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Sent: Monday, June 24, 2019 8:43 AM
To: Jeff Lehman <Jeff.Lehman@barrie.ca>
Cc: Cam Guthrie <Cam.Guthrie@guelph.ca>
Subject: Letter to Barrie Council

An open letter to Barrie Council,

I was once like many of you. There was no way an overdose prevention site, or a safe consumption site, would ever open its doors in my city.

Oh I said it all:

“It’s enabling drug users”

“It ruins neighbourhoods wherever they’re allowed to operate”

“Crime will go up”

“No one even helps the addicts while they’re in there.”

“Those that run these places turn a blind eye to other criminal activity.”

“It’s the Provincial or Federal Government’s problem, not ours!”

But then the opioid crisis landed on my city doorstep. Just as it has to yours. Our city was trying to use any means necessary to combat the problems associated with these issues, but we were missing a tool in our tool box. And that tool is the safe consumption site.

I have done a complete 180 degree turnaround when it comes to the site in Guelph over its year in operation.

People are getting help to lift themselves out of addictions and other related health concerns. Lives are being saved. Criminal activity is not being ignored. Crime in the neighbourhood hasn’t skyrocketed. Emergency room departments are not being abused. Antidotally, discarded needle complaints to my office in parks and laneways have decreased.

Mayors and City Councillors often talk about how important infrastructure is to a community. The roads, bridges, pipes in the ground and fixing the potholes. But I need to ask you, how much more important is the infrastructure of our people?

We all want to create “complete communities” in our cities. To accomplish that it means everyone is cared for, everyone has value and everyone in some way at some points in their lives needs a hand up, not a hand out, in life. I want Guelph to be a city that embraces these values and I want my colleagues in Barrie to embrace them too.

Since opening the site in Guelph the sky has not fallen. I implore you to support implementing this site in Barrie. Use this tool in the tool box at this time of crisis.

Perhaps you won’t need this tool to be used forever? As the Mayor of Guelph that’s my hope too. The day I can put this tool back into the toolbox and not use it anymore, is the day when I know we’ve finally restored people away from addictions and towards a positive life within a

complete community. I hope that day is today. But until then, we'll keep on using it and I think you should too.

Cam Guthrie
Mayor - City of Guelph

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