

Agenda Item # Page #

--	--

September 11, 2012

VIA Email and Canada Post

Mayor Joe Fontana, Chair Bud Polhill, and Members of the Planning and Environment Committee  
London City Hall  
300 Dufferin Avenue, P.O. Box 5035  
London, ON N6A 4L9

Your Worship, Chair Polhill, and Committee Members:

This letter is regarding the proposed zoning amendment to the City's Z.-1 by-law to permit Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre (OATC) to open a methadone clinic at 425 Wharncliffe Road South.

I am a concerned resident and property owner in Ward 11. Not only do I reside in the neighborhood, but also own a rental property within 400 m of 425 Wharncliffe Road South. My well-maintained rental property is home to a single employed female, and a young working-class family. I'm pleased to have found such great tenants.

I would like to thank the city for the effort and intentions put into the Methadone Study completed throughout the past couple of years and in particular the Interim Control By-Law which allowed time to complete the study. I found Scott Burns Discussion Paper both informative, but also disheartening.

The need for more methadone clinics has been identified, but there has not been any assessed need for a larger clinic in Ward 11. As you know Ward 11 consists of Old South, Wortley Village, and Southcrest/Coves which are desirable neighborhoods. The appeal of these neighborhoods certainly played a part in my property purchase decisions.

I understand the city's Planning Goals for Methadone Clinics are:

- 1) Plan for these uses in locations that best meet the needs of those who use methadone
- 2) Minimize the potential for land use conflicts that can be generated by methadone clinics

I don't believe a clinic located at 425 Wharncliffe Rd. S. fulfills these goals.

In reference to the first goal, it's fair to say London needs more Methadone Clinics. Unfortunately I haven't yet seen any data/assessments to indicate that Ward 11 is in need of more Methadone clinics. I understand that neither the city nor OACT have assessed the need in this neighborhood. There are presently 5 small clinics and pharmacies within a 5km distance from the proposed 425 Wharncliffe Rd location. These 5 locations provide for the current local demand. Ward Councillor Denise Brown opposes the placement of a Methadone Clinic at 425 Wharncliffe Rd. and suggests a new clinic would better suit other areas of the City. In the Methadone Study, it is cited that Dr. Judson at clinic 528 also agrees that another clinic would be recommended to support the east end. I have no opposition to the present small clinics and pharmacies

**Agenda Item #**   **Page #**

--	--

that are currently in operation. My concern lies with the OACT operation which will be run on a much larger scale, with no limits to the number of clients served daily. Clinic 528 is an example of how a large scale Methadone Treatment business can get out of hand and impact the local neighborhood. Also, I do believe that individuals using methadone treatment in our neighborhood would prefer the small, more discreet pharmacies/clinics already established over a larger clinic which tends to be more stigmatized.

In reference to the second goal, I attended the Public meeting held on Sept. 5, 2012, and was witness to the many small business owners who plead their case. I do believe that business owners will see a drop in business or will choose to move to a more desirable location. Many concerned residents in the surrounding neighborhood advised they would no longer use the services around the new methadone clinic including the Dairy Queen, Western Animal Clinic, and Western Day Care to name a few. Services like these are essential in the appeal, economy, and growth of a neighborhood. If these business' are forced to shut down, and buildings abandoned, I fear the neighborhood will see a decline.

Another concern lies in the Euston Park and Environmentally Significant Area's within the vicinity of the clinic. Even though clinics are encouraged to discourage loitering around the clinic, there are no laws in place for the clinic to enforce loitering outside of the clinic property lines. Friends of the Coves, City of London, and the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority have put countless hours and funds into revitalizing the Coves and Euston Park. Parks unfortunately often succumb to graffiti, vandalism, and mischief, and I can only image this would increase with increased traffic from the clinic.

The March 2011 discussion paper prepared by Scott Burns cites "the most problematic impacts originate from the program participants (and those attracted to them) while they are outside the building on private property or in the public realm such as sidewalks, parks and streets or in other communal areas such as stores or schoolyards."

In a City of London Methadone Study report dated April 29, 2011, the London Police advised the methadone clinic located at 528 Dundas St had a substantial increase in calls for service in comparison to surrounding businesses. Also, many complaints were cited by the local neighbors and businesses.

I fear OATC on Wharnclyffe will have the same effect as Clinic 528 on Dundas St. After reading the data collected for the City of London Methadone Study, I am a convinced that a large, quick dispensary has a detrimental effect on the surrounding neighborhood. It would be a shame to see Wortley Village, Old South, and Southcrest/Coves neighborhoods come to a similar demise.

The Provincial Methadone Maintenance Task Force recommends Methadone Clinics connect with their communities prior to setting up a program, and be accountable for the programs they are running. I am shocked and disappointed about OATC and its representation at the September 5, 2012 public meeting. The message I received from OATC is that no studies or research has been conducted to establish a need for a Methadone Clinic in the community. Other than attending this public meeting arranged by the City of London, they have made no effort in consulting with the community before going forward with their

**Agenda Item #**   **Page #**

--	--

program. I commend the Methadone Clinic that withdrew its application for business in the City of Toronto "Cabbagetown" district after the community voiced its concerns. I only dream that OATC can "hear" the concern of Old South residents.

I would like to remind you of the Recommendations set out in the Discussion Paper prepared by Scott Burns in March 2011:

Our analysis has indicated that properly managed 'primary purpose' methadone clinics can fit into certain types of areas in the city. These areas would be characterized by:

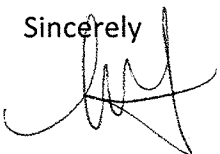
- Areas where the planned and expected environment includes pedestrian traffic normally coming and going from establishments which, on occasion, can include small, brief duration, gatherings,
- Not close to land uses with sensitive populations such as schools, day cares, community centres, places of worship, funeral homes,
- Not close to public areas where longer duration gatherings can easily occur such as public parks or squares,
- Not adjacent to residential neighborhoods,
- Separated from other methadone clinics.

Based on the recommendations I would conclude that 425 Wharnclyffe Rd. S. would be an inappropriate "zone" due to the close proximity to Euston Park, Western Day Care, the dance school, the Dzamija Mosque, the other methadone pharmacies/clinics, and the adjoining established Old South and Southcrest residential neighborhoods.

I do believe that opening Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre (OATC) on Wharnclyffe Rd. S. will have a long-term land use impact. Not only will the surrounding residential neighborhoods be impacted, but also the local parks and businesses. In fact, my two sets of tenants have both advised they would be leaving at the end of their lease if a large scale methadone clinic is established. I do not see any value to it being added to our neighborhood.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely



Melanie Gutz

Cc: Denise Brown, Counsellor