

**From:** Jennifer T <

**Sent:** Monday, September 11, 2023 12:55:13 PM

**To:** Office of the Mayor <[OfficeoftheMayor@barrie.ca](mailto:OfficeoftheMayor@barrie.ca)>; Craig Nixon <[Craig.Nixon@barrie.ca](mailto:Craig.Nixon@barrie.ca)>; Amy Courser <[Amy.Courser@barrie.ca](mailto:Amy.Courser@barrie.ca)>; Sergio Morales <[Sergio.Morales@barrie.ca](mailto:Sergio.Morales@barrie.ca)>; Robert Thomson <[Robert.Thomson@barrie.ca](mailto:Robert.Thomson@barrie.ca)>

**Subject:** Downtown resident - Community Safety Committee

Good morning,

I'm writing with regards to the September 19th Community Safety Committee, and my experiences as a resident who lives and works in downtown Barrie since 2010.

I live on . In the time I've seen the area (Queen's Park) experience a lot of gentrification as rooming and half-way houses gave way to family homes. My full of families and young children, but those from other parts of Barrie or outside of town still consider my neighbourhood "rough".

I've rarely felt unsafe in my I regularly walk (both alone and with my partner, daytime and evenings). Our regular walking path often takes us down Eccles St, past the armoury and the skate park, and around the far side of the park. We have never been harassed or bothered by anyone using those spaces - from any walk of life (teens, adults, low income homes, homeless, etc). In April, my partner and I participated in volunteer clean up of the creek in Queen's Park and the forested area there. I was extremely upset to see so many of the beautiful trees and greenery cut down and removed from the park.

I contacted my Ward counsellor and was told the City did it for safety reasons. What I saw was the City making the park inhospitable to those who would rely on it for protection from the elements or other people. Safety for some, but not for all. And a great detriment to green space and the environment.

I also , where I've seen just how many people The Gilbert Centre services. Yes, more homeless people are now gathered in our parking lot during a work day. But they've never harassed me or even approached me. They're there for care, food, shelter, a phone, a shower, medical aid and connection to support services provided by non-profits. The centre is a small group helping so many. They are filling a major gap in local support services. They don't get nearly enough recognition for how much they do.

I love my city and my neighbourhood. Even with the growing population of homeless in our downtown. Because I do not blame them for their circumstances, when systems of care have failed them. I do not blame them for a perpetual lack of resources and access to housing. I do not blame them for being hungry. I do not blame them for the disease of addiction and mental illness. I recognize the difference between being uncomfortable and being in danger. I think many people fail to realize these are not always mutually exclusive.

A lot of us have the privilege of suffering our worst moments privately. We can go home, close the door and break down - scream - swear - drink - cry - become undone - in the privacy of our homes. If you don't have the luxury of a home, where do you go when you're at your lowest? You must suffer publically and then be judged for it by people who don't even know you. You're labelled "a crack head", a "danger" to society. They fail to see the human in that vulnerable moment.

Rather than put serious priority and care towards one of the most vulnerable populations, the city appears to prioritize deterrents and an inhospitable environment to those with very few places to go. The city needs to return to a humanitarian approach to the care, support and health of our homeless and unsheltered population of residents. Rather than trying to move them along out of sight, they should understand that all these people belong. They belong to the city, to the community, to downtown. We can't continue to "other" them. Our community will be its best self when we **all** thrive, not just a preferred group of residents.

You'll probably hear a lot of opinions from people who don't even live downtown, telling you they don't come downtown because they're scared for their lives or their safety. But how often did they ever really come downtown in the first place? I love living downtown. We have a beautiful waterfront, wonderful shops, restaurants and recreation. Should we be concerned about safety? Yes! Are the homeless shouldering the majority of the blame for us feeling unsafe? I think they are.

Our downtown could truly benefit from community care/mental health workers and safety workers - not armed cops - who are there to support and connect with people. More collaborative programs between the city, the downtown business and the vulnerable populations would benefit relationships and inclusion. It could help restore humanity and self-worth to those needing help and start the process of healing and better health. Having safe places for the unhoused to go in the day so they're not forced to "loiter". There's so many ways to do this with care. You can't effectively treat a symptom without addressing the cause.

Our downtown is not the dangerous dystopian hellscape so many try to paint it as. It's families in the parks, it's elderly couples mowing the lawn, it's queer couples at a new restaurant, it's students at the library, it's groups of friends at the skate park, it's retirees playing tennis, it's neighbours shovelling each other's driveways in winter, it's kids riding their bikes around the block, it's new friends doing yoga at Open Air Dunlop, **and** it's unwell, vulnerable residents with little to eat - coping as best they can with illness - on the streets and sheltered in doorways. It's all of us living together. And we all need to care about each other. That's the downtown I see everyday. There is lots of room for improvement but the route to achieve this needs to be a humanitarian one.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

Jennifer Tracy

To the city clerks office.

Here is a letter from our rooming house super. (see page 2)

Ray has lived in this rooming house for at least 4 years and has stepped up to be the “ protector “ of the rooming house kicking off addicts, no residents, homeless people off the property.

