

Methadone clinic irritates businesses

Kitchener council calls for restrictions on number of clinics allowed in one area

Terry Pender, Record staff

KITCHENER — As a third methadone clinic prepares to open on King Street East, city councillors made a symbolic show of support Monday night for a couple of business owners who are upset about it.

“I don’t think this resolution is going to do anything,” Coun. Zyg Jannecki said of the motion that was tabled by Coun. Daniel Glenn-

Graham.

Glenn-Graham’s motion calls on the operators of methadone clinics to voluntarily keep their operations at least three kilometres from each other in the future.

Glenn-Graham and Coun. Frank Etherington tabled the motion yesterday after learning last week that a third methadone clinic is about to open on King Street East.

There is a clinic operating now in the strip mall at King Street East and Sydney Street. The new clinic will open one block from that location. There is a pharmacy at King and Cedar streets that dispenses methadone.

“We need to show the people in the area we support them,” Coun. John Gazzola said before voting in favour of the move.

“I think two in one block is beyond the pale, it is just too much,” Etherington said.

Heather Anderson, who owns the Fred Astaire Dance Studio at 1211 King St. E., told councillors she is very concerned.

“I don’t understand why we need three methadone clinics within a couple of minutes of each other,” Anderson said.

Mary Tutuianu, who owns Simply Elegant Flowers at 1167 King St. E., said neighbours should have a say in whether a methadone clinic sets up in an area.

As long as the area is zoned for medical clinics, a methadone clinic can locate there. And that zoning is in place for much of the city, Alain Pinnard, the head of planning, told city councillors.

If the area is properly zoned, the city cannot deny the operator

of a methadone clinic the permits needed to open up, Pinnard said.

“I think it’s ridiculous we have no ability to set limits,” Coun. Scott Davey said.

At the request of Coun. Berry Urbanovic, city staff will look at creating two definitions for medical clinics — one that dispenses methadone and one that does not.

Methadone clinics are popping up in neighbourhoods around the province. Widespread addiction to opioids has driven demand for methadone, which reduces cravings for the narcotic painkillers.

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MARTA IWANEK, RECORD STAFF

Rena Schmidt is pictured with daughter Alex Thornhill, 8, in their home in Ayr. Schmidt will be one of five Canadian moms going to San Antonio, Texas, to shave her head as part of 46 Mommas Shave for the Brave, a fundraising event for child cancer research.

‘She missed a year of being a kid’

Inspired by daughter, Ayr mother raising money for childhood cancer research

Johanna Weidner, Record staff

AYR — When Rena Schmidt was told her five-year-old daughter had cancer, the reality didn’t hit her for a day.

“And then I had a total breakdown,” Schmidt said.

The Ayr woman doesn’t want any other parent to have to face such terrible news, which is why she’s raising money for childhood cancer research.

This weekend, Schmidt