



Christ Church Cathedral School

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July 13, 2017

Dear Mayor Helps and all City Councillors,

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention the lack of municipal and provincial guidelines to direct the acquisition, development, and siting of supported housing facilities. As you know, the opening of Mount Edward Court at 1002 Vancouver Street immediately next to Christ Church Cathedral School has caused a lot of difficulty for the neighbours and the school. I was very surprised to learn there are no by-laws or even guidelines for siting such a facility. There are by-laws for the placement of marijuana retail stores and pubs that assure none will be placed within 200 metres of a school. There are by-laws restricting how close marijuana stores can be to each other. There are even by-laws to prohibit bicycle vendors from operating within 30 metres of a grade school. But there are no by-laws or even any loose guidelines in Victoria concerning the proximity of supported housing to a school.

The City of Victoria has worked closely with the provincial government to support the development of affordable housing and supported housing. As a result, several new supported housing facilities have opened in Victoria in recent years to serve an obvious need – that of housing those with barriers to employment including mental health and addiction issues. However, it would appear that development has occurred on an opportunistic basis and not according to well-considered criteria that assesses the receiving neighbourhood community for an appropriate fit, at least this was certainly the case for Mount Edward Court. Victoria is the seat of the provincial legislature and it makes good sense and appears to be a good investment of public funds that the Capital City's mayor and councillors use their strong relationship with the provincial government to help the province develop guidelines and sample by-laws that would serve not only Victoria but all of BC.

These guidelines could address the following:

- distance to elementary schools, daycares, playgrounds or anywhere vulnerable populations are concentrated
- the size of the supported housing facility (ideally 30 – 50 residents)¹
- the concentration of supported housing facilities in a neighbourhood
- proximity to public transportation and health services

¹ Lenk, Anna. *Research Highlight: Options for seniors or chronically ill shelter users*. Ottawa: CMHC, 2004. Print. Socio-economic Ser. 03-019; (can also be found here: <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/catalog/productDetail.cfm?cat=32&itm=35&lang=en&sid=oRRgmdekEXkxgNzTsi8V6mmxbryQjRjSkHNg40Vbv50KJlmaWBftXJtbQriotsu&fr=1496099941207>)

For the past year and a half I have been taken away from my primary role as a School Principal, which is the education of our students. Instead, out of necessity I have had to focus on the complexities of supported housing including: the legal and political world of provincial-municipal relations, political influencers, police reports, needle sweeps, increased security, child psychology papers, assuring parents that their children will be safe on my watch and the drafting of covenants, which may or may not hold water. I am certain that Mayor Helps and many City Councillors have also spent a lot of time on these issues. If there were common sense guidelines and by-laws in place then every school principal across the province now and into the future could remain focused on providing the educational leadership that society has asked from them. For this to happen, our city leaders and decision makers in the provincial government must collaborate to design an overall framework of guidelines and sample by-laws. Wouldn't this be a good use of everyone's time and energy?

This is my appeal to the elected leaders of the City of Victoria: focus on governance by developing guidelines and by-laws that will serve as a roadmap to current and future supported housing initiatives and ensure the well-being of all members of the community.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Hall', written in a cursive style.

Stuart Hall
Head of School
Christ Church Cathedral School

cc: Lianne Taylor, Director of Planning
Chris Coates, City Clerk

Lucas De Amaral

From: Richard Epp [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2017 12:26 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: Mt Edwards Court

Categories: Lucas in progress

Dear Mayor Helps and City Council,

I understand that the Province, through its Departments, is responsible for the programming and operation of Mt Edwards Court and the safety and security of those who reside there. The Province seems satisfied with the continued employment of the Cool Aid Society as its agent and the symbolic placement of a security guard in front of the building as it moves ahead with plans for expansion of the facility. But the City's interests are not always reflected in the Province's agenda and it seems to me that City Council needs to take a firm stand against their proposal.

