



July 25, 2014

DVBA Board

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(Ex-officio)*

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General Manager

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To Whom It May Concern

DVBA Support for Cool Aid's Housing Plan

The Downtown Victoria Business Association (DVBA) believes that Cool Aid's goal of building more apartments to end homelessness is necessary as well as achievable and we enthusiastically add our support to them achieving its targets. Cool Aid's Plan provides a concrete strategy towards significantly reducing the number of homeless and, in so doing, addressing some of the challenges downtown businesses face associated with homelessness.

Specifically, the Cottage Grove project on Quadra near Tolmie – which will provide supportive housing for 45 seniors who are currently homeless – is an excellent project. The adjacent Cedar Grove facility is already owned and operated by Cool Aid, so the plan to add a new building makes good economic sense. We understand that the project is shovel-ready, save for a contribution from BC Housing and operating dollars. We support provincial funding going toward this project and encourage contributions from businesses and residents of the capital region.

Most downtown business owners understand that allowing the current situation to continue, with many people living without homes, is both costly and ineffective. Leaving people homeless costs government more than providing them with modest apartments and support. In turn, we also believe that providing housing will contribute to reducing the demand on policing and healthcare services.

Over the past ten years, the DVBA has employed over sixty people on our downtown Clean Team who have experienced barriers to jobs because of past challenges and their living situations. Through this experience, we know first-hand how critical it is to provide safe and secure housing to help stabilize people's lives and help them become better integrated and more able to positively contribute to the community through employment and volunteering.

We support Cool Aid's work with the marginalized and its efforts to add to our community's housing stock.

Sincerely,


Kenneth Kelly
General Manager