

Dear Mayor Guthrie and City Councillors,

My name is Emily Mininger and I live in the Onward Willow neighbourhood. I am writing in support of the zoning by-law amendment for transitional housing to be located at 65 Delhi St. and the zoning by-law amendment for permanent supportive housing located at 85 & 89 Willow Rd.

As our community has a plan to end homelessness by 2023, creating housing options for those who need it is a key part of making this happen.

Transitional housing at 65 Delhi St. will help our community members get the support they need to improve their lives and wellbeing. This will contribute to them being able to find a permanent housing solution and live a better quality of life.

Permanent supportive housing at 85 & 89 Willow Rd. will also help our most vulnerable community members. Permanent supportive housing is proven to be a cost-effective solution that improves lives and contributes to a stronger community.

I believe both of these zoning amendments will contribute to our plan to end homelessness and strengthen our community. Housing is one of the most important needs for those experiencing poverty to be able to improve their wellbeing, get out of harmful situations, and thrive. I believe housing is a human right and it's our collective responsibility to provide housing for all who need it. As someone who lives in Onward Willow, I think this change would be a positive improvement to our neighbourhood and make our community stronger.

I encourage council to approve these amendments to help put an end to homelessness in our community and help everyone find a safe, stable and affordable place to call home, as I believe the addition of these supports could make that possible.

Thank you.

Emily

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Emily Mininger

Dear Mayor Guthrie and City Councillors,

Please support the zoning by-law amendment for permanent supportive housing located at 85 & 89 Willow Road.

Having spent a decade volunteering with ARCH in support of the harm reduction program and the Guelph-Wellington Local Immigration Partnership, I know how crucial non-precarious housing is to sustainable integration and well being.

We need to demonstrate we care by constructing spaces for justice to be realized.

Sincerely,

Dan Maitland

Ward 4

Dear Sir / Madam,

As a parent living in the community, I am concerned about the development of 85/89 Willow Road.

According to the City's application for 'A Place to Call Home' permanent supportive housing funding from the Ministry of Health on January 19, 2021, "overall 90% of homeless experience complex health issues, 69% have substance abuse issues, 58% have mental health issues and 43% are tri-morbid, meaning they are living with physical health, mental health and substance abuse use issues."

Given that this building will be situated directly adjacent to three centres used by children - namely Willow Road Public School, the Shelldale Centre and Willowdale childcare centre, I am very worried about the effect this will have on our children. I am worried about the effect on our children's mental health from seeing adverse behaviours of the tenants due to their own mental health and addictions issues (as indicated above). I am also worried about the children's physical health with the increased risk of them coming across drug paraphernalia in the area.

Given that we are living in a time of increased risk of mental health issues in children due to the COVID restrictions, and that we live in a neighbourhood that is already struggling with poverty and mental health problems, I feel that this development would be a massive burden on our community, and in particular our children.

Yours Sincerely,

Marion Bishop.

That report 2021-48 regarding a proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application (File OZS21-001) by Skydev Inc., on behalf of the property owners, Skyline Real Estate Holdings Inc. and D.D. 89 Willow Ltd., to permit the development of a five storey building containing 32 supportive housing units on a portion of the lands municipally known as 85 and 89 Willow Road and legally described as Part Lot 8, Plan 593, as in MS73909; City of Guelph; and Part Lot 8, Plan 593, as in ROS636516, City of Guelph, from Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise dated March 8, 2021, be received.

Dear Mayor Guthrie and Guelph City Councillors,

I have written before concerning the amazing initiatives to alleviate homelessness in Guelph and have supported this and other projects. I am writing now on my own behalf having been made aware of some changes regarding the support programmes now being considered as part of the “wrap -around care” for those residents at 85 and 89 Willow Road and I believe these are so very important for the future residents themselves and for the community already established in this area, that a decision to agree to the zoning change should be tabled until these concerns are addressed.