Confident that Council takes seriously the safety and security of its neighbourhoods and the legitimate concerns of residents, I think it should not accept the continued operation of this low barrier facility in close proximity to a school and should say so boldly to the Province and its agent. It should not accept the notion that Cool Aid has responded in any meaningful way to the concerns of residents and businesses in the area – in my view it has not. Council should note that the presence of a security guard is anything but reassuring to those who walk by – in fact, it strongly suggests that the place *is* dangerous, if not within its walls then in anticipation of disreputable persons on the street who want to engage with its residents.

Some Members might regard opposition to Mt Edwards as coming from a not-in-my-backyard interest group. But surely it is the residents of the area who see the problem first hand. Like those on Council who note the potential danger of numerous oil tankers near the shores of their City, residents of Vancouver/Rockland/Burdett continue to regard Mt Edwards Court as a significant problem. If the facility were to continue to operate where it is and with increased numbers, the neighbourhood's sense of safety and security could only decline.

Sincerely,

Richard Epp
405-999 Burdett Ave
Victoria, BC
V8V 3G7

Lucas De Amaral

From: Dr. Steven Benson [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 16, 2017 7:19 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: Mt. Edwards

Categories: Lucas in progress

Dear Mayor and Council:

We are writing concerning the rezoning application by Cool Aid to provide 78 of their “hard-to-house” population with accommodation in the same neighbourhood that suffered through tent city for over a year, and who’s immediate next-door-neighbour is the Cathedral School. Rezoning Mt. Edwards for this purpose would have a long-term, devastating effect on the same residents who experienced, first-hand, what it is like to have drug addicts, mentally ill drug addicts and mentally ill people as their neighbours. We spent our year trying to run a business in this environment, which involved cleaning urine and excrement off of our patio, picking up needles, having police and ambulance coming and going constantly, having drug addicts and all of their belongings occupying our sidewalks and boulevards, and frequent outbursts and altercations which frightened our patients and caused a fair amount of intimidation to them and our staff. Did I mention, theft, break-ins, etc.? So, your response would be, Mt. Edwards is not a tent city, and will compose of a much older, much quieter, much more controlled population. We disagree, vehemently. Because a person is 50+ does not change their habits, their attitudes or their behavior. In fact, it is more ingrained and more stubborn. Our office is right next door to Sandy Merriman House, also run by Cool Aid. These women are all ages, and we still hear the same foul language and experience the same type of altercations on a regular basis, as we did with Tent City. In fact, they just received a beautiful new garden. Do you think they sit in the garden? No way – they are still out on the boulevard with all of their stuff, smoking a variety of substances, a few feet from our door. The ambulance, police and fire truck come at least once or twice a week.

In addition to Sandi Merriman House, we are within about a 2 mile radius of a number of major shelters, Our Place, and the new Johnston Street Facility, to name two. Our neighbourhood is already a pedestrian walk-through for these residents, who take all their stuff with their carts, down to the park, leaving traces of all their garbage and filth behind them. By trying to house and care for our addicted population in Victoria, you have attracted drug addicts from Vancouver and even further afield. We now have 3 times the addicted population as we did when Tent City was at its height. The Johnston Street facility is an absolute disaster, and has driven away business and residents who were there before this was rezoned. Both Cool Aid and the Johnston Street facility have required the Conservatory and other businesses to put off fencing and hire 24 hour security.

You say to us, well, no one wants them in their neighbourhood! Well, you are right, no one wants them because they have filthy habits, disgusting behaviour and engage in criminal activity to support their drug habits. In addition they attract the drug pushers, which brings in more of a criminal element. Tent City had two gangs as part of its population. Even though Mt. Edwards won’t house IV users, they will still be housing drug addicts and their behaviour is uncontrollable and anti-social.

We were at a dinner party on Friday night. Two of the guests were from Ottawa. We asked them how they were enjoying Victoria, and waited to hear the usual praise. Do you know what we heard? In the space of 3

days they witnessed someone shooting up in Beacon Hill Park, and worse, a man exposing himself on Fort Street. We were so shocked to hear that. As business owners, we walk downtown every day, and we are absolutely disgusted with what our beautiful City has become. Homeless drug addicts on every block begging for money, filth on the streets, the smell of marijuana everywhere, and to top it off, we have a kaleidoscope of painted crosswalks, which are now dirty and unsightly. We have lost our beautiful city, and if the Mayor and Council don't turn this around soon, the entire City of Victoria will look like Vancouver's East End.

