

**Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendments**

**File #OZ-8004**

**H.B. Beal Secondary School, public meeting input, (February, 27, 2012).**

**Presented by: Don Macpherson, Principal, H.B. Beal Secondary School.**

Thank you for the opportunity to present on the issue of by-laws related to the location and operation of methadone clinics within the city.

As noted in our letter of May 9, 2010 there are a number of concerns our school has with the operation of methadone clinics that we hope are addressed by amendments to the by-law. In our letter we outlined several concerns:

The congregation of adults within the vicinity of the school and the apprehension that this creates for our parent community.

Being prone to intruders in the building who are using the school as a warm thoroughfare or accessing school washrooms.

The related adult traffic through school driveways and parking lots and the safety issues related to finding needles on school property on a daily basis.

The increased presence of illegal activity and the diminished level of safety within the vicinity of the school.

While we recognize that these concerns are not likely entirely related to the methadone clinic, it is our view that locating methadone clinics in proximity to the school contributes significantly to the problems previously identified.

Therefore:

We support the defining of methadone clinic within the by-law as a way to ensure that future "clinics" may not open under the larger definition of "clinic" within the existing by-law.

We support the addition of minimum gross waiting room space. In our view one of the existing problems is the congregation of adult pedestrian traffic within the school vicinity. This increased adult traffic creates an unsettling atmosphere for families and students when they arrive at the school. The sense of school safety is marginalized when

22

there are many unknown adults loitering in the vicinity of the school. Larger waiting room spaces may address this.

We support the creation of separation distances from schools. The separation distance must not only describe a linear space but also consider the pedestrian travel routes to and from the facility. Planners need to avoid the situation where school properties become convenient short cuts between transit nodes and clinic locations.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input on this issue.

Sincerely yours,

Don Macpherson  
Principal, H.B. Beal

**H. B. BEAL SECONDARY SCHOOL**  
525 DUNDAS STREET, LONDON, ONTARIO N6B 1W5  
Tel: (519) 452-2700 Fax: (519) 452-2729  
<http://www.tvdsb.on.ca/HBBeal>

**Don Macpherson**, B.A., B.Ed.,  
*Principal*  
**Connie Bray**, M.Ed., Ed.D.,  
*Vice-Principal*  
**Donna Vachon**, B.A., B.Ed., M.B.A.,  
*Vice-Principal*  
**Dan Clarke**, B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed.,  
*Vice-Principal*

May 9, 2011

Municipal Council for the City of London  
Planning division

Attention Nicole Musicco, Planner  
John Fleming, Manager Land Use Planning  
P.O. Box 5035  
206 Dundas Street  
London, On  
N6A 4L9

To: Councillor Bud Polhill  
Chair of the Built and Natural Environment Committee

Please accept this written submission opposing the application to amend the zoning by-law, Z-1, advertised in the London Free Press on March 11, 2011 (File # : Z-7879).

I am writing to express concern regarding the change in the by-law that would allow 'clinic' to be added to the existing list of acceptable uses to the Restricted Service Commercial (RSC2/RSC4) zone as it relates to the property at 519 York Street specifically, and to properties generally within the City of London. My concern is that "Clinic" is not specific and would allow for the addition of methadone and other similar clinics to exist in proximity to H.B. Beal specifically and in the vicinity of any other school generally.

As principal of H.B. Beal Secondary School I am writing on behalf of the students, staff and parent community. H.B. Beal Secondary School is located at 525 Dundas Street and has approximately 1600 students in grades nine through twelve. Beal is operated by the Thames Valley District School Board and will celebrate its one hundredth anniversary in 2012.

I would advise at the outset that we in no way find fault with methadone as a treatment option for addicted persons. Our issues lie with the impact that such clinics have on their neighbours and community. As you may be aware, the existing methadone clinic at 528 Dundas Street is directly across the street from Beal. It is from this first hand experience that we are able to identify several concerns related to this type of clinic being located in proximity to a school.

The addition of a second methadone clinic in the vicinity of the school will, in my view, exacerbate the problems particularly if located to the south of the school adjacent to our athletic field, as is the case with the property at 519 York Street. In addition to being used for sporting events the athletic field serves as a classroom for our health and physical education classes. It is inappropriate to have students directly exposed to the activities associated with methadone clinics while in their classroom space.

In addition to the clinic there is currently a heavy concentration of social support services surrounding the school (Mission services - Men's Mission, Children's Aid Society, My Sisters House, United Way Coffee House, Methadone Clinic). These services create a significant adult, pedestrian presence immediately around Beal and often on Beal property. Many of the clients accessing these services suffer from the effects of mental health and poverty and as a result present an intimidating presence to our students and parent community. There exists a significant loitering issue with this adult group as they socialize around Beal's perimeter.

This concentration of mostly male adults hanging around in the vicinity of the school raises issues of school safety for parents and students. Parents dropping their fourteen and fifteen year old sons and daughters off at school do not feel safe and in fact question the safety of the school, given the nature of their perceptions about the concentration of adult pedestrians near the school.

We are prone to clinic related intruders using our Dundas Street entrance. We have had adult intruders walk through the school to use it as a thoroughfare to go north or south and or to use the washroom facilities. There have been instances of finding intruders, under the influence of prohibited substances, in our main floor washrooms.

In response to a Ministry of Labour (2008) workplace safety survey that reported high levels of staff anxiety regarding intruders, we are required to lock the north entrances to the school after students arrive. Guests who arrive for school programs in our auditorium and or pool must now access the building on the south side of the school at the King Street entrance.

Immediately to the west of the school a driveway runs north and south from Dundas Street to King Street. Unfortunately this driveway has been used as a thoroughfare by the adult population previously described. In addition, drug users have been taking shelter behind our portables and in our bulk lift area. Each morning custodial staff scour the area and collect used needles to remove them as a danger to students and other staff.

The safety issues are not limited to the work day as Beal is one of the most heavily used schools for after hours community programs for both youth and adults. Safety for our custodial staff is also a concern. In addition to the risk associated with needles, our custodial staff are required to access this area after dark as they clean the portable classrooms and access the bulk lift area. Contact with drug users and or the suppliers in the west alley at night is a serious concern. In an effort to curb the problem the Thames Valley District School Board has had to erect fencing in the area and remove doors to our bulk lift area and we have required custodians to work in pairs for safety reasons. The costs of additional lighting and additional security camera surveillance are also being reviewed by our Operations Services Department.

Our community resource police officer reports that drug dealing by those who prey on methadone clinics occurs regularly. The presence of the methadone clinic brings an element of illegal and unsafe behaviour to the school's front door every day. This has resulted in a few issues between students and adults in the area that have required assistance from police services.

Transition to high school is an anxious time for parents and students. During this registration and transition process we receive many questions from parents about what is going on Dundas Street and how it impacts the school. Parents are simply worried about the safety of their children. The proximity of the methadone clinic to the school brings with it a series of negative consequences and although unintended they do effect both the safety of the school and the perceived safety of the school. We are concerned about intruders, the safety and the perceived safety of our students, teachers and custodians. The presence of drug dealers and the remnants from drug use so close to the school and the high concentration of adult males around the school damages the school's reputation. For reasons of safety and the school's reputation we oppose the amendment of the by-law and any other opportunity to locate a methadone clinic close to a school.

22

We are requesting notification of any and all future proceedings on the matter and would seek an opportunity to present our concerns in person in a public forum. Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Best Regards,

Don Macpherson  
Principal, H.B. Beal secondary School