surrounding area? For we are seeing the impacts that the homelessness crisis

is having, to the local economy and residents, when there is a facility like the one at 602 Queens Ave, which is catering to the needs of the entire city's vulnerable population?

As Midtowners, we really can not be expected to take on anymore of the city's social problems. We are already doing our part to help the city. It is now time for other parts of the city to do theirs.

Thank you.

Cheryl Watson, Coordinator

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Midtown Community Organization