Did we mention, Mt. Edwards is also a short block from the new million dollar playground that had to be built because of Tent City? Also, next to the YM/YWCA. Do not make the same mistake you made with Tent City, followed by Johnston Street. Do not house large numbers of drug addicts and mentally drug addicts in the same location. Sell Mt. Edwards. It is a valuable piece of real estate. Use the money to put into serious rehabilitation and build a rehab center away from the city, away from the children, away from the tax-paying citizens, on cheaper real estate.

We elected you to care for our City, and care for all of our citizens, that includes the back-bone of this City, the people working and paying taxes, the people contributing to homeless centers and other causes. You have neglected us all and we are not only angry, we are disgusted with the way you have used your position to protect and care for one part of the population, while putting the majority of the population at risk.

Oh, another thing. We were brought up to say "No to Drugs"! The message you are giving the children at the Cathedral School and the Y, and the neighbours is "Say Yes to Drugs", then you will be guaranteed, free accommodation, free food, free support, free legal defense, free medical care and even free drugs! What kind of a message is that? Not a deterrent, that is certain.

Stop the rezoning of Mt. Edwards Court!

Dr. Steven and Marjory Benson
202-821 Burdett Ave,

████████████████████
████████████████

Lucas De Amaral

From: Donna Longley [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 14, 2017 5:06 PM
To: Lisa Helps (Mayor); malto@vicotira.ca; Ben Isitt (Councillor); Jeremy Loveday (Councillor); Margaret Lucas (Councillor); Opmadoff@victoria.ca; Charlayne Thornton-Joe (Councillor); Geoff Young (Councillor)
Cc: donna.j.longley@gmail.com
Subject: Opposition to rezoning application Re; Mount Edwards Court
Categories: lucas in progress

Greetings Mayor and Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at the Council meeting on July 13, 2017.

Please vote against the rezoning application made by Cool Aid and BC Housing regarding Mount Edwards Court for the following reasons:

- Currently 38 residents at the facility and the neighbors in the area have now had over 16 months to experience what it's like to live next to the Cool Aid managed building. Neighbours have frequently reported incidents of theft, needles discovered left lying around and police and ambulance calls regularly attending the building. The siren noises plus witnessing the disturbing nature of these calls is upsetting to the neighbors and the many children who attend the school.
- There is a lack of trust with the neighbours due in part because Cool aid and BC Housing are seeking support for a permanent facility based on the current format of a maximum number of 38 handpicked people, with three times the planned staff, plus outside professional security, when they plan to fit in 94 hard to house residents, with no outside security and only 3 staff within the three story building. There is not enough staff or security planned for the increased number of proposed residents.
- The Cool Aid and BC Housing wish to remove the security guard at the front of the building. This would cause an increase in negative community incidents. The school needs security in place to maintain peace and order in the neighbourhood.
- Cool Aid states no illicit substance use will be tolerated on the premises but that does not stop residents from using drugs in the neighbourhood, in front of neighbour's homes, children from the school and the nearby new million dollar playground. Neighbours have actively been sending the city "community impact statements" about finding condoms, needles, thefts from their yards and cars, shouting at night among other disturbing occurrences.
- A potential increase of an additional 56 residents at Mount Edwards Court does not align with best practices regarding number of residents in such a facility as researched by CMHC.
- The 844 Johnson Street facility run by Portland Housing has 140 residents which has made a negative impact on the neighbours and the enrolment rates at the Conservatory of Music. Families have stated they do not feel comfortable allowing their children to walk to or from the Conservatory due to the unpredictable, threatening nature of the residents at the Johnson Street facility and Our Place. On June 6, 2017 at 3:00 PM a random shooting incident took place with a pellet gun from a suite in the Johnson Street facility at a woman driving by who was injured from broken glass after her window was shot out. It would be reckless to place a facility with 94 hard to house people next to an elementary school as the current plan stands.
- If the outcome of this rezoning goes ahead, parents will not tolerate drug or alarming mental illness behaviour and will seek alternate schools and playgrounds to visit, removing their children from Christ Church Cathedral School and choosing safer playgrounds. This happened at St. Andrews school, a popular elementary school which closed due to dropping enrollment after "Our Place" opened.
- As a resident of Victoria, I ask you to please protect and preserve the last remaining elementary school located in the downtown core. Create a vision for seniors, individuals, families and the school, to continue to live safely, in harmony, in the Cathedral Hill neighbourhood.

