

# Phoenix Transition Society

1770 - 11th Avenue

Prince George, BC V2L 3S8

Phone: 250-563-7305 • Fax: 250-563-2792 • [www.phoenixhouse.ca](http://www.phoenixhouse.ca)

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February 15, 2021

City of Prince George Mayor and Council  
1100 Patricia Boulevard  
Prince George, BC V2L 3V9

**Re: Harmony House Rezoning Zelkwas Avenue**

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing this letter to express support for the rezoning at 606 Zelkwas Avenue to facilitate the development of Supportive Housing for the Phoenix Transition Society's Harmony House program.

Phoenix Transition Society has been in operation for 46 years. We offer transitional housing and supports for women and women with children who are at risk of violence and/or experienced violence and trauma in their lives, we have worked with many generations of family member's grandmothers, mothers, aunts, cousins, children, youth and families who access our services.

In 2017, Phoenix expanded their program to open the Harmony House program for pregnant women and mothers with their babies who would be able to stay longer, as they begin to heal years of deep trauma and abuse, before moving into independent living. The program provides 24/7 awake staffing: Frontline workers, Nurse, Outreach worker, child support worker, para-professional counselling, Elders, educational, life skills, parenting workshops and healing. We connect the families with support services offered in the community; Indigenous agencies, medical & professionals supports, Ministry of Children & Families and other community agencies, as we are aware not one agency or program can do this work alone, it takes a community and supports wrapped around the families as they heal and work hard on wanting a different way of life. To date, 89% of the women who participated and completed in the Harmony House program are living independently with their children.

At our current location, (January 6, 2021) there was an RCMP incident which happened on Vancouver Street and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. I was thankful for the woman in our neighborhood who phoned the main house to let Phoenix & Harmony house know about the incident unfolding she said: "there is an incident with RCMP, and we should keep everyone inside, don't let the women, children, and employees go outside," her phone call validates the relationships we have built with our neighbors of respect, caring, understanding, honesty and problem solving we have done throughout the years as we keep women & children safe in our community, this is also known as neighborhood watch and taking care of each other.

*"Working Towards Eliminating Violence Against Women and Children"*



United Way Member Agency



Due to COVID 19 restrictions, we were unable to have the neighborhood engagements in person meetings, I attended some of the virtual meetings and presentations held with Ma’Kola Development Services (Hillary Morgan), BC Housing – Development Manager (Shaan Desai), BC Housing – Manager with Women’s Transition Housing & Supports Program ( Sairoz Sekhon) Trinity United (Rev. Dr. Bob Filler), Harmony House Coordinator (Maria Brouwer) and some residents of Zelkwas who joined the virtual meeting as they discussed the construction of the building that would fit into the neighborhood (maximum 2-storey), other concerns and questions were around safety, security, drug use, parking, noise, fencing and landscaping.

What we know is women, children and families want to live where there is safety, security, in a non-judgmental caring home. They want to live in a neighborhood where there isn’t crime or drugs use, they want a family without living in fear and they want to be proud and confident to provide a safe home for their families. It would be great to work together with the neighbors who live around and on Zelkwas Ave to build the relationships that they so much want in their neighborhood of respect, caring, understanding, honesty and problem solving together.

We urge the Mayor and Council to support this rezoning application for the Supportive Harmony House Program at 606 Zelkwas Ave.

Respectfully,

Redacted

Karen Underhill  
Executive Director  
Phoenix Transition Society  
250 563-7305

*With gratitude, I respectfully acknowledge that I live and work on the unceded traditional territories of the Lheidli-T’enneh Nations.*