

Proposed Re-zoning of 420 Division Street as an addiction rehab facility

Concerns and Questions: November 24, 2020 For submission to Cobourg Council and others

Notes:

1. Public awareness of the proposed use of the Woodlawn has been minimal, at best. Council and Council staff have done only the bare minimum to provide information to Cobourg residents. Confusion about the status of ownership of the property in question and misleading information in Weston Consulting's invitation to an open house have not helped.

Council and Council staff now need to take urgent steps to raise awareness of the proposed re-zoning of 410 Division street among Cobourg residents.

2. The submission also addresses concerns expressed to me by a number of Cobourg residents.

3. The 'Open house' hosted by Weston consulting, including staff members from the CCFA was held viz a Zoom webinar. This version of Zoom provides for very limited involvement by those who registered. The information provided and answers to questions were sketchy at best.

4. Please see the list of questions that require answers on page 3.

Introduction.

Most concerns relate to the inappropriateness of the physical location of the property for an addiction rehabilitation facility. This raises concerns for a) the safety of Cobourg residents, b) the chances of recovery and safety of patients at the facility and c) the potential drain on local emergency services.

The property in question is in effect in the center of Cobourg, facing onto the busiest street for traffic in Cobourg (after King Street), within easy walking distance of shops, including the liquor store, pharmacy and the Medical Center on University. It is steps away from the Beer store, school and Church. It backs onto John Street, with its history of drug problems. Indeed it is safe to say that drug addiction and related problems, such as homelessness, robbery and violence, is now a serious problem in Cobourg.

Community Safety. The CCFA treats people with alcohol and drug addictions. The latter includes: cannabis, cocaine, fentanyl, crack and heroin.¹ The potential for violence, robbery, suicide attempts and emergency services based on these kinds of dependencies exists. Patients are not prisoners and cannot be physically restrained from leaving the premises, despite the use of cameras and monitoring. With temptation so close at hand, this is an obvious concern.

According to Canadian statistics,² alcohol and cocaine accounted for the highest costs to the criminal justice system. Cocaine was associated with 24% of all costs related to violent offences. The same statistics showed 277,060 hospitalizations related to addictive substance use in Canada (2017).

In many cases, those with substance addictions enter rehabilitation facilities because they see little other option. For example, in Ontario, DUI repeat offenders are required to seek such services as a condition (among others) of regaining their driving licenses. In other cases, it may be a condition of continued employment. *The payment of substantial fees paid for inpatient addiction treatment by the patient, their employer or family members does not of itself relieve the patient of the physical and mental health effects of addiction.*

Response to a question at the Open House about the accessibility to drug addicts and dealers, given the facility location, was of particular concern. A CCFC representative replied that if a person ‘wandered in’ seeking help, of course they would offer help and referrals. Does this mean that anyone could just ‘wander in’?

CCFA have indicated they intend to have 40 inpatients at the facility. *However once re-zoning is passed, there is nothing to stop that number from potentially doubling. And that does not count the number of out-patients admitted on a daily basis. Will CCFA increase its staffing levels accordingly?*

Lack of Legislative Oversight. Since it is a for profit organization, it is not covered by Provincial Government standards.³ It is however covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act and COVID-19 emergency requirements. Out of town inpatients, out patients and family member who drive patients to the

¹ See CCFA Dorset Street Residence website.

² Canadian Center on Substance Use and Addiction Canadian Substance Abuse Costs and Harms 2015-2017.

³ Ontario Provincial Standards for Adult Residential Addiction Services Addictions and Mental Health Ontario 2017 Standards Manual

facility all carry varying degrees of COVID-19 transmission risk to the residents of Cobourg.

What is not known about CCFA. Little is known about the corporate structure of this organization. It is a numbered company apparently administered by a Legal firm. Does it have a Board of Directors? Who is the Chief Executive or person responsible for overall management?

Little is known about the use of local emergency services by CCFA's Port Hope facility. Enquiries to the Police have been to no avail; nothing is known about hospital emergency occurrences related to this facility.

Questions for Council and Council Staff

The residents of Cobourg deserve answers to these questions. Cobourg Council needs these answers in order to make informed decisions, taking the interests of Cobourg residents into account.

1. What is the corporate structure and identify of senior management of the CCFA?
2. What is the potential drain on local emergency services posed by this facility?
3. What is known about the rate of occurrences involving emergency services during the operation of CCFA's Port Hope Facility?
4. Will Council be obtaining information from the Police Chief and Northumberland Hills hospital about occurrences at the Port Hope CCFA facility that required the use of emergency services? For example, what is the rate of police arrests for drug possession and drug dealing in Cobourg?
5. Has Council identified any other private, for profit addiction facility located in the center of a town and related occurrences affecting the safety of the community?
6. How many inpatients, out patients and family members or others who drive them to the facility come from out of Town?

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7. How many of the above travel to Cobourg from COVID-19 hot zones?⁴
8. Do existing Cobourg by-laws allow for the construction of a fence along the frontage of 410 Division street?
- 9.. What extra security measures would need to be taken by: residents in the immediate vicinity (many of whom in close-by apartments are seniors); St Michael's school, the Beer store, Church and Medical center?
10. What steps will be taken by Cobourg Council to inform residents and organizations noted above of the potential risks to local home owners and the organizations listed above?

⁴ Questionnaire screening, temperature taking and even testing for COVID-19 is not a guarantee of freedom from infection.