

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

3.2 Adult Live Entertainment Parlour Location – 2190 Dundas Street

- M. Walker, London Abused Women's Centre – acknowledging city staff and Orest Katolyk; indicating that Mr. Katolyk is incredibly patient, resilient and a wealth of information and also very open-minded; stating that she was really pleased, not very long ago, when City Council unanimously passed its Strategic Plan, and in that Plan, included specifically creating a safe community for women and girls; stating that it was unanimously passed and it was one of five areas of focus, and it got a lot of attention across the country; noting that other individuals and agencies have contacted us to try to get information about how they could adopt this as well; indicating that one of the specific areas in it states that we will recognize London as a sex trafficking hub and take action to work collaboratively toward solutions; stating that it is a sex trafficking hub, and just to give some background - between two programs at the London Abused Women's Center, they have, in three and a half years, provided service to 2840 at risk women and girls, including almost a thousand who identified as being trafficked; stating that they have also had more than two hundred family members fly into London from various parts of Canada because their children - their daughters - were students at Western, and were lured into the sex trade and they are desperately trying to find them; indicating that this is a major issue; indicating that she thinks it is incredible to have a community where somebody comes forward and buys a whole building to ensure that women have jobs that are sustainable employment opportunities in the future, and that the community benefits from that; noting that she wants to acknowledge Ray O'Connor because she thinks what he has done is just absolutely amazing and they are very grateful for that; stating that some people forget that prostitution is involved in strip clubs and, in fact, oftentimes prostitution is how women eventually are lured and trafficked across the country, and that either happens by a sex purchaser who wants a lap-dance, by the manager of a club, or by a boyfriend who they meet at the club; indicating that when we reduce the number of strip clubs, we are also reducing and helping to reduce trafficking; noting that it should also be recognized that, in our legislation, the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act, sexual services are clearly defined and they do define that lap-dancing, which is a regular occurrence at strip clubs, is illegal; stating that, in fact, sex purchasers could be charged and convicted for that, so it is important to remember that illegal activity is going on in these establishments; noting that she wants to just talk a little bit about the legislation, just for one second or two, because prostitution is deemed in the legislation to be a dangerous activity, inherently violent, and poses a significant risk to women and girls as far as violence and psychological harm; indicating that prostitution reinforces gender inequalities and, in fact, if we did not have prostitution, or, prostitution is not compatible with women's equality rights; stating that one of the things that people forget is that it is called the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act because there is a risk and danger to communities as well; indicating that there is often other illegal activities that are happening around these facilities such as drug dealing, organized crime; noting that they often hear from community members that their children are exposed to sex purchasing, which commodifies women and leads their daughters to believe that women are just objects and leads their sons to believe they have a right to commodify women and girls; stating that she thinks it also can present harassment issues and increased noise and loitering and garbage and things like that into communities; indicating that it is really important we recognize that this is an individual issue, but it is also an issue that impacts our communities across the city; noting that Mr. Katolyk indicated that this is a dying business, and it is, and she is grateful that this is a dying business and it is a dying business because we are becoming more aware of sexism and misogyny in our communities, and more of us are making an effort to decrease that; stating that, where in the old days it used to be that the old guys would get together, and the old boys club would go down to the strip clubs for their business lunch – you do not see that anymore, it is totally inappropriate; stating that she is happy that this is a dying business and is happy to see this reduced down by one facility; indicating that she appreciates the opportunity to come today and she appreciates very much the work of by-law enforcement and Mr. Katolyk, and also police services; stating that we work as a team in this community; acknowledging the strength in our community to work cohesively and collaboratively toward solutions.