
From: Steacy Easton [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 6, 2024 12:52 PM
To: Stevenson, Kirsten <Kirsten.Stevenson@hamilton.ca>
Subject: Concerning the Police Service Board

Kirsten Stevenson:

My name is Steacy Easton, I am a writer and artist, who has lived in Hamilton for almost nine years. I am deeply committed to making Hamilton my home, and profoundly connected to the people and the landscape of this city. Living here has made my work richer, my life more generative, and I feel safe with the networks of fellow creators, and neighbors. In the last two years, this has become less and less the case.

I have seen more of my neighbours sleeping rough, some small examples of people in what appears to be mental health crises, and more importantly some other neighbours, who own homes, are convinced they can gate keep who has property and who does not. I am more scared about people who own homes than people who are sleeping rough. We also have solutions, with strong, evidence based histories, of what can help people with substance use issues, or without homes, or mental health crises—namely paying for safe use sites (There has been some discussion about the use sites in the Downtown East Side in Vancouver, but the rebuttals have been done with limited sample sizes for audiences with profound conflict of interests), for bathrooms and showers, for meals, and for apartments; even a robust street nurse program, like what Cathy Crowe has done in Toronto for decades.

What we have instead is police officers—police officers tearing down encampment sites, chasing down drug users, guarding public bathrooms, and insisting on escorting social workers to crisis care centers. They ask for more money to do jobs that do not help those who need it, but to protect the lives of property owners. This is what the police have been designed since the 19th century, and in Hamilton they do it well—regardless of how well a job they have done (and because

they are funded carte blanche, without proper oversight), they receive substantial pay raises.

On a personal note, I talk to my friends who are racialized, and my friends who are disabled, as someone who is disabled themselves, the conversation continually loops around—why are we paying taxes for a group of people who is more likely to harm us, or even kill us, than to make us safe? I have pointed this out to my counselor, the mayor, spoke about it as a delegate last year, and it only gets worse. In fact I was so tempted to just cut and paste last year's delegation speech, considering it hits the same points.

Mostly I am writing this to make sure that people are actively opposed to these funding increases, and also to ask why the cops think they need the money they do.

Thanks
Se

