



**Regular Council meeting for Public Hearings
Monday, January 22, 2024**

Place: Council Chambers
Richmond City Hall

Present: Mayor Malcolm D. Brodie, Chair
Councillor Chak Au
Councillor Carol Day
Councillor Laura Gillanders
Councillor Kash Heed
Councillor Andy Hobbs
Councillor Alexa Loo
Councillor Bill McNulty
Councillor Michael Wolfe

Evangel Biason, Acting Corporate Officer

Call to Order: Mayor Brodie opened the proceedings at 7:00 p.m.

1. **TEMPORARY USE PERMIT (TU 23-032827)**

(Location: 2520, 2540, 2560, 2580, 2600, 2640 Smith Street and 9031 Bridgeport Rd.;
Applicant: BC Housing)

Applicant's Comments:

The applicant was available to respond to queries.



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In response to queries from Council, Julie Roberts, Executive Director, Community Builders noted that (i) currently a caterer and a number of staff are supporting the meal program at the housing facility and in addition, Aster Place partners with the meal program A Loving Spoonful, should there be a disruption in food services, (ii) there are mental health staff on-site specifically trained to work with the residents, (iii) a number of residents have secured permanent housing, (iv) Community Builders can provide Council with a bi-annual report on Aster Place operations and other matters that may be of interest to Council, (v) in most cases mental health concerns are not reasons for eviction, and the operator works with the resident to provide support, (vi) evictions occur when there is a safety concern, and in these cases staff work with the resident to find new accommodation, (vii) there is a consumption site in the building monitored by staff where residents can use substances in a safe way, and (viii) the neighborhood has been provided a 24-hour contact to address any complaints regarding the housing facility.

Written Submissions:

Dr. Meena Dawar (Schedule 1)

Chris Chung (Schedule 2)

Submissions from the floor:

Tracey Hanford, Aster Place tenant, expressed her concerns with respect to the operations, management and food quality of the Aster Place facility.

In response to queries from Council regarding Aster Place operations, Ms. Hanford spoke about (i) the low quality food served to residents, (ii) the lack of qualified mental health workers at the facility, and (iii) the eviction process of tenants.

Rob, Aster Place tenant, expressed his concerns with regard to Aster Place operations, including concerns related to a lack of communication between tenants and management. He spoke in support of renewal of the temporary use permit, adding that the housing has been helpful for many people.

David Garnett, resident, spoke about the operational issues at the facility and shared his personal negative experiences with Aster Place operations.



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PH24/1-1

It was moved and seconded

To renew the existing Temporary Use Permit for the three-storey temporary modular housing development with 40 residential units and vehicle access from Smith Street at 2520, 2540, 2560, 2580, 2600, 2640 Smith Street and 9031 Bridgeport Road.

CARRIED

As a result of the discussion the following **motion** was introduced:

PH24/1-2

It was moved and seconded

That the performance of Aster Place be evaluated and that staff prepare a report on the effectiveness of the operations of Aster Place Supportive Housing and report back as soon as possible, then review every six months.

The question on the motion was not called as discussion ensued with respect to (i) the number of evictions and the number of people transitioning through Aster Place into new forms of housing, (ii) the terms of the memorandum of understanding signed by BC Housing, City of Richmond and Community Builders, (iii) the need for a full investigation into the operations of the facility, (iv) the qualifications of the staff working at Aster Place, and (v) making the necessary changes to improve facility operations.

The question on the motion was then called and **CARRIED**.

ADJOURNMENT

PH24/1-3

It was moved and seconded

That the meeting adjourn (7:54 p.m.).

CARRIED



City of Richmond

Minutes

Regular Council meeting for Public Hearings Monday, January 22, 2024

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Regular meeting for Public Hearings of the City of Richmond held on Monday, January 22, 2024.

Mayor (Malcolm D. Brodie)

Acting Corporate Officer (Evangel Biason)

Schedule 1 to the Minutes of the Public Hearing meeting of Richmond City Council held on January 22, 2024.

Biason, Evangel

From: Dawar, Meena [VCH] <Meena.Dawar@vch.ca>
Sent: January 17, 2024 3:49 PM
To: MayorandCouncillors
Cc: Lusk,Serena
Subject: Letter in support of a temporary use permit for Aster Place Modular Supportive Housing Building
Attachments: 2024 Dawar Letter to Mayor and Council re Aster Place Permit Renewal.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: - TO: MAYOR & EACH COUNCILLOR / FROM: CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

City of Richmond Security Warning: This email was sent from an external source outside the City. Please do not click or open attachments unless you recognize the source of this email and the content is safe.

