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Guelph, ON
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Mayor Guthrie & Members of Council
c/o Clerks Office
Guelph City Hall
1 Carden Street
Guelph, ON N1H 3A1
clerks@guelph.ca

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Councillors –

We are writing to express our growing concern regarding potential acquisition and conversion of the Parkview Motel property into permanent supported housing for long-term homeless individuals.

We support the 'housing first' model but the high-density residential neighbourhood adjacent to Riverside Park is not a suitable location for this project. This would be the first such facility in Guelph – it would not bode well for future projects if either the proposed facility or the neighbouring community suffered as a result of poor planning and/or siting.

The County of Wellington's housing and homelessness plan identifies a number of vulnerable populations – the homeless is one group but seniors constitute another priority group. From what we understand, there are more than 500 housing units – condos, apartments and townhomes – within metres of the Parkview Motel. A significant proportion of these units are owned and/or occupied by seniors. It seems *so* risky to push through with a plan for 36 members of one vulnerable population when that arrangement has the potential to disrupt/destabilize the long-term living arrangements of many hundreds of members of another vulnerable population.

We continue to hear that a solution is required before the snow flies, somehow justifying a lack of communication and, potentially, a minister's zoning order which could circumvent the City's standard review and consultation processes altogether. Why not continue to rent space in local motels (hopefully at a favourable rate) while options are investigated and weighed thoroughly?

It's been emphasized that 'this is not a City of Guelph project'. As currently positioned though, City of Guelph funding is essential to the project's forward movement and in fact, would constitute nearly 50% of the 30% down-payment necessary to make acquisition possible.

In that connection, it must be said that the math is concerning: a \$3.8 million purchase, plus renos, plus operations – and a lead agency with just \$600,000 to contribute. For individuals and businesses struggling with the financial pressures of covid, a commitment on that scale is staggering.

Proponents of the Parkview project point to Lucy's Place in Barrie as a successful – and similar – project. Lucy's Place is a supported-living facility with 24/7 staffing, as is envisioned for the Parkview site. But Lucy's Place accommodates 18 people, rather than the 36 envisioned for the Parkview site. And Lucy's Place is situated on a commercial strip with residences located only on the street behind. When consulted, commercial neighbours of Lucy's Place cite ongoing problems, from drug paraphernalia and under-the-influence residents on their properties and the sidewalk, to drug deals on the adjacent street corner. Just last month, Lucy's Place was damaged by fire and charges of arson by negligence are pending.

As impacted neighbours and Guelph taxpayers, we urge you to turn down the request from the Welcome Drop-in Centre for funding to acquire the Parkview site.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Sally Scherer and Curtis Scherer in cursive script.

Sally & Curtis Scherer

