

Please accept my written comments re: the minor variance application for the emergency shelter at 23-25 Gordon Street. Also, I'd like to be informed of any future decisions on this file.

The 'minor variance' requested is a entire third floor addition for 75 shelter beds in a zero/low barrier drug use shelter. [There are no proposed additional emergency spaces for the drug free 16 space family shelter on Waterloo Ave, or the 22 space drug free men's shelter on Hwy 6.] This is 59 spaces more than the by-law maximum of 16, and a major increase in population under a harm reduction model (Housing First) of services, including consumption sites, that causes serious [public safety & order issues](#) for residents and the general public wherever these related facilities/programs are located, including fires & violence up to and including a recent murder in a Toronto shelter.

This is **not** a 'minor' variance, and IMHO it shouldn't be submitted or assessed as such.

There has been no public information/engagement from the Stepping Stone, including as of this writing on their website. The submission includes transitional units, per a local news article, which are not even mentioned in the application, and the Grinham Architects reference to "supportive housing" means under this housing first model, which is drug strategy not housing policy, a consumption site will be included.

The applicant, as the current Stepping Stone, Inc. and its previous incarnations as the Drop-In Centre, and the Stepping Stone men's shelter on Woodlawn Rd. has had serious issues with its operations as low barrier facilities, including:

[Stepping Stone](#) (Woodlawn) had to close operations to to rampant meth use and resultant safety problems, including firing staff.

A 'drug use recovery room' esp. for meth users, was operated out of the [Drop-In Centre](#), but abandoned due to "lack of staff" (pre-covid), with no further explanation. There was no accountability for the approx. \$600,000 allotted for the project, or any objective operational review, let alone a Core safety & security impact review for those outside the harm reduction circle. [This project also went from the hospital, to the Community Centre, to the Drop-In Centre, with no public explanation for these moves.]

The [Stepping Stone](#) had a deal with community members to use their properties for housing the homeless, and was to have the properties vacated when the program ended, and they didn't do this, allegedly causing damage to the units and more squatters moving in. Ms. Hoekstra and the Stepping Stone had to be formally served with a lawsuit to have these issues addressed.

There are already serious problem in the core due to the concentration of social services, and the exclusion of the public from the mayor's homelessness task force and the downtown advisory group means our experiences are not considered.

This is not acceptable and should be rejected as such

jj salmon

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