

EX9.6.3



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October 20, 2015

Clerk of the Executive Committee
Toronto City Council

Re: Item 2015 EX9.6, George Street Revitalization –
Recommended Scope and Approach

My name is Richard Hudler and I am chairperson of the group Queer Ontario which is a provincial network of gender and sexually diverse individuals – and their allies – who are committed to questioning, challenging, and reforming the laws, institutional practices, and social norms that regulate queer people. We recognize and support the seeking of equality as a means toward gaining liberation but see this as a means to an end, not the end itself. We come from the perspective of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, two-spirited, intersex, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) communities. We incorporate the word Queer into our name because we find that many in those communities see equality as an end in itself. We call this ‘assimilation-seeking’ where we are concerned about seeking a place for queers unwilling or unable to fit within a legalized equality framework, which we call ‘liberation-seeking.’

I tell you all of this to help explain why I am here. I am a single, gay senior who retired to this area where I felt I could remain active in the queer community and was comforted by the fact that there was a place like Fudger House nearby should my ability to remain active diminished. When I attended a consultation about the possibility that Fudger House might be closed, the topic of the George Street Revitalization came up but we were told that was separate from the Long Term Care issues and we would need to attend a consultation on that topic.

Last week I attended such a consultation and heard that questions about Fudger House had to be discussed with the Long Term Care people. Another concern that came to our attention at Queer Ontario was that the 519 Community Centre, in partnership with private donors and the support of the City of Toronto, is pushing to turn Moss Park and John Innes Community Centre into an LGBT-Focused Sport and Recreation Centre. I do not remember this being mentioned at either of the consultations mentioned above.

Receiving information like this in such a piecemeal manner makes people suspicious. Although we hear reassuring answers to some of our questions, such as the comment that one of the guiding principles for redevelopment is “[To] promote and preserve partnerships, including ethnocultural, volunteer, and community linkages,” suspicion still lingers.

It seems to me that the antithesis to the often heard “not in my back yard” is “no pride in gentrification” and we are hearing that as a group concerned about seeking a place for those unable or unwilling to “fit in.” The possibility that people who may not always be deemed acceptable by mainstream society could be displaced through gentrification is disquieting.

We ask that you make the links between the varying aspects of these projects to help relieve suspicion and urge that any revitalization project should aim to benefit all stakeholders involved and not one group over another. Anything less would not be revitalization, but rather a re-victimization of those being displaced.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you.

Richard L. Hudler, Chair

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