

ARIS BABIKIAN
MPP- Scarborough-Agincourt



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Jan. 9, 2024

Economic and Community Development Committee
Mr. Matthew Green
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto ON
M5H 2N2

Dear All,

As the provincial representative of Scarborough-Agincourt and long-time resident of Scarborough-Agincourt, I am writing to you regarding my concerns and that of Scarborough-Agincourt residents. It has come to my attention that on January 11, City staff will submit the “Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy: Real Estate Strategy and Lease Extensions” report to the Economic and Development Committee. The report will recommend extending the leases at Delta Hotel at 2035 Kennedy Rd. as temporary shelter site for up to five years.

Since the extension news has been circulated, my office has been flooded with telephone calls, emails, texts, plus personal meetings by residents of Scarborough-Agincourt. The unanimous verdict of the residents and the business owners is that they are against the extension.

I also strongly oppose the extension and join my voice to that of our community residents. I ask you to reject the staff’s recommendation and preserve our community’s social fabric while standing up for the health of our business community and putting the safety and security of families before any other consideration.

I wholeheartedly sympathize with the plight of the homeless. I believe there are more practical, durable, and economically viable solutions to help the homeless and provide them with a permanent solution rather than the temporary hotel options like Delta.

Since 2020, the Delta Hotel shelter has become a contentious and volatile issue between the residents and the business owners on one hand and the shelter residents on the other hand. I have participated in town hall meetings with residents, businesses, and police officers and listened to their concerns. Parents are concerned in the safety of their children. Businesses have complained that there have been break-ins forcing them to close their businesses. Police officers of the 42 Division told me they need officers on duty 24/7 to monitor and provide security.

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My neighboring business on the second floor of 4002 Sheppard Ave., was broken in and its computers, which contained valuable data on their clients, were stolen. My office is one kilometer from the Delta Hotel. The parking tower of my building is a frequent gathering place of the shelter people. They consume alcohol and use drugs day and night. Customers and building staff are afraid of using the parking tower. They are harassed and manhandled by the shelter people. At some point, the building management needed to install fobs for access after a certain time in order to protect employees and businesses. When I contacted 42nd Division and brought to their attention the dire situation, they said they were aware of the dire situation. They said they receive numerous complaints, however, the 42nd Division is understaffed and cannot meet the needs of The Delta Shelter as well as the community at large.

In addition, Scarborough's social services, hospitals, and food banks, has been overwhelmed and stretched beyond capacity. It is unfair for Scarborough to host one third of the city of Toronto shelter system homeless in our region.

For the last three years, thousands of residents of the Village Green Square and the Kennedy-Sheppard neighborhood have been living in a nightmare. The residents are even afraid to walk the short distance to the Agincourt Go Station. The future of our community is at peril.

I contacted Mr. Gupta, the owner of Delta Hotel, and discussed the issue of the shelter and the hazards the community is facing. He told me he will not renew his contract with the City because he wants to convert the facility into a hotel.

I urge you to turn down the City staff's recommendation and prevent unpleasant and hazardous occurrences from taking place in Scarborough-Agincourt.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Aris Babikian', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Aris Babikian
MPP, Scarborough-Agincourt

CC:
Councillor Nick Mantas
Councillor Jennifer McKelvie
Councillor Michael Thompson
Councillor Jamaal Myers
Councillor Paul Ainslie
Councillor Parthi Kandavel