

INTREPID THEATRE

21 November 2018

Att: Mayor Helps and Victoria City Council
Re: Development Project of Fairfield United Church

The Victoria Fringe Festival has utilized the hall adjoining Fairfield United Church as a venue space for several years. This accessible, affordable space has been invaluable in providing a platform for diverse artists to present work and for local audiences to enjoy it. We are constantly searching for low cost venues in Victoria (a rare entity in our city) and the church has been very welcoming. They are committed to working with local community groups and supporting their work. Should the new Sanctuary space be suitable for our needs once constructed, we would certainly consider looking at it in future for a venue space.

Thank you and please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Sammie Gough
Senior Producer
Intrepid Theatre

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Victoria, BC V8W 2J5
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November 22, 2018

City of Victoria
#1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC, V8W 1P6
c/o mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca

RE: Unity Commons Application - 1303 Fairfield Rd.

Dear Mayor Helps and members of Council,

I write in support of Unity Commons, the proposed redevelopment of the Fairfield United Church.

While I would miss the charm of the existing old church structure, what is more important to me is the private subsidy of new purpose-built space that will ensure that the congregation of Fairfield United remains in the neighbourhood and that this area will serve as a community gathering space and a catalyst for social connection at a time when social isolation is a growing concern.

Reverend Beth Walker and members of the Fairfield United congregation have for many years worked across the community to the benefit of many individuals, families and organizations, including Our Place. She and her congregation have spread compassion as a form of their worship. The annual Sock Toss at Sir James Douglas Elementary, for example, puts young students and their families in touch with the simple needs of our family members through the annual collection and donation of socks. Also, for many years, Fairfield United has hosted our talented artists from the street community as part of the Moss Street Paint in. These types of meaningful and engaging events have fostered a wonderful kinship that is informing and shaping the next generation of compassionate leaders through acts of kindness and generosity. We need these connections to help define our humanity today and in the future!

Repurposing the existing old Church to a project that aims to reduce its carbon footprint, provides rental housing in perpetuity, creates a new home for Fairfield United and provides opportunities for connection to the broad community makes good sense. Nurturing compassionate neighbourhoods that are supported by a strong social fabric promotes inclusiveness, tolerance and encourages active engagement is good for everyone.

I thank Council for their consideration and support of Unity Commons.

Warm regards,



Don Evans
Executive Director

Monica Dhawan

From: Donna Mclellan [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 22, 2018 3:06 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: letter on behalf of Fairfield United Church

Dear Mayor and Council,

After several years of persevering with a deteriorating church premises and another year in temporary surroundings, the Fairfield United Church community is looking forward to a much deserved place of their own. The decision to partner with a local developer to design a modest apartment building at Fairfield and Moss, that would include a church sanctuary/community space, was chosen as the best way forward.

The ensuing trials with some of the neighbors, the successive changes to the plan to accommodate the naysayers, the ultimate loss of some members of the congregation and the move last January are now history. Reverend Walker and the folks that support her plan have come together in solidarity. More than that, it is the authenticity and inclusiveness at the heart of Fairfield United that has deeply touched the hearts and minds of its fellowship.

No one minds the continuous set up and take down that precedes and follows every church service and the work within the community continues. Those who think, however, that this temporary location could or should be satisfactory are, quite frankly, wrong. There is a need for people who gather together regularly to have a place of their own.

The developer, Unity Urban Properties, has been a patient ally of the Church, making adjustments to the building plan to satisfy the close neighbors and the neighborhood in general. It is no surprise that a thoughtful and progressive Church would connect with a forward thinking property developer.

The building proposed will be environmentally friendly and will embrace green technologies that will meet the step codes of the future.

So, I encourage council to approve this proposal. From a municipal point of view it has 3 major benefits:

- It will be an example of a building constructed with 21st century sustainable technology.
- It will help a Church in need that has traditionally emphasized and acted on the need to help others.
- And it will be one more much needed apartment building, in perpetuity. Hopefully, we will see many more in the future.

Sincerely,

Donna McLellan

1385 Manor Rd.
Victoria

#515-845 Dunsmuir Road
Victoria, BC V9A 0A7
Nov. 24, 2018

Committee of the Whole
Victoria, BC

Honourable Mayor and Councillors of the City of Victoria:

Re: Development Application by Unity Commons

I am a relative newcomer to the Fairfield United Church, having first worshipped there in December of 2017. And I have been very favourably impressed by both the minister, the Rev. Beth Walker, and by the positive energy and engagement of the congregants since then. My personal background includes extensive education in the liberal arts, involvement in both urban and rural planning and development, leadership in the local Catholic parish in Sooke (for 35 years) including overseeing the building of the new church facility which was completed in 2012.

The vision and goals which Fairfield United Church has articulated for itself line up very well with my own personal values: inclusivity; sensitive, respectful, and responsive engagement with people's "better angels"—the deep values that honour the both the dignity of the individual and social cohesion of the human family.

I am very aware of the shrinking of local congregations generally in the western world, and of the need for churches to move out of the unsustainable model of large stand-alone church facilities. The structural deterioration of the church building at the corner of Moss and Fairfield streets has proven to be a fortuitous opportunity for the congregation to develop a new model of being church that engages with the local community and responds to significant need of both local residents and of greater Victoria at large.

Housing needs are primary in Victoria, and you and your predecessors have articulated in the Official Community Plan guiding Broad Objectives (see pg 34 of the OCP). The application you are considering now helps meet items 6(a,d,f,&g) in the expansion of the current "Urban Village" (somewhere between the Large and Small versions in our case) by adding a coffee shop, a 2500 sq ft "Commons" gathering place for the local community, and denser rental housing at affordable market rates. Unity Commons includes a commitment of never converting the apartments to condos.

There has been some concern expressed by residents that the proposed building does not look like the single-family homes adjacent to the east and south. This is true. But item 6(g) encourages a range of housing types, whereas the neighborhood is characterized by a large preponderance of single family homes built in the early and middle 1900's, and a lack of multi-family residences. The design of the Unity Commons avoids the look of a monolithic box-style

apartment building. Rather, the facades have a “soft” look, created by a variety of depths and finishes.

About 9 Fairfield United members engaged members of the local community during the Fall Fair held at Robert Porter Park in October this year. Our goal was to simply listen to their stories of living in the neighborhood: what they like, what they find difficult, what their hopes are for the neighborhood, what they may be uneasy about. One of the themes that emerged from this “Listening” opportunity was social isolation. A primary contribution of religious congregations to society at large is the provision of a community of caring and belonging that counteracts social isolation. The application before you provides for a sustainable presence of a caring congregation in the Fairfield community.

I urge you to approve the application by Unity Commons.

Bruce Lemire-Elmore

Monica Dhawan

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 30, 2018 1:16 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: Redevelopment at 1303 Fairfield Rd, Victoria, BC V8S 1E3

Mayor and Council,

We are new homeowners in the Fairfield neighbourhood (we moved here in March of this year). We live at 1246 Fairfield Rd., and can see the big brick church building from our living room window.

We are writing to voice our **support for the proposed redevelopment at Redevelopment at 1303 Fairfield Rd.**

As owners of a strata condominium ourselves, we think it is important for every neighbourhood to have a variety of housing types. We would not have been able to afford to live in Fairfield were it not for multi-family dwellings like ours. And we know, from our recent experience of house hunting, that Fairfield has far more than its *fair share* of large, single family homes. I'm not suggesting that those homes should be replaced with high-density towers – that would be ridiculous. But I am suggesting that a non-residential building at the end of its functional life can and should(!) be redeveloped to create beautiful and contemporary new housing that is consistent with the character and style of the community. That is exactly what is being proposed!

Furthermore, www.unitycommons.com is not *only* looking to build a multi-family dwelling, they're also proposing **purpose-built rental**, which is very much needed in this *and every* neighbourhood in Victoria. This is the kind of place my 25 year old son could reasonably afford to live in.

The existing building is **not** a heritage building; the congregation has found a new home for the time being (and they're eager to move back into the Unity Commons, when it's complete). There is no reason not approve this Redevelopment Proposal.

Regards,

Terry Harrison & Sandra Maxson
#6-1246 Fairfield Rd., Victoria, BC.