

January 13, 2012

Chair and Members
Community Services Committee

Re: Old East Village BIA Request for Removal of Needle Bins

The Old East Village BIA has submitted a letter, requesting that the recently installed needle bin boxes be removed.

I have walked the locations of the needle bins in the past few days, as I did previously to them being installed. I was unable to find any discarded needles whatsoever, in either the alleyways or the parking lot, where prior to the needle bin installations, they were quite easy to find. It was evidence to me, that users are being responsible by disposing their drug using equipment in the provided bins.

I spoke to a number of business owners on Dundas Street, who at first echoed the concerns of the Old East Village BIA, in regards to the possible negative impact on adjacent businesses. However, once I explained that the removal of the needle bins would leave no safe place for users to discard their needles, leaving the situation to revert back to what it was prior to the bins, they were then in favour of leaving the needle bins in place.

I also spoke to a number of residents, mainly renters in the area, about this issue and there was absolutely no worry of stigmatization whatsoever. Many of them were thankful, that finally some action had been taken to alleviate this hazard. One lady actually said she was willing to bring her young child for a walk in the area now, where prior to the needle bins, she wouldn't. Another lady that uses the parking lot off Queens Avenue said she was now glad, not to have to carry her child out of the area when she parked her car.

Further, since the installation of the needle bins, I have not received any complaints from my constituents via emails, phone calls or direct contact at city hall.

This is a matter where City Council has to make a decision for the greater good.

- the greater good here, are the people who live in the affected area 24/7
- the greater good here, is reducing the chances of the general public, including children, from picking up a deadly infection from dirty, discarded needles.
- the greater good here, is that users do not pick up discarded needles, with chances of contracting infection and spreading disease.

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- the greater good here, is that the London Police Services patrolling the area on a regular basis, the London Fire Services who service the area and City Environmental staff who remove trash from the area, all have a reduced chance of needle injury and/or infection to themselves.
- the greater good here, is that we continue to keep the area safe, responding to the multitude of prior public safety complaints on this issue.

Please see attached letter from Jan Richardson, Manager Homelessness, Hostels and Special Populations, outlining the **success** of the **'Needle Bin Collection Program'**. As you can see, the numbers are staggering in favour of needle bins.

I respectfully request the Community Services Committee either receive the letter from the Old East Village BIA and take no action, or make a recommendation to the Old East Village BIA membership, that at their own expense, hire a full time individual to do a daily pick up of needles and drug using equipment in the area and properly dispose of them, in the event this issue is pushed to remove the needle boxes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Orser', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Stephen Orser
Councillor, Ward 4
(519) 851-4968
sorser@london.ca

Attach.