Dear Mayor and Council,
Please find attached my letter in support of the permit renewal or extension for this facility. Thank you for the care you provide to the most vulnerable Richmond residents.

Sincerely,
Meena Dawar

Dr. Meena Dawar
Medical Health Officer, Richmond
Vancouver Coastal Health

office 604-233-3170
e-mail Meena.Dawar@vch.ca

I acknowledge that my place of work lies on the unceded traditional homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. The content of this e-mail is confidential and may be privileged. If you receive this e-mail in error, please contact the sender and delete it immediately.

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9th floor, 8100 Granville Ave
Richmond, BC V6Y 3T6
Tel: 604-233-3150

18 January 2024

Mayor and Council

City of Richmond

By email: MayorandCouncillors@Richmond.ca

Dear Mayor and Council:

Re: Temporary Use Permit (TU 23-032827) – Aster Place Modular Supportive Housing Building

I am writing in my role as Medical Health Officer for the City of Richmond regarding the three-year permit extension of the Aster Place Supportive Housing facility. In November, I communicated support for the extension of the Alderbridge Supportive Housing lease, and I was pleased to see Council's continued support for the services provided there. For the same reasons, **I write to emphasize the importance of maintaining 40 units of supportive housing at Aster Place to address the needs of some of Richmond's most vulnerable residents, many of whom may otherwise face homelessness and other hardships.** Consistent with the City of Richmond's Homelessness Strategy and Affordable Housing Strategy, this facility and its associated services have been an invaluable source of stability and support for people who live there.

As you know, the most recent homelessness count shows an increasing number of people are experiencing homelessness in Richmond. According to the [2023 Homeless Count in Greater Vancouver](#), 162 people in Richmond experienced homelessness last year – a 91% increase since the last count. The homelessness count represents a point-in-time calculation on March 7-8, 2023, and is understood to be an undercount of the true number of people actually experiencing homelessness in Richmond. In particular, since 2020 Richmond has experienced a significant change in number of *unsheltered* people experiencing homeless (+55), an absolute change that is higher than most other municipalities in the region (only lower than Surrey, Vancouver, and Burnaby).

Facilities such as Aster Place Supportive Housing are critical to meet the needs of Richmond's residents experiencing homelessness, as well as people who have previously been unsheltered. **Housing and health are closely interlinked.** People who are experiencing homelessness generally have higher rates of illness, injury and death.ⁱ Poor health can be a determinant of homelessness as individuals with chronic health issues or injuries may experience problems with employment.ⁱⁱ Loss of employment in the absence of a safety net can quickly become a housing problem. Homelessness itself can lead to or exacerbate health problems. Individuals are at higher risk of communicable diseases, and can experience higher rates of mental anxiety, stress and depression, intentional or unintentional injury, and violence.ⁱⁱ Exposure to extreme of weather conditions is a danger. Chronic health conditions that require a controlled diet and regular medications are impossible to manage when living in precarious conditions.

Safe and secure housing is a necessary prerequisite to ensuring health and wellness. Having a home improves not only mental and physical health, but also intersects with other elements that affect our health, including income, social cohesion, equity and environmental exposures.ⁱⁱⁱ A stable place to call home provides each of us with a more secure foundation to meet the challenges we all face at some point.


9th floor, 8100 Granville Ave
Richmond, BC V6Y 3T6
Tel: 604-233-3150

Supportive housing also helps connect people to health care. For people who use substances, housing can be the first step on their healing journey. Because residents of facilities like Aster Place have a stable home, Vancouver Coastal Health is able to provide more flexible supports that are better tailored to their needs. This includes connecting people with withdrawal management services (mobile “detox”), which is available at VCH’s Community Health Access Centre (CHAC).

I strongly encourage Richmond City Council to support the staff recommendation to renew the existing Temporary Use Permit for the Aster Place Supportive Housing facility for an additional three years. Additionally, I advise the City to expand its commitment to and investment in supportive housing as well as shelter beds in City Centre, where a majority of people experiencing homelessness are located.

As I have previously emphasized, the City of Richmond’s leadership in supporting some of the municipality’s most vulnerable residents through sites like Alderbridge and Aster Place is commendable. I look forward to continued collaboration between the City, the housing operator, and VCH to ensure that the necessary services and supports remain in place.

