

Switzer, Joan

From: Michelle Stephen *redacted
Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 8:10 AM
To: cityclerk
Cc: shirley.bond.mla@leg.bc.ca
Subject: Letter for April 22, 2024 Agenda with City and Council -
Attachments: Millar Addition Resident Against Permit Application No TU000091.pdf

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Good morning,

It would be appreciated if you would include the attached letter to the April 22, 2024 Agenda for City and Council.

Michelle







Dear Mayor and Council:

I am writing to you as a long-standing resident of our community, deeply troubled by the escalating safety concerns stemming from the encampment on Lower Patricia, known as Moccasin Flats. My family has lived in this area since 1916 and in all the years we have lived in this home, I have never felt as threatened and unsafe as I do now.

I understand that there complex social issues facing the unhoused and those experiencing addiction. These social issues are leading to bigger safety issues affecting anyone who owns a business or a home within reach of the encampment.

Having the encampment located so close to a community, a detox centre, schools, Connaught Hill Park, and Lheidli T'enneh Memorial Park was an ill conceived decision from the prior administration. This was an oversight that the Millar Addition Community was hopeful the new Mayor and Council would find a reasonable and viable solution **for all involved**. Temporary Use Permit Application No. TU000091 is **NOT** a reasonable nor viable solution.

My personal experiences since the encampment was established include:

- Having to purchase a security system as I am afraid to be in my home alone.
- Hearing and feeling the explosions that happen at the encampment at a minimum of 2-3 times/week. My home has more cracks on the outside and inside walls as the explosions shake my home.
- Experiencing the constant yelling, screaming, and swearing and garbage that is strewn along Upper Patricia Boulevard by encampment residents.
- Being kept awake all night by generators running in the encampment even when wearing earplugs.
- Listening to the constant hammering, drills, blow torches and other power tools being used in the encampment until 2 am.
- Listening to car tires peeling out as vehicles race along the streets in Lower Patricia and Upper Patricia Boulevard between the hours of 9pm to 1am.
- Finding drug paraphernalia, including used needles, in my yard, in the back alley, and along Patricia Boulevard which is a popular walking trail. Residents of our neighbourhood have not been provided with safe disposal containers and gloves to pick up disposed needles.
- Having to clean-up drug paraphernalia along the path leading down the bank from Upper Patricia to Lower Patricia to keep neighbour and dogs safe. This path is one that many Millar Addition residents use or used prior to the encampment being established to get to and from work.
- Being constantly exposed to the dirty smoke and fires from the encampment. It usually smells like electrical, chemical, plastic, or treated wood. I have also been exposed to the smell of a meth lab explosion which will linger in the air for a long time before dispersing. The smoke from these fires have prevented me from being outside and also caused me to leave my house while it clears. Some nights, smoke from the fires is visible many blocks from the encampment.
- Having to report gunshots on many occasions. Gun violence in the encampment has led to encampment residents being shot and one man murdered. With the encampment becoming more packed, violence is escalating and moving up towards my community. I worry that one day a Millar Addition resident will be caught in the crossfire. The fallout from that will be huge as it seems having someone from the encampment die doesn't cause outrage and change.

- Experiencing the constant fireworks going off from the encampment wondering if it was a firework or a gunshot. My animals are terrified and hide with any loud noises, whereas before the encampment they weren't bothered. The constant loud noises and wondering are affecting my well-being.
- The encampment attracts bears, coyotes, and other wildlife which means that more bears will be disposed of, I will be subjected to bear bangers, or I may have to intervene again as I did last year to prevent a dangerous human-wildlife encounter as encampment residents were yelling and exploding bear banger from below while a bear was stuck between the encampment and the Upper Patricia Boulevard traffic.
- Having to call-in, witness, or worry about individuals on drugs carrying weapons such as large sticks, a baseball bat, or a machete. The police are called but there doesn't seem to be any results.
- The encampment has led to random violence and destruction of personal and city property.

These experiences have tremendously impact my sense of personal safety and security. I have everything locked up, and I have installed a security camera/system as I no longer feel safe. Living along Patricia Boulevard means I get to hear everything and feel at risk just by being in my own space. Since the encampment was established, I have also been experiencing more headaches, sinus congestion and breathing issues. This is not acceptable.

After living along-side the encampment for three years, my experience is that the encampment does **not** provide safe shelter, but instead has created an unhealthy and unsafe situation for encampment residents, nearby businesses and the residents of Millar Addition.

I therefore request that:

- City council support the notion of motion for a community safety town hall on the encampment that is **specific** to the Millar Addition and the Community from Queensway down to Victoria St. *Individuals from other areas of the city do not know what our community is currently living with, experiencing or the trauma that is occurring because of the encampment.*
- City council **does not support** the temporary use permit application No. TU000091, unless:
- It is contingent on and contractually tied to the removal of the encampment on Lower Patricia Boulevard;
- Strict conditions are put in place including an enforceable plan to address crime and safety;
- There be more police patrols at night to deter crime;
- Strict fire safety measures be implemented within the encampment;
- The city lobby the appropriate agencies to provide support and services to those living in the encampment to address the root causes of these issues; and

At anytime if you wish to speak to me or see the videos/pictures that have been taken, please let me know. I will gladly share them with you.

Thank you,

Michelle Stephen

cc: The Honourable Shirley Bond