

Dear Rockland Residents,

**RE: Supportive Housing Initiative for 1322 Rockland Avenue**

My thanks to the many of you who were able to attend the information session the Mayor, Planning, and VIHA presented on May 13<sup>th</sup> concerning the above initiative for Supporting Housing for Mental Health and Substance Dependence. At that meeting, a spectrum of views was presented:

- Support for this proposal as consistent with the neighbourhood's tradition of sponsoring care facilities
- Concern regarding the lack of protective mechanisms for long-term stewardship: security, visitation, accommodation for smoking, maintenance of grounds, level of staffing
- Apprehension over future development of surrounding land
- Dismay at the lack of acknowledgement by the City that a change in use and density would occur
- Desire for a formal process, namely a rezoning application

We acknowledge that the proposal is a response to problems of pressing concern for all of Victoria, and we respect the diversity of opinion in Rockland. We also appreciate both the impact such a facility might have now, and perhaps more significantly, the long-term implications the current zoning interpretation may have for the neighbourhood in later years.

A rezoning is required when the use of the land is changed or the density is increased from what is prescribed in the Zoning Regulation Bylaw. There is no question that supportive housing for mental health departs dramatically from the recent single-family use of the property and also from the facility for Anglican women that was endowed by Kathleen Agnew. Furthermore, Planning has since indicated that they consider the present allowable density to be 70 people.

We wish to emphasize that the purpose of the attached legal opinion by Mr. David Mulroney is not to stop the proposal. The objective of the letter is to focus Council on the fact that, contrary to the Planning Department's position, the RNA views the proposed use for mental health, drug and alcohol rehabilitative housing as NOT supported by the current zoning and therefore an illegal use which would require a full -on public rezoning process. This was a necessary stance for us to take to prevent a precedent being set that saw Council and VIHA make a use of a property that was not allowed by its legal status. This letter was sent out by Mr. Mulroney on the 14th day of July, and we are yet to have any response from the City, though we expect one in due course and will report further in the future.

Sincerely,  
Janet Simpson  
RNA President