Sincerely,



Dr. Meena Dawar, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer, Richmond

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- ⁱ Stephen Hwang (2021), “[Homelessness and Health](#),” *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 164(2): 229-233.
ⁱⁱ National Health Care for the Homeless Council (2019), “[Homelessness and Health: What’s the Connection?](#)” Fact Sheet.
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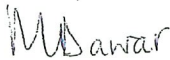
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Dr. Meena Dawar, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer, Richmond

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From: Chris Chung <chris@curion.ca>
Sent: January 19, 2024 10:40 AM
To: CityClerk
Subject: Temporary Use Permit TU 23-032827 ("Aster Place")

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed



City of Richmond Security Warning: This email was sent from an external source outside the City. Please do not click or open attachments unless you recognize the source of this email and the content is safe.

To whom it may concern at the City of Richmond:

We request the City of Richmond to cancel the renewal of Temporary Use Permit TU 23-032827.

I am an owner and the CEO of Curion Dental Products located across the street from Aster Place at 2571 Smith Street, V6X 2J1. On any given weekday, 8-10 staff work in our office (mostly women). We have been at this location since 1996.

In the planning phase for Aster Place, the city of Richmond failed to mention to residents and businesses in the area that this facility would transform into a place for those in need of far more than just basic housing support. It is crystal clear that many residents of Aster Place are substance abusers, petty criminals, and individuals grappling with severe mental issues. It is indeed ironic that a facility supposedly designed to nurture the vulnerable, inspired by the aster flower's virtues of love, hope, and loyalty, has instead negatively impacted the community in the opposite manner. Our community, deserving of a safe and healthy neighborhood, has been naively betrayed by the very institution that pledges to protect and uplift all members of its community.

Below is a **partial** list of negative experiences we have had with Aster Place. I am certain that other residents have a list of negative experiences if they were asked.

1. Regular suspicious or inappropriate activity/ behaviour by residents of Aster Place

- Public cannabis smoking is regular just across the street – on the sidewalk directly in front of Aster (as residents are not allowed to use drugs in the Aster facility or on Aster property)
- It is not unusual to see Aster residents using drugs (cannabis, and syringe-related) directly on our property and throughout the neighbourhood – including surrounding back-alleys and nooks (not well seen areas) around homes and on building properties in the area
- Note: we have had meetings with Aster management to make it clear to their residents that they are not to be on our property (private property, no trespassers). Nonetheless, Aster residents still come onto our property.

2. Regular loitering on our property – and, leaving litter and a mess on our property. This has increased significantly since the opening of Aster.

- This is a frustrating cost to Curion – time and effort for Curion staff to deal with the mess created by Aster residents

3. Incident A – 2023 January 3rd (TUE)

- Captured on CCTV – and reported to RCMP and Aster Place management.
- RCMP Case Number: RI23-2502
- Aster Place male resident (confirmed to be from Aster) came onto Curion property, loitered just in front of our front door and smoked cannabis. A Curion staff asked him to leave the property. Included in this incident was a death threat by the trespasser to the Curion staff who initially confronted him.
- This incident was incredibly unsettling not only to the target person of the threat, but also to all Curion staff

4. Incident B – 2023 March 3rd (FRI)

- Captured on CCTV – and reported to RCMP and Aster Place management.
- RCMP Case Number: RI-23-6744
- Late at night, car entered Curion parking lot and parked. Driver (sole person) walked to and back from Aster Place. Came back to car, re-parked car under Curion building's front lights, then ransacked said car, left a massive mess on our property, drove off "through" our landscape hedges, and hit one of parking lot lamp-posts (which remains damaged)

5. Incident C – 2023 March 6th (MON)

- Captured on CCTV – and reported to RCMP and Aster Place management.
- RCMP Case Number: RI-23-7117
- Aster Place residents (2 females – confirmed to be from Aster) at the back of our property (back parking lot). Looked into cars, and eventually rang our back doorbell. Curion staff answered, and a female made efforts to look "into" the back warehouse. The female seemed to be curious about the contents within – assumed to be "staking" the premises with ill-intent.

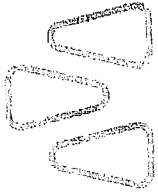
6. Incident(s) D – 2023 July/August

- Captured on CCTV – and reported to Aster Place management.
- Unwelcome use of the water faucet on the front of our building (trespassing). Note: one needs to squeeze by landscape hedging to access this faucet). We ended-up installing a special faucet case/housing and a lock to deter such use.
- A cost to Curion (financially, and staff time)

If the city of Richmond is going to proceed with renewing the temporary use permit for Aster Place, we demand that a full-time security detail be implemented to protect the neighbourhood from many of the residents at Aster Place.

Sincerely,

Chris Chung



Chris Chung
CEO

T: 800.667.8811 ext. 114
2571 Smith St., Richmond, BC, V6X 2J1
curion.ca