Sincerely,

Donna Longley

parent at Christ Church Cathedral School

Resident at 1343 Slater Street in Victoria

Lucas De Amaral

From: Peter Daniel [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2017 1:20 PM
To: Lisa Helps (Mayor)
Cc: Ben Isitt (Councillor); Pam Madoff (Councillor); Marianne Alto (Councillor); Jeremy Loveday (Councillor); Charlayne Thornton-Joe (Councillor); Chris Coleman (Councillor); Margaret Lucas (Councillor); Geoff Young (Councillor); Cathedral School @ CCCS
Subject: Mount Edward Court
Categories: lucas in progress

Good Afternoon:

As a former Director of Christ Church Cathedral School, as a grand-parent with 3 grandchildren as students, as a parent of one of the teachers at this school and as a “grand uncle” to one student and Uncle to another teacher, I have a long association with this very successful school.

In my role as Asset Manager of the Anglican Diocese of BC, I am anxious to see Diocese property well maintained and used. This is particularly important for Heritage Designated and Heritage listed properties where alternate uses often cannot be accommodated in these buildings. Christ Church Cathedral is a designated Heritage Building; the School is in a building on the Heritage list. Full occupancy of these buildings means that they are well maintained and often used for Public events.

As a 3rd generation parishioner at Christ Church Cathedral, I am very aware of the importance of this school to the Parish; the strong relationship that all parishioners have with this institution and how beneficial it is for the sustainability of the Cathedral itself that this school survive and thrive.

The future success of this school has been in doubt with declining enrollment caused by justified safety concerns from parents and families of students since “tent city” and “Mount Edward Court” have been operating.

Tent City is no more. Mount Edward Court continues to operate. Disturbing events are a regular occurrence (note police files of recent events on Christ Church Cathedral parking lot this month). The owner of this property, BC Housing, is planning to bring forward a rezoning application to increase occupancy in this building.

As you are likely aware, BC Housing and the Housing Ministry of the Province have met with the School to attempt to come to an agreement with operational regulations that will satisfy the school and gain approval from the City of Victoria in rezoning.

There has been discussion around limiting the age of residents at Mount Douglas Court; restricting the use of drugs; and restricting the level of occupancy. We understand that there may also be a commitment by the owner to designate this building as Heritage.

No private sector owner could purchase a property and use it in contravention of existing zoning pending rezoning. BC Housing as an agent of the Province has done this and the results have upset the local community. They have done this in response to a housing crisis.

The City is now being asked to “post approve” rezoning is a Land Use out of character in this residential neighbourhood. We are well aware of the Housing Crisis. Seven not for profit Societies associated with the Anglican Diocese provide over 350 affordable housing units on Vancouver Island. Over 100 additional homes are under construction or in approvals stages.

At the same time, we have always respected local government regulations and approvals process in providing affordable housing in neighbourhoods.

The neighbourhood meeting on this rezoning proposal held by the Neighbourhood Association within the past 2 months was very well attended and the advice of the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Association to that meeting was that his report to Council would note that the proposed rezoning is “overwhelmingly negative” in the community.

There may be uses for this property that will be acceptable to the School and the Parish and the Diocese of BC as owners of the Precinct lands.

Those uses are for a much smaller occupancy than proposed by the present owners and their operators; with an age restriction (over 50 years of age) and with no drug use.

If the City is able to work with the community to bring forward an application for Land Use and Operation of the Building on these terms, that could be an initiative that the School and adjacent Church Community may endorse.