I have learned that “treatment” for those with ‘addictions will now be offered as optional at the new centre and that a “safe consumption site” “safe supply program” and” paraphernalia exchange” is part of the plan now. I am wondering if this is actually in keeping with the Ontario Supportive Housing Policy Framework, March 17th which states,

Programs inconsistent with best practices: Some programs focus on care and dependency rather than supporting recovery and independence. This is not consistent with best practices in supportive housing

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=15986>

I have been informed that the dear souls who will be housed at this centre may be described as having “Tri-morbidities” meaning, probable mental illness, life-time moderate or high risk alcohol or illicit drug use and at least one chronic medical condition, in fact the most vulnerable of the vulnerable of which it has been said. *“Experience of mental health and/or substance misuse can significantly hinder decision making and day to day living and can often lead to or exacerbate chaotic lifestyles”* Therefore we should not consider their choice of whether or not to undergo treatments which will assist them in recovery, but like Sweden mandate the required help they need in order to assist them in taking back their lives and dignity. I am informed that “tri-morbidity” is present in 39% of those experiencing homelessness indeed the most needy of this dear segment of our society. However, I sincerely question whether the approach now considered as the “wrap-around “ care for this vulnerable cohort is the correct one.

I believe there is enough evidence available to make the city pause in this decision to give time for us all to be presented with the real facts of whether housing these very dear and suffering souls in the middle of community of new immigrants with large families, a school, and a daycare is the correct decision for the future tenants or the immediate community – it seems to me that the site on Delhi street might be a more apt spot for those suffering with such health and life affecting burdens. Time restraints will not allow me to say more but I have finish with some quotes from a report that I have recently accessed and urge City council to please pause in this decision and allow time for further research to be accessed before making this decision. Please see below

Sincerely

Jakki Jeffs
Guelph
Ontario

“establishment of a SIS [safe injection site] is based on the concept that addicts cannot change, and therefore must be provided with clean facilities and medical supervision to repeatedly inject their drugs. This assumption is contradicted by the thousands of former drug addicts who have sought treatment and now lead healthy, productive lives. The fundamental need of a drug addict is abstinence-based treatment rather than easy access to facilities to continue to inject drugs.”

Advocates of SIS also argue that these facilities provide opportunities for the addict to seek treatment. The latter is not the priority for such facilities, as very few addicts take advantage of treatment offered them. The SIS employees do not exert pressure on addicts to seek other treatment since they believe the addicts must make their own independent decisions. A drug addict, without support, is not able to do so. In contrast, Sweden, a very liberal country, has strong law enforcement and mandatory treatment for addicts. Treatment facilities are also widely available there. As a result, Sweden has the lowest rate of drug use in Europe. It is noteworthy that the effectiveness of treatment is the same whether it is voluntary or mandatory.

These thirty studies on Insite, however, were all conducted by the same individuals who lobbied for the establishment of the drug injection site in the first place.

One such study on Insite was published in the British medical journal *Lancet* on April 18, 2011. This study was pivotal in the decision by the Supreme Court of Canada, handed down on September 20, 2011, to prevent the federal Minister of Health from closing down the Vancouver injection site. This study purported to show there was a 35% reduction in overdoses in the 500 metre radius around Insite, while in the rest of Vancouver, the rate decreased by 9%.

The B.C. Coroner’s report, however, indicated that overdoses actually increased in that specific area by 14%, or 11% when population-adjusted, between 2002, the year before Insite opened, and 2005, the final year of the study period. An international medical team of drug experts has exposed this egregious error in a *Lancet* article which was published in the journal on January 14, 2012.

Drug injection sites are destructive for the communities in which they are established. They make the area neither safe nor passable for people living there. They also gravely harm businesses located there. Drug addicts around them scream abuse day and night, and engage in endless fighting. Drugged out and sometimes dead addicts litter the sidewalks, together with abandoned needles, condoms and crack pipes. Addicts defecate anytime, anywhere in the area, making the vicinity almost unwalkable. Those few individuals who dare walk near the sites are accosted by beggars, prostitutes

and drug traffickers. Consequently, those who reside in the vicinity are afraid to go out at night, and businesses in the area experience huge financial losses.

It is also a fiction that drug addicts using SIS cease casually disposing their used injection needles. The federal Expert Advisory Committee report found that only 5% of drug addicts use SIS for injections, and of these, only 10% used the facility exclusively for their injections. Many continued to inject their drugs on back streets, alleyways, and parks, leaving their contaminated needles behind."

Mrs Jakki Jeffs
Executive Director
Alliance for Life Ontario