

To the members of the Police Services Board of Hamilton, Ontario:

Hope this finds you well. I write as a life-long resident here in Hamilton on Treaty lands, as a home-owner and tax-payer.

On the agenda of the 25th of May's meeting, 2023, items 6.14, 6.15, and 6.16 were listed as correspondence from 3 local hotels (Sheraton Hamilton Hotel, Homewood Suites by Hilton, and Staybridge Suites). All 3 hotels' representatives requested more policing downtown, after Denningers and G. W. Thompson Pawnbrokers requested the same (Cara Nickerson, 'Bosses at 2 downtown Hamilton businesses say workers don't feel safe, call for dedicated officer', C.B.C Hamilton, 2 May 2023). In the light of these requests by hotels and businesses for dedicated beat officers, I would ask that the Board heed the words of one of its members, Councillor Kroetsch, regarding the risk to vulnerable people downtown by the presence of police. When weighing the risks to vulnerable and, comparatively, invulnerable people, perhaps often perceived as 'a philosophical approach to perception of safety', the risk must fall most heavily on those who have much more risk in the situation and the inability to extricate themselves from their situation; they cannot walk away from their situation, currently. Moreover, criminalizing homelessness and mental-health struggles will be the result of more policing downtown, despite the best intentions of Denningers' CEO, Mary Aduckiewicz, and the hotels' managers, despite the presence of duty cops sitting in Denningers and having lunch there, and is the fruit of the out-of-sight, out-of-mind mentality prevalent in many businesses. The price paid by the rich to keep the economy humming along is often the very lives of the poor, and it is worth asking, How much is that Lyoner-style bologna worth *now*? Putting unhoused people in jail, telling them to move along, or, as has happened in many past interactions between people with mental-health struggles and the police in this city, the killing by police of people in a mental-health crisis are not at all humane or considerate responses; only the abolition of policing services can be an adequate response.

Until that day, perhaps more lighting could be erected atop the businesses' parking lots. Perhaps, too, the hotels that are most affected could give hotel rooms to the unhoused people in their lobbies and those hotels could be expropriated by the city as emergency public housing. Certainly, there is precedent in Toronto and here in Hamilton for the use of hotels as over-flow spaces after shelters are full. Being part of the solution requires community care, not carceral feminism. I continue to hope that this city can be a place where all can flourish and not just some who happen to have money. I look forward to this Board's actions in these regards.

Respectfully,

Joshua Weresch, OCT, M.Div.