I’ve been managing this property for more than 10 years and have seen a huge a increase of the in the area not to mention littering, fighting, drug deals, prostitution, violence etc...Since the Busby centre relocated from the church on Collier next to the Scotia bank a few years back.

This area is a residential neighbourhood, but the long-term residents ( elders, mothers and their children are at risk ) and tell me that they don’t feel safe walk about at any time, this situation is already “ out of control “ and getting worst day by day.

Isn’t it a scary thought when the street centre itself kicks their patrons out and off of their location advising them that drugs are not permitted but the patrons to go across the street on other peoples properties.

Are we not supposed to protect our ( elders, mothers and children ) from the ongoing activities ?

The contributing factor to this growing neighbourhood issue as the super jail drops off ex-convicts on Mulcaster directly across the street from the centre instead of sending these ex-convicts back home where they came from.

Solution could be to have a referendum or move this centre to a local commercial area away form those citizens that didn’t ask this.

Thank you,

Richard Brisson  
Business Development Manager  
Property Management Brokers

SEP 15, 2023

MY NAME IS RAY I LIVE AT

ST I'M RIGHTING THIS LETTER  
A CONSONANT ABOUT MY SATTY AND  
AT THE THE PEPOI THAT LIVE AT  
PEPOI THE BUS BY CENTER SLEEP

do drag live Broking class  
pipes nicks/garbeg  
I HAVE TO clean up to cut  
GRASS. children walk  
By with the tickers five  
stool and THATS WA I  
They see and they are  
filling my BUTYFEEL  
LILAC Hedges ~~THANK~~  
YOU

YOUR'S TRULY

RAYmond Levesque

**From:** Roya Dostzadah

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 19, 2023 9:31 AM

**To:** Wendy Cooke <[Wendy.Cooke@barrie.ca](mailto:Wendy.Cooke@barrie.ca)>; John Alousis <

**Subject:** Re: Request to Speak at the Community Safety Committee of the City of Barrie on September 19, 2023 at 6 p.m.

Hi Wendy

My name is Roya Dostzadah, and I live in Barrie. I live on the Busby. I have been in discussions with John Alousis and other neighbours in regards to how the Busby is affecting all of us. I was supposed to attend in person tonight, but due to surgery last week, I am still recovering. In my place, I have asked Bill Anderson to attend. He will read the letter I have prepared (attached), and will also add his input. In fact, he is representing myself and himself. The reason his input is valuable is because he has spent a significant amount of time at the property, as he has been renovating all the apartments for me, and has been witnessing the Busby on a daily basis. In fact, he liked one of the apartments that he renovated and we agreed for him to move into it this year, but he had to leave due to unfortunate events involving people at the Busby and drugs.

Please add him to the list, and if you need anything else, please let me know. His name and phone number is listed below.

Roya

Bill Anderson

To:

September 14, 2023

**Sara Peddle**

**Executive Director**

**The Busby Centre**

88 Mulcaster Street  
Barrie, ON, L4M 5E1  
705 739 6916

Dear Sara

I am writing this letter to express my long overdue concern about the situation in front of my house and in our neighbourhood. [REDACTED] and since, have seen my share of issues. I decided that it was priority to renovate the units being rented out, as the previous owner only masked problems, which created an unsafe environment to live in. I immediately waterproofed the property, brought the house to current building standards, installed a new furnace, hot water tank, new appliances, updated bathrooms, new flooring, and too many other items to list. I also dealt with a sewage problem that was at the city level, but ended up costing me significantly in damages. I renovated the units and it became priority to create a comfortable and safe living environment.

The house became a full time job for myself and the contractors, which would normally be a lot to handle. What has made this mission even more challenging has been the way the Busby Centre has been handling its management. This bad management has cost me significantly in the thousands of dollars. To begin, every tenant has left either at the beginning or in the middle of their lease because of the Busby Centre. There are large crowds on a daily basis [REDACTED] on my front lawn, and no matter how much we have done, this problem continues to affect my ability to have tenants, and consequently pay my bills.

The Busby Centre seems to feel that [REDACTED] when I am not there is fine. I have had to remove food stations off my property, which has drawn crowds to all units. The people who come to the Busby are on my [REDACTED] and I have tenants who have eye witness accounts. Not only do they come across the street to the lawn, but also come down the walkway to the lower unit. They frequently sleep [REDACTED] or a neighbour's lawn, and the Busby does nothing about it.

It is even more difficult watching ambulance trucks come on a daily basis to remove people that have passed away, but to have tenants watch people come on my property and overdose, is traumatizing. I have spoken to Sara and asked to move the crowd to Mulcaster Street, which is an easy solution for them. Each time, they have promised to move the crowd, but refuse to put their words into action.

The tenant for my upper unit, [REDACTED], left the house permanently because the crowds were coming into contact with his children, even though he repeatedly asked the Busby for months to get people off the property. My upper unit was vacant for three months, and I just found new tenants, which took significant time and loss of rental income.

