

[REDACTED]

From: Carol Chapman [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 22, 2022 7:05 PM
Subject: Fwd: city hall memo

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To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2022 10:12:16 AM
Subject: Fwd: city hall memo

----- Forwarded Message -----
Subject:city hall memo
Date:Sat, 4 Jun 2022 15:01:35 -0700
From:Louise [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To City Council:

I provide ongoing assistance to my sister, Sheila Williams, who resides at #351, 1035 North Park.

Parking on the street is very limited, which is a problem as my sister has mobility issues.

There are always people loitering - on the lawn, by the building entrance, and on the street. Abusive language, aggressive encounters, and heckling is commonplace.

Although I support the concept of a 'safe site', it is clear that it needs to be located in a less-populated location. I DO NOT support this proposed 'temporary use permit' of 1802 Cook Street - it infringes too much on the other people and businesses of this street. I am concerned for my own safety and that of my sister on a regular basis.

Carol Chapman

This submission is regarding the Temporary Use Permit Application No. 00021 made by SOLID. I previously sent a thorough letter on this topic, on behalf of Toes 'n' Taps Dance Shoppe (re-submitted today), as we are located directly across the street. However the situation on our street has rapidly worsened since my last letter, and both our customers and our staff have front row seats. We've outlined below just some of the recent experiences we've witnessed. Please keep in mind that we are a specialty business that caters to families, and primarily young families, and that our customers drive from all parts of Vancouver Island to shop with us. And that we need them to continue to WANT to do this, otherwise we're going to go out of business. All day, every day, we see customers enter and leave SOLID, and then stay in our area openly doing a variety of drugs and often getting so intoxicated (high and drunk) that they are unable to walk or leave the vicinity. The North Park St./Cook St. corner has become a comfortable destination for SOLID customers to spend their days.

- we watch them walk into traffic and stand in the street endangering drivers and themselves
- we watch them collapse, unable to walk or move and it's difficult to tell if they've overdosed or not
- we listen to screaming fights outside our door, with foul language and threatening physical behaviour
- we watch people leave SOLID, then visit the Substance facility next door immediately after
- SOLID has created a hub where people come knowing they can access hard street drugs right outside their door
- we recently witnessed an altercation where one man defended himself against another using a hockey stick and the police were called
- recently an extremely intoxicated man wearing a Viking helmet entered our business through our back door, walked around our storage area and stole an item, then left and walked in our front door with the stolen item, took a handful of brochures off our rack and didn't want to leave our store, which made our young staff very nervous
- last week an extremely intoxicated man, barely able to stand up, was blocking our front door to customers, while using a push pin to clean the cracks in the sidewalk. Our staff were very worried that he was going to enter the store and we had to monitor the situation.
- we have had people enter our store, steal an item, and then we watch them walk directly across the street and enter SOLID
- there has been a huge increase in people with shopping carts spending their day on the corners of North Park and Cook St., spreading their belongings all over the sidewalk, and making it difficult for patrons of the many local businesses to pass by
- we have witnessed intoxicated people spending a considerable amount of time right outside our neighbouring restaurants and coffee shop (Jones BBQ, Fern Cafe, Fernwood Coffee) and we can plainly see that it makes patrons feel unsafe
- panhandling on our block is a daily occurrence, and passersbys are constantly harassed for money by SOLID customers
- we see people selling and sharing hard street drugs
- people stand in front of our back door alcove to hide while they do drugs and urinate, and we watch them through the blinds of our staff room window

The final points we'd like to illustrate are:

- while SOLID believes they're performing a harm reduction service, they are not providing any support system for their own patrons or any kind of security for surrounding businesses and our customers
- this situation is untenable
- we cannot survive as a small business, trying to recover from the terrible effects of the pandemic, if our customer base no longer feels comfortable parking in our area, walking down our sidewalks and coming in our front door
- SOLID has made no observable effort to deal with the issues faced by their neighbouring businesses

Toes 'n' Taps Dance Shoppe is completely opposed to this Temporary Use Permit being approved, and wishes that Victoria City Council respect the needs and feedback of the long-standing surrounding businesses. We have had enough.

Sincerely,

Amy & Ellen Cole

Toes 'n' Taps Dance Shoppe

1733 Cook St. at North Park St.

Victoria, BC



I'm writing this letter on behalf of our business of 27 years, Toes 'n' Taps Dance Shoppe, which is located at 1733 Cook St. at North Park St. We are directly across Cook St. from the proposed temporary permit for the distribution of "cannabis as an ancillary use to a harm reduction service". Unfortunately, we have had a front row view, since Solid first moved into our neighbourhood, of all the very unfortunate effects they have had on the fabric of our area.

We are the largest retail dance store on Vancouver Island, and our customer base comes from all over Vancouver Island to access our services. We are proud of the family business that we have painstakingly built over many years, managing to successfully navigate the recession, the threat of online shopping and the challenge of mega-discounters. With the enormous challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, we are still here due not only to the support of the local dance community, but primarily due to the government aide that was available (Small Business Loan, Rent Benefit, CERB). We are making EVERY effort to stay in business, therefore we do not take the threat of further deterioration of our neighbourhood lightly.

Our customers range from age 2 right up to 80+ (ballroom dancers), and we have a constant flow of young families into our store on a daily basis. In all the years previous to Solid's arrival, we experienced next to zero shoplifting incidents, lewd behaviour, or negative interactions for our customers or our staff with passers-by on the street. This, however, changed dramatically for the worse immediately after Solid opened its doors. We have experienced a huge increase in brazen shoplifting incidents, open drug use, threatening behaviour both on the street and inside our store, defecation and constant urination at our back door, a large increase in graffiti in the area, and our staff no longer safe in the workplace. Recently a Toes 'n' Taps customer found an un-capped needle beside their toddler while they waited in our sidewalk line-up. It should be noted that we have witnessed multiple shoplifters run out of our store, walk quickly across the street, and head directly in the door at Solid. This is unacceptable.

Our customers now comment regularly that our neighbourhood had really gone downhill, and some have asked if we have plans to move locations to a better one. Our dance community is very connected, and word travels fast. We absolutely cannot survive as a small business if our customer base is uncomfortable visiting our store. We have always appreciated everything our North Park neighbourhood has to offer, and have no desire to move. What we do want is action on the part of the City of Victoria, as this entire issue has gone unaddressed for far too long.

We are quite familiar with the harm reduction approach, but unfortunately with regards to Solid we have observed no safety measures, counselling, outreach, support, security or controls in place. What we have witnessed, and been told as much by many a Solid customer in the street, is a storefront simply handing out drugs with no discretion. Supplying drugs to those who are already at-risk, without providing access to proper outreach, is tantamount to enabling. Without any credible evidence that this particular "outreach" service is effective, the application for "temporary" use should, at the very least, be put on hold pending a proper study to support what they are now proposing. As the owner of Fernwood Coffee has stated, "good intentions do not guarantee effective care or good results." Solid has not offered solutions or plans to mitigate the extremely negative impacts on the North Park neighbourhood, its businesses, our customers, and the local homeowners and residents. At this point the benefit of Solid's application is completely unknown, and the only evidence presented was rendered useless by having no third party oversight.

We look forward to actual studies and consultation with ALL the parties affected.

Sincerely,
Amy Cole & Ellen Cole
Toes 'n' Taps Dance Shoppe
1733 Cook St. Victoria, BC
