

DALHOUSIE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

755 Somerset Street West, Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 6R1

February 8, 2022

Mayor Jim Watson,
City of Ottawa.

Chief Peter Sloy,
Ottawa Police Services.

Dear Mayor Watson and Chief Sloy,

Yesterday, our city declared a State of Emergency, eleven days after the truck blockade started invading our neighbourhoods.

When will our city be returned to us? And when that happens, we expect a fullsome report on how this came to be. We also deserve an apology for having to live under siege for so long.

Residents of the Dalhousie community, just west of the downtown core, are living through the occupation. Our neighbours in Centretown and the Byward market are bearing the brunt of this and we stand with them. The Centretown Community Association sent a letter to your offices two days ago and we agree with their assessment and support all their demands.

At the northern end of our community lies Uppertown and Le Breton Flats. Residents there have had their sleep interrupted by incessant air horns and nightly fireworks. Idling diesel trucks are spewing toxic gases, adding to the health concerns of many.

Businesses in the Chinatown area are feeling targeted by occupiers spouting anti-Asian lies about COVID. LGBTQ++ and racialized neighbours are rightly fearful of the racist and homophobic slurs, the waving of hateful messages and flags.

Residents relying on homecare supports are having difficulty with the most basic daily tasks as their PSWs are fearful of coming to work or unable to navigate around the convoy or use transit.

Many of our neighbours were already struggling with homelessness, addiction and poverty. And the majority of shelters are in areas most affected by this occupation.

There is no bus service to the downtown core. Grocery stores are not making deliveries.

The list is much longer, but the main concern of Dalhousie residents is how long it will take to reclaim our streets.

Of course, we are finding ways to help each other, using social media or knocking on doors to help neighbours as best we can.

But when will our children feel safe taking the LRT to school? When will our seniors be assured that their daily supports will come on time? When will our many racialized residents and business owners be afforded the peace that every Ottawan deserves?

Community Associations are made up of volunteers who care about how their neighbourhoods grow and become healthy, diverse, vibrant places for people and businesses.

We did not expect to spend our last Board meeting talking about the Charter of Rights or the impact of an occupation by people who do not respect our streets and our homes.

We are shocked that the City was so vulnerable and that there seemed to be no plan to contain and diffuse this convoy. This was not a tornado or flood. It was a planned event.

There will need to be a thorough review of the lack of foresight once this is over. And we will expect an apology for what has been a gross mishandling of this occupation.

Sincerely,
Catherine Boucher
President, Dalhousie Community Association.
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