



April 14, 2014

Letter of Support: Cool Aid Housing Initiatives

To Whom It May Concern:

Downtown Residents Association (DRA) members are much more familiar with and impacted by people who are homeless and living in the downtown core than those who live in other neighbourhoods. We have a special interest in ending homelessness because the concentration of people without homes is greatest downtown.

The DRA welcomes the Coalition to End Homelessness' action plan and endorses Victoria Cool Aid Society's complementary building plan to open 360 new supportive housing apartments over the next five years. We are also pleased that Cool Aid will open some of these new apartments outside the downtown area.

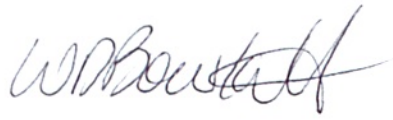
Specifically, the DRA endorses the three projects that Cool Aid has currently identified (all of which have been endorsed as community priorities by the Coalition):

1. Cottage Grove, in Saanich, will provide homes for 45 seniors who have been homeless.
2. Central Gardens, on Johnson Street downtown, has the most potential to dramatically improve the street situation – with 140 housed within six months of acquisition and repurposing of an existing downtown building, including both low-income and supportive housing units. While this is a dense development there can be no doubt that housing 140 people will make a dramatic and positive impact on the downtown core; even more so than other identified projects.
3. Cedar Grove is a converted motel property on Gorge Road currently operated as supportive housing by Cool Aid. Their plan will improve living quarters and allow for an additional 39 individuals to have an apartment.

Many of Cool Aid's programs and apartment buildings are located downtown – we are neighbours. These programs include the Downtown Community Centre, REES employment and mental health supports, the Access Health Centre, Thrift Shop and several apartment buildings in and around the core. The Downtown Residents Association admires the calm way that Cool Aid front-line staff manages these many properties. Not only has Cool Aid proven to be good neighbours but also there is no doubt that their presence and services improve the quality of life downtown for all residents, workers and visitors.

Please feel free to contact myself should you have any questions or wish further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W Bowkett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Wendy Bowkett

Chair
Downtown Residents Association
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