The agreement on Land Use and Operations would have to be committed in zoning and as a covenant on title of the subject property in favour of the City and the Anglican Diocese of BC. In this manner, the City would join with the Anglican Diocese of BC as committed observers with legal enforcement rights to ensure that the legal property use agreements are respected.

As one vitally concerned with the sustainability of the School, Parish and Buildings on the Precinct, I urge consideration of Land Use that is considered and approved by the School and where legal covenants on the title of the Mount Edward Court property are made in favour of the City and the Diocese.

Respectfully,
Peter Daniel



Renewed Hearts, Renewed Spirits, Renewed People

Peter Daniel

Asset Manager
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Victoria, BC V8V 3V7
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July 12, 2017

Lara Salchert
Christ Church Cathedral School
912 Vancouver Street
Victoria, BC, V8V 3V7

Mayor Lisa Phelps
City of Victoria City Hall
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC, V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor Phelps,

I am sending this letter due to my significant concerns with the redevelopment plans at Mount Edwards Court. I am a teacher at Christ Church Cathedral School and I wanted to ensure that you were made aware of the hardships the school is experiencing due to the present situation at Mount Edwards Court. School enrollment has significantly declined in the past year due to the change in use of Mount Edwards Court from a seniors' residence to supported housing. Because of this, the future viability of the school is now in jeopardy, staff employment is greatly at risk, and student safety and security is a growing concern.

Student safety and security is paramount to parents and staff alike. The proposed plans at Mount Edwards Court, if left unchanged, will cause hardship to many within our community and places some of the most vulnerable in society, our children, at great risk. These risks would be significantly reduced if a more appropriate use for Mount Edwards Court was found such as affordable housing for seniors, families, and single parents. I ask that council reconsider their present plans for Mount Edwards Court to further investigate other viable options.

The proposed number of 79 units of supported housing is almost double the current population and does not align with best practices by CMHC and other Cool Aid Facilities. Housing such a large population of hard-to-house residents with diverse needs, including drug use and addictions issues, right next to a K-8 school is unacceptable. The 844 Pandora Street facility with approximately 140 residents run by Portland Housing has been a disaster for the neighbourhood and general downtown core. Similar results are likely to occur if Mount Edwards Court were to expand to such a high number of residents.

As mentioned previously, many of the hard-to-house suffer from addiction issues including hard drugs. It is important to the safety and security of our students that absolutely no hard drug use is permitted anywhere near our school. The City has a 200-metre buffer zone around schools for pubs and marijuana dispensaries. As a community, we feel strongly that this should also apply to institutionalized use of hard drugs.

The current situation and proposed rezoning of Mount Edwards Court has had a detrimental effect on our school and community. I ask council to reconsider its position and seek an alternative use for this site in order find a solution that is acceptable to our school community. Thanks so much for your time and consideration of such an important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lara Salchert".

I would like to draw your attention to a hitherto unexamined aspect of the Mt Edwards Court controversy. According to Cool Aid a Vulnerability Assessment Tool will be used to ensure that potential residents will have a profile that indicates Low to Moderate support needs.

I suppose that the term moderate in reference to a total score on the VAT is designed to reassure the neighbourhood that they have little to fear from the addition of 65 more residents to Mt Edwards Court.

However, a closer look indicates that a moderate score is possible given the following behaviours:

BASIC NEEDS - "Occasional attention to hygiene"
SURVIVAL SKILLS - "Is frequently in dangerous situations"
MORTALITY RISKS - 3 Risk Factors ie. heart, diabetes, etc.
ORGANIZATION - "Sometimes disorganized"
MENTAL HEALTH - "May be taking prescribed medications"
SUBSTANCE USE - "Ninety to 180 days into addiction recovery Or Substance use affecting ability to follow through on basic needs Could be a binge user"
SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS - ... Difficulty coping with stress; sometimes has angry outbursts"

Thus, many residents of Mt Edwards will have behavioural patterns such as frequently being in dangerous situations, being binge users of narcotics, subject to angry outbursts and often not taking their prescribed medications.

Can anyone say that it is socially responsible to place this facility next to an elementary school? Please take action to ensure that this never happens.

Vote No on the Rezoning of Mt Edwards Court.

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