

Nicole Roberts
Unity Urban Properties
3471 Short Street
Victoria, BC V8X 2V6

City of Victoria
#1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC, V8W 1P6

March 12, 2019

RE: Parking Clarification for Unity Commons 1303 Fairfield Rd

Dear Mayor Helps and Members of Victoria Council,

I write to address inaccuracies in our representation of the written agreements between the Fairfield United Church and the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association and the understanding between the Fairfield United Church and the School District.

History and context are important. Fairfield United Church has for decades enjoyed a productive and cooperative relationship with Sir James Douglas Elementary School/School District 61, and with the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association. The congregation has longstanding relationships with both of these entities and parking privileges were informally agreed to and granted on Sundays; privileges were also recognized on weekday evenings as needed and as available.

Over the past three years, the Fairfield United Church congregation has worked alongside me in our extensive engagement with the neighbourhood with regard to Unity Commons. The Sanctuary is an integral part of Unity Commons and together – Reverend Beth Walker and I – listened carefully to the concerns of residents. As the proponent, I responded to concerns where ever possible as evidenced by the design changes and modifications made to the project over this period of several years. While parking concerns were raised during our engagement sessions, our application was not contingent upon Unity Commons entering into formal offsite parking agreements with either Sir James Douglas Elementary/School District 61 or Fairfield Gonzales Community Association. All of the new uses being added to the church property in our proposal are being accommodated with sufficient parking as verified by the parking study. Given the parking concerns raised by some local residents however, I encouraged Reverend Walker to formalize her historical understandings in order to provide comfort to concerned residents.

The congregation of Fairfield United Church has convened in the church without any provision for parking on site for over 90 years. With a shared desire to address local concerns, Fairfield United Church endeavored to formalize their functional, informal parking privileges understanding with both Fairfield Gonzales Community Association and the School District. Both organizations responded supportively regarding Sunday parking utilization. Fairfield Gonzales Community Association identified

up to 8 spots and School District 61 welcomed the opportunity to formalize a rental agreement for Sunday's based on need and dates.

The request to formalize the agreements to help ease the concerns of local residents did not fully capture the historical utilization of occasional weeknight use. Parking has been utilized – and continues to be utilized - as needed and as available during evenings by the church congregation, church users and the broad community for decades. This occasional historical utilization of the parking areas at Sir James Douglas and at Fairfield Gonzales Community Association by the church on weeknights was missing in the written understandings.

I regrettably represented the willingness of SD61 to enter into a rental agreement as an agreement in place. To be clear...it is not. It is a Letter of Intent stating School District 61's willingness to rent to Fairfield United Church as needed and on Sundays. I referenced the historical use of the weeknight parking when discussing the agreement with the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association and the letter with School District 61. I apologize as this is not accurate.

I have no doubt, however, that Fairfield United will continue to work respectfully and positively in relationship with Fairfield Gonzales Community Association and Sir James Douglas Elementary/School District 61 as they have for decades. This is such a positive aspect of the neighbourhood culture and character and a testament to the relationship with Fairfield United.

I have been accused of intentionally misrepresenting the truth and in doing so, undermining the good work of the church congregation in the community. Nothing could be further from the truth. I must stand up for Unity Commons and my aspirations for this project and my contributions to the broader community. I have been trying to bring this small project forward for over three years. I am investing and advocating for the Fairfield United congregation to remain in Fairfield – to have a home they can afford – and to share their home with others while continuing their important work in the community; I am addressing important community needs through rental housing in perpetuity including one affordable home for a family; and I am making possible a commercial opportunity for a local business.

This unfortunate controversy threatens to put at risk a very worthwhile and relevant project, and the continued presence of the congregation in Fairfield.

I'm so very apologetic for this confusion and these inaccuracies. I do thank both organizations for their support of the Church over these many decades. We are aligned in our mutual appreciation and commitment to their important contributions to the neighbourhood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicole Roberts".

Nicole Roberts