

Attachment 3

Case Study: City Assistance in Retaining Child Care Spaces and Facilities

City Assistance in Retaining Child Care Spaces

Summary

In the past year, the Social Planning team has played a direct role in retaining over 100 child care spaces in the community. More specifically, these spaces were subject to building deficiencies, including deferred maintenance; higher and uncertain lease arrangements; and inconsistent external funding.

The Social Planning team, either through Council direction or its own initiative, has secured or stabilized the majority of these spaces, or negotiated additional time to address outstanding issues. This work, which is of an emergent nature, cannot be captured in the work program but is essential to addressing the needs of families, many of whom rely on these child care arrangements to maintain employment and afford housing and other essentials.

The following summaries speak to the assistance provided and the positive outcomes achieved. It should be noted that in addition to acting as a resource to child care operators, the Social Planning team also acts as a resource to parents by providing information and making referrals.

Little Lambs Child Care Centre at 317 Carnarvon Street – Downtown Neighbourhood

In September 2023, the Social Planning team became aware that Emmanuel Pentecostal Church would be concluding its lease with Little Lambs Childcare Centre effective the end of December 2023. This timeline provided limited opportunity for the operator to find a new location for its 45 school age care spaces and for families to secure alternative arrangements. The Social Planning team met with church officials and negotiated a lease extension until the end of June 2024 and then worked with the operator to secure a new location at Olivet Baptist Church, including working inter-departmentally to expedite the City's licensing process. This direct involvement resulted in the retention of 40 of the 45 school age care spaces.

Merseyside Montessori Child Care at 401 Ewen Avenue – Queensborough Neighbourhood

In March 2023, the Social Planning team became aware of the possible closure of Merseyside Montessori at the end of September 2024. The child care operator was retiring and it was uncertain if the property owner would offer a lease to another operator, which placed 25 pre-school age care spaces in jeopardy. The Social Planning team held multiple meetings with the property owner and parents; addressed questions related to zoning; and liaised with the City's Building Division. It also worked interdepartmentally to expedite the City's licensing process. This direct involvement resulted in the property owner agreeing to an up to five year lease extension for a new operator and the retention of all 25 pre-school age care spaces.

A&N Academic Montessori at 403 East Columbia Street – Sapperton Neighbourhood

In July 2024, the Social Planning team became aware that Coastal Church would be concluding its lease with A&N Montessori at the end of August 2024 in order to facilitate a campus development. Although the church had provided time to assist with relocation, the operator had not secured another location, which placed 28 school age care spaces in jeopardy. Social Planning met with church officials and explored incorporating the child care as part of the campus development. When this was not successful, it negotiated a lease extension, and

worked with the operator on another location. Further, it is working interdepartmentally to expedite Building Division review and licensing, and will continue to work with the operator on a permanent location. This direct involvement could result in the retention of a number of school-age care spaces.

St. Barnabas Daycare Society at 1010 Fifth Avenue – Brow of the Hill Neighbourhood

In March 2024, the Social Planning team became aware that St. Barnabas Daycare Society was experiencing significant financial hardship and possible closure. This was due to issues related to a Community Gaming Grant and an increase in their lease amount. Of note, this is the city's longest-serving, non-profit child care and offers 55 pre-school age care spaces at affordable rates. The Social Planning team forwarded a letter to address the issue related to the grant and met with church officials to explore a more manageable lease increase. Social Planning has recently received an update from the operator that the situation has stabilized.