

To: City of Prince George, 1100 Patricia Blvd, Prince George BC V2L3V9
From: Glen Thielmann, 1556 Cedar Street, Prince George BC V2L1B7
Date: April 15th, 2024
Re: Temporary Use Permit Application No. TU000091

Attention: City Council c/o City Clerk,

As a 50+ year resident of the Millar Addition neighbourhood, I am writing today to express concerns regarding the "Moccasin Flats" homeless encampment below Patricia Blvd and the proposed temporary use permit for supportive housing in that location.

One of my basic concerns regarding the encampment relates to the welfare of camp residents; specifically, that they are living in dangerous and deplorable conditions, essentially a garbage dump, and that a more humane and equitable arrangement must be made for them if we have any respect for their dignity and a desire for safe and sustainable communities. The social and physical impacts of the camp include violence and intimidation within the camp; an uncontrolled spread of waste, sewage, and other contaminants; degradation of the hillside through excavation, tree removal, and fire; unacceptable contribution to bad air quality through burning of pallets, garbage, and other substances; an increase in crime in adjacent residential and commercial neighbourhoods; and risk of further fires affecting their own lives and property as well as the lives and property in Millar Addition.

Since the camp was established, my neighbours have seen an increase in crime such as stolen bikes and tools, siphoned gas, and attempted break-ins. In recent months, I have had block heater cords and other small items stolen from my yard, and in March, my vehicle's gas tank was spiked or drilled for the gas, leaving me with an expensive repair and loss of my vehicle for three weeks. I understand the roots of poverty and know that with adequate supports, there will be a reduction in the need for the homeless to turn to crime as means of survival. One of the most fundamental supports for this group is basic housing or shelter that is still accessible for those using drugs.

The use of temporary supportive housing sounds like a reasonable transition from the current situation. However, this housing needs to have a timeline in place, i.e. how long will it be in place and what is the criteria for it to remain or be removed? Importantly, the supportive housing should serve the usual residents of the encampment first, and then other homeless folk from Prince George, and lastly others who may benefit from this opportunity. Even more important is that when the supportive housing opens, the Moccasin Flats encampment must be removed and cleaned up, with consistent enforcement that prevents new encampments. It is not fair to the homeless residents or the residents of Millar Addition to keep both an encampment and supportive housing at the same time. The base expectation of dignity for all residents should be a unit of housing that is safer and sounder than the dangerous and degrading conditions of the present encampment. I look forward to hearing about how Council will do what it can in partnership with the province to provide this dignity for the homeless and safety for all.

Sincerely,

*redacted

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Glen Thielmann,
Resident of 1556 Cedar Street