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From: Wayne McCurdy <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, January 9, 2024 2:01 PM

To: Ostrander@northumberland.ca; Crate, Bob <crateb@northumberland.ca>; ohankivsky@porthope.ca; mayor@ahntp.ca; Martin, Makayla <martinm@northumberland.ca>; scottjibb@hamiltontownship.ca; Lcleveland@cobourg.ca; nbeatty@cobourg.ca; mmutton@cobourg.ca; abureau@cobourg.ca; aburchat@cobourg.ca; bdarling@cobourg.ca; rbarber@cobourg.ca; Moore, Jennifer <moorej@northumberland.ca>; Campbell, Kate <campbellk@northumberland.ca>; Horne, Lisa <HorneL@northumberland.ca>; Carman, Rebecca <carmanr@northumberland.ca>

Subject: 310 Division Street shelter in Cobourg

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CAUTION: External E-Mail

Dear Warden Ostrander, County Councillors, Mayor Cleveland, Cobourg Town Councillors, and County Administrative Officers,

A questionable decision to purchase 310 Division Street and turn it into a low-barrier shelter is now a fact. It appears that County Council is not only willing to ignore issues presented by 1000 of the taxpayers they are supposed to represent, as expressed in an on-line petition, but was also unwilling to take a second look at an existing County-owned property (the Golden Plough) to determine if it could be repurposed as a shelter before spending millions of taxpayer dollars to purchase another property for that use.

There is no question that we need to address homelessness in our community, and in particular support our own area citizens who find themselves in dire economic straits and cannot find or afford a place to live. The lack of geared-to-income housing is at a crisis level as more and more families struggle to make ends meet. The purchase of 310 Division Street has potential to meet some of that need but instead seems to be completely oriented towards clientele similar to those who make up the current population of Transition House. While these people also need support, I am confused as to how the increased capacity of 310 Division will help when Transition House is currently operating at a 50% occupancy rate. In fact, one source states that many of the homeless currently living in the encampment on Brookside property will refuse the offer of a room at the proposed shelter. We are missing an opportunity to provide for many individuals, couples and families whose incomes leave them without options for safe longer-term accommodation.

In addition, my concern is how Transition House and the support it offers is managed. As someone who lives within a few blocks of Transition House, I have witnessed trespassing (on my property), theft, drug deals, garbage and abuse of private property (specifically Trinity Church and adjacent homes) in our neighbourhood. Some of us have been verbally abused while walking past Transition House. Many of us have taken extra precautions to install additional security measures at our homes. Yet despite expressing our concerns over these and related issues, no one at any level of government seems to be able, and indeed often seems unwilling, to provide leadership or offer solutions to a growing complicated problem.

As the proposed new shelter at 310 Division will be much larger than the current Transition House, the potential for increased problems is much greater. Please examine the experiences of other communities and adopt the best practices of communities such as Whitby, in drawing up agreements which are comprehensive and legally binding and offer some much needed responsibility and accountability for all stakeholders of a facility such as a low-barrier shelter.

I look forward to transparency in open communication from Councils and elected representatives at all levels in addressing our issues concerning 310 Division Street.

Sincerely,
Wayne McCurdy

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[REDACTED]