

November 28, 2018

City of London Planning and Environment Committee
300 Dufferine St. 3rd Floor
London ON

Re: Re-zoning 446 York St. London Ontario

Dear, Committee Members

Let me clear to state that this community is in great need of a permanent Supervised Consumption and Treatment Site for individuals and their loved ones, friends and neighbours. Addiction is a tragic disease that can grip anyone of us given the right (or wrong) sequence of life events. The "temporary" overdose prevention program has demonstrated and proven that this intervention is life saving and life is changing.

As I understand it the program has reversed 56 overdoses that could very well have added to the death outcomes this community is experiencing due to drug related illnesses and miss-adventure of consuming substance in lethal quantity. Not only have staffs of the temporary overdose prevention site watched over 10,000 safer injections they have been engaging, educating and directing 150 people to Treatment Programs.

Being a Community Mental Health and Addiction worker for over 40 years I have witnessed and can affirm a better quality of health and life when we proactively intervene and provide health services where the people are. Typically these folks have lost connection to family and have few friends to assist with life changing support. Many have been disadvantaged, experienced significant life traumas and have turned to substances. They are people that need to be treated with respect and offered dignity.

I realize that there will be naysayers and NIMBY will raise its head but having experience in this type of negativity I have come to realize it is out of fear and misinformation. Please consider that your committee is responsible to meet the needs of all constituents, even those who typically have no voice. This is a health issue and in fact a Health Clinic specific to a particular patient service need not unlike a dentist office, a chiropractic office or a Community Health Centre. Regrettably there is the thinking that substance users are "unsavory and of bad character" and therefore should not be in the public spaces. This thinking in my opinion is misguided as I see only individuals seeking help, safety and respect. Yes there are behaviours that are as a result of the "drug use" not the person. No one intentionally acts out; it is the result of the drug and its influence on the brain chemistry.

I understand the clinic will employ security services to allay risk to the general public, those using and visiting the service.

Further, as a work neighbour of this proposed site I can attest that the individuals who would use this service are here and "using" in public space. They are subjected to using substance in unclean environments, open to the elements, at risk of being preyed upon and ridiculed. This site will not encourage "others" to come from other areas of the City. The neighbourhood will not be over run. The neighbourhood will offer refuge, safety of person, health services and treatment opportunities for those already here.

Most of all the Supervised Consumption and Treatment site will nurture and care for our most vulnerable with the same care we all deserve for just being a member of this community and City.

This is a Pillar Community Award winning service.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my views and expression of support for this life altering health service.

Respectfully,

Martha Connoy

Martha Connoy
457 York St., London ON N6B 1R3

cc. Christopher Mackie
cc Brian Lester