

Feb 16th, 2021

Dr. Kendra Mitchell-Foster PhD
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Prince George, BC
V2M 1X9

Redacted

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 to express my unwavering support for the rezoning at 606 Zelkwas Avenue to facilitate the development of Supportive Housing for the Phoenix Transition Society's Harmony House program. The land in question is currently not in use, the owners of the land have enthusiastically supported the development of the property for Harmony House, and the members of Trinity United Church have expressed the same.

The proposed development of this 2-storey housing unit has, and continues to, take into consideration the needs, aesthetics and capacities of the neighbourhood. There have been community dialogue sessions and careful planning on the part of Harmony House and Makola Development to ensure that the neighbourhood can maintain its character and integrity by welcoming this Phoenix Transition Society program to Zelkwas Ave. The concerns regarding security, safety, drug use, and crime are misplaced in the targeting of Harmony House; these problems already exist in the area, as they do all over the city, and this housing development would not introduce negative impacts; in fact, it may serve to reduce the problems.

I have been a ministry student at Trinity United church (2019-2020) and in this time I have cleaned away injection drug use paraphernalia from the back steps of the church on more than one occasion. Residents of PG who experience housing insecurity will often look for a sheltered, illuminated, relatively safe place to administer drugs to themselves and to one another. For these folks, who often walk up into the neighbourhood from the Spruceland Shopping centre, the vacant lot and the unpatrolled back parking lot of the church is both convenient and private. Bringing in Harmony House to this vacant lot would provide more lighting to the area, more people present and monitoring the area, and more resources in the area that may support folks to find safer injection locations in other neighbourhoods. I believe that the focus of the blame on Harmony House for "bringing these elements" into an otherwise quiet and safe neighbourhood is a scapegoating tactic, that functions to alienate vulnerable women and children from their own communities, and support systems that are interested in seeing them be whole, happy, and successful in living good lives here in PG.

Harmony House serves a critical need for mothers and pregnant women in Prince George. Harmony House has successfully been operating their six-bedroom house for four years and has served 94 women from across northern BC. To date, 89% of the women who participated in the Harmony House program have successfully gone through the program and are living independently with their children. This success rate is attributed to the highly effective and unique program that provides 24/7 staffing and focuses on strengthening the bond between mother and child and promoting the women's confidence by teaching life and parenting skills in a non-judgmental and caring environment. I believe that the neighbourhood concerns about safety, drug use and crime are unwarranted and will be non-issues, as

the building will be staffed 24/7 and Harmony House has demonstrated success in their existing development.

I urge you to support this rezoning application, as it serves a critical need in our community and region. From a land use perspective, this development is in an ideal location as most of the mothers living in Harmony House will not have vehicles and therefore having services, schools, and parks within walking distance is important.

Thank you for considering this letter.

Sincerely,

Redacted

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Kendra Mitchell-Foster, MSc, PhD, MTheology (c)