



Dear Member of City Council,
DM31.1 – Commencing Public Consultations for Communities Impacted by New Shelter Locations

About West End Welcomes

West End Welcomes is a community organization that supports local shelters and harm reduction services to ensure successful integration into the community. Our goal is to work collaboratively to support a successful opening of the shelter at 629 Adelaide St. West and ensure ongoing communication between the shelter and community to create a safe environment for guests utilizing the shelter and those living in the area.

Position

West End Welcomes opposes this motion based on the past behaviour of Councillor Pasternak who previously attempted to cancel the proposed shelter in his ward. This showcases a disingenuous attempt at improving public consultation through back door tactics which will result in a reduction in much needed shelter supports in a city experiencing a homelessness crisis.

It has been erroneously stated in letters to council that the 629 Adelaide St. West shelter was installed without providing residents with an opportunity to voice concerns and that there was no consultation. Please let it be on record that the City ran four virtual public meetings that began in October of 2023. Since that time St. Felix and Deputy Mayor Malik's office has made themselves available for questions and concerns and provided regular updates to community members that requested information. In addition to these parties, both the TDSB and TCDSB Trustees made engaged in discussions around the community concerns.

In April of 2024 the management company tasked with community outreach for this site conducted a Community walk which we were able to attend along with city staff, TPS, local school administration and other neighbourhood support program representatives. Therefore, anyone stating that no consultation occurred for this site are being dishonest.

This type of misinformation spreads to other communities and provides those with greater resources and time, to fight against the installment of shelter programs that our city so desperately needs. This shelter in particular has been delayed over a year because a small group of wealthy home owners served the City with a lawsuit objecting to zoning of the site. This is the type of behaviour that makes the process of creating shelter space so challenging and by adding more layers to the consultation process, we will not see any progress. These

shelters come with essential services to connect homeless residents with the supports they need to access permanent housing. Further delay of these supports puts the most vulnerable at risk, people who are living outside in all kinds of weather, while the privileged sit in their homes complaining about their perceived lack of safety.

To Councillors Pasternak and Kandavel,

It is your responsibility to represent all the residents in your wards, not just the ones with enough wealth to own property. Your residents include those experiencing homelessness who have a right to access shelter and support programs. Attempting to block shelters from your wards does not remove the homeless from your community, it actually makes things even harder for those desperately in need.

We ask that you take the time to educate yourselves and your community on the supports our city provides and the services provided by shelters instead of fanning the flames of misinformation.

We encourage you to withdraw this motion and work more positively with City Council and actually engage with experts and committed community members to be part of a successful solution.

Sincerely,

Nicole Rajakovic
West End Welcomes