
From: Win Black [REDACTED]
Sent: March 4, 2019 10:28 PM
To: Info; Brian Taylor; Zak Eburne-Stoodley; Cathy Korolek; Neil Krog; Chris Moslin; Christine Thompson; rzelinski@grandforks.ca
Subject: Whispers of Hope proposed soup kitchen
Attachments: Letter to councillors.docx; WOH1011.jpg

Dear Mayor and Councillors, Please read and give consideration to my attached letter outlining concerns about the proposed Whispers of Hope soup kitchen.

Thank you
Andy and Win Black



FILE CODE
WE3
or C/O - re Whispers proposed
(Businesses 000) Soup Kitchen
Black, Andy & Win

March 4, 2019

To: Mayor Brian Taylor and Councillors

Re: Whispers of Hope proposed Community Kitchen location



I call your attention to the attached letter supposedly distributed to our neighbourhood, by the Whispers of Hope Benevolent Society. Although my wife and I own property and live in the immediate neighbourhood, we received this at a meeting of concerned citizens and not from Whispers of Hope, I assume their understanding of what a neighbourhood is, is limited to a few metres radius of their proposed base of operation. Obviously, the fact that I am writing this letter indicates that we have concerns about this. Our concerns are both personal and community related. We have experienced firsthand the impact of the influx of “clients” that the Whispers of Hope attracts when they were operating in their previous location. We have been broken into and robbed at least three times that we are aware of. Not surprising is that none of this happened before or after the Whispers of Hope was active.

Anyone with eyes in their head and willing to take the bold step of seeing past the cloak of “political correctness” will remember the travesty of the Whispers of Hope’s last site of operation. From their own publication they say they will “... base our reaction on an individual’s actions in and around our facility” and “... ensure our space is respected and clean even outside of operating hours”.

I have to assume that means they were perfectly ok with destruction of public and private property, thefts, drug dealing, drug consumption, garbage dumping, public defecation and urination and a multitude of other activities taking place in the vicinity, that demonstrates the utter disrespect of their clients for everything, including themselves.

There is no reason to believe that the new hub of these activities will be different this time, except for the fact that the open space is much smaller so these activities will spread into the surrounding residential neighbourhood and parks. I fear for the safety of my family and property should this happen.

I would also refer you to the City of Grand Forks web site. If you can take the time to read it, the web site paints a pretty picture of what a visitor, new resident or potential business investor to Grand Forks might expect to experience by coming to Grand Forks.

“Welcome Home – original peaceful living”

“The City aims to grow and strengthen the business community in Grand Forks through business retention, expansion and attraction.”

“Whether your industry is tourism, retail, agriculture, arts, recreation, forestry or manufacturing, Grand Forks offers a wealth of opportunities for your business.”

By allowing and encouraging the Whispers of Hope to operate in the downtown core of Grand Forks you would be also be encouraging these potential visitors and businesses to just “pass on by” to the nearest city that actually delivers on what they offer to businesses, visitors and residents.

Our city deserves to grow and thrive. Downtown re-vitalization is essential to getting us back on track. Turning Grand Forks into what has been described as a “homeless hub” is probably the best way to completely crush any hope of doing this.

While the deserving citizens of Grand Forks in need, should certainly be accommodated in a caring and respectful way, it should be done in such a way to allow the City to continue to grow and flourish as well as meeting their needs, without attracting “needy” people from around the province.

My wife and I have lived and worked here for 40 years. We raised our family here. We own property and pay taxes. Until the last few years we enjoyed many of the benefits that living in this beautiful small community had to offer.

If this plan to allow Whispers of Hope to open a new facility in the downtown core, and all that this could bring with it, is allowed, we feel that it will negatively impact the city’s ability to recover and revitalize.

Based on our experience from the Whispers of Hope Soup Kitchen that was located on Riverside, we believe that the proposed Soup Kitchen on 5th Street will only serve to encourage marginalized individuals with drug addictions and criminal behavior to congregate in this area to an even greater degree than currently, which in turn, will subject the residents and businesses to even more problems. For that reason, on behalf of family, friends, neighbors, downtown business owners, and other concerned citizens of Grand Forks, we implore you to use whatever means necessary to ensure that Whispers of Hope not be allowed to operate their Community Kitchen in its proposed location on 5th Street.

Sincerely

Andy and Win Black



Dear Residents,

Our organization is new to the neighbourhood, as we have just signed a lease for 7229 5th street, previously the Little House of Bohemia Yoga Studio. We plan to set up our Community Kitchen and are still working on all the necessary permits and licenses.

We as a group believe strongly in access to basic necessities, nutrition, and comradery to keep our community healthy. We have been working with the community to strengthen relationships and gather feedback to ensure that our services are understood and welcomed. If you have not done so already, I encourage you to visit our website and see more about our projects, governance, and even news articles about us over the years: www.whispersofhope.ca

We empathize with those who have concerns, and would especially like to hear from you. Our policies have always been strong against criminal activity or any aggressive or threatening behaviour, and thankfully we don't encounter much of either. As a public service we see a diverse group of citizens and families using our facilities. We believe in inclusivity and the right to fair and equal treatment, regardless of anyone's background, and instead base our reaction on an individual's actions in or around our facility. We stand strong behind our "right to refuse service to anyone" and will not hesitate to use it. In addition to our policies and management of the space, we also include measures such as surveillance and lighting, and strong relationships with health service providers, RCMP, and neighbours to ensure our space is respected and clean even outside operating hours. Prevention is better than cure.

As a Community Kitchen, we rely on involvement from everyone in some shape or form. We encourage volunteerism, donations, and even thoughtful feedback as it all contributes to the positive wellbeing of our organization and community as a whole. If you support our efforts and want to get involved please get in touch with us. And, if you don't support our initiatives, please reach out to us and tell us how you feel and what you want to see. If there is any way we can improve our services we are motivated to do it!

I can best be reached via email at: whispers.coordinator@gmail.com
or during our Thrift Store hours at: 250-442-2006

Respectfully,

Melissa Shulga
Center Coordinator
Whispers of Hope Benevolence Association
www.whispersofhope.ca

Thrift Store - 7463 3rd St. - Phone: 250-442-2006
Hours: Mon-Fri 9a-4p, Sat 10a-2p, Sun Closed

whispers.coordinator@gmail.com
www.whispersofhope.ca