For the lower unit, which was completely renovated, I found a long term tenant, Bill Anderson. Bill moved into the apartment in April 2023, and called the police, fought with the Busby management and people at the crowd on a daily basis, yet nothing changed. One evening in May of this year, while at home with his children, a person from the Busby came down the walkway with a needle in his hand, and tried to inject his daughter. Bill had to call the police on many occasions that evening. This same person came back down the walkway, needle in hand, and tried again to inject his daughter. Bill called me that night quite upset and decided to leave the apartment immediately. I could not force him to stay and understood his anger.

The apartment has been empty for 4 months. During these 4 months, each time I find a good prospect, they have no desire to live in a place where there are people who are addicts surrounding the area and coming onto the property.

On September 12, 2023, I had a couple that were quite interested and who I had been communicating with for some time in the hopes of having them rent out the lower apartment. As they finished their viewing, a male from the Busby refused to leave, and was about to overdose. This was witnessed by the contractor, who tried to help him and get him to leave, but he refused. I have video footage as proof. One of the employees at the Busby had to come over and take his hand and walked him over across the street. Unfortunately, the prospect couple witnessed this and didn't even return my messages. This has been a repeated pattern over the past few months. No family wants to live in the area, and I am at a huge financial loss.

No matter how much I do to the units and the property to make it a more livable environment, it's useless. The crowd and bad management, and negligence of the Busby is destroying my chances of having a self sufficient property. This property has only caused me stress, loss of rental income, and significant time in finding new tenants. It has taken time away from me being able to earn a living to support my own kids. I also had no place to live and wanted to move to avoid buying another property, but after all the drama, unsafe conditions, and drugs that I witnessed, I had to keep my children away from that property and area. Again, my loss.

I am currently exploring options to regain what I have lost. This letter is to finally express to the Busby that their mismanagement is causing significant damages and stress to other members of the community. There needs to be some accountability into what your program is doing to the overall neighbourhood, the families living there, the safety, and the overall social impact of what we witness on a daily basis. I am saddened that even though I own a property, that I am not able to live in it, or have anyone else as renters, as the Busby is too selfish in running a program that doesn't do anything to actually help the disadvantaged people it takes in. It seems that the Busby is so focused on giving drugs to these addicts, which only worsen the problem, yet do nothing to actually help these addicts. I could be wrong, but isn't the solution to try and find a way for these addicts to stop the use of drugs? It saddens me to see that handing out drugs openly, and waiting for some of them to die, has been a norm that everyone is now accustomed to. This is wrong on many levels, and it's even more sad to see the Busby profiting off this terrible system, which doesn't take these addicted people's lives into consideration.

**Roya Dostzadah**



Tuesday Sept 19 2023

Attention: Mayor Nuttall, City Council and City of Barrie Safety Committee

Re: Downtown Safety and Wellbeing

It is getting harder and harder to 'keep our heads up' as we make our way through Downtown. However, we are staying positive and will continue to make the investments into our public realm in the hopes that our community, city, county, province and country come together to get control of this current 'pandemic' - because it has deep affects to our local main street business.

The BIA, as an event facilitator, has now experienced it first hand with over 6 overdoses and counting during BIA family events in Meridian Place over the last few weeks. Even more overdoses and deaths in downtown alleyways. We have even gotten to the point of contemplating canceling the events for the safety and wellbeing of our staff and attendees. This scenario can be similarity recited by many Downtown businesses.

It's not a matter of making people aware of the situation, it's about coming together to find solutions. There have been many new initiatives that have been implemented but we are still behind and still need to 'catch up'...so more has to be done; we know there are programs being worked on that will be implemented within the next 4-6 months that will help.

In the interim however, we do need to find solutions & programs to manage, here is a list of programs that are currently active and include the downtown as a focus area, and need to be continued beyond pilot programs.

- Barrie Police - 2 dedicated officers (Mike & Colin) 7am - 5pm, Monday to Friday (pilot program)
- County of Simcoe - One Community Solutions - 2 teams of 2 support workers majority of time focused in the Downtown. Narcon trained, picking sharps, establishing a connection with the challenged, connecting with businesses, communication point to first responders. 7 days a week, 6am - midnight (pilot program)
- City of Barrie - 2 to 3 Operations Staff - picking garbage within Downtown area (pilot program)
- MCERT program - a uniformed Barrie Police officer paired with a RVH Nurse - downtown focused but not dedicated
- COAST program - a non-uniformed Barrie Police officer paired with a CMHA Mental Health Professional - downtown focused but not dedicated
- Barrie Police - communicated instruction to monitor and route through the Downtown area when on shift





- Prisoner release drop off halted for those not living in the area at Downtown Barrie bus terminal.

The BIA has implemented the following additional event safety and security measures as a result of now over 6 overdoses in or within Meridian Place during BIA public events

- Additional security personnel dedicated to Meridian Place and alleyways during public events (as additional 'eyes' to connect with first responders)
- Public event email - to all first responders when an event is happening with a request to inform staff on shift to be 'on alert'

The Downtown Barrie BIA is positioned as a contributing partner to this community-wide challenge within the scope of the organization's mandate and is focused on achieving collaborative solutions.

Regards,

Downtown Barrie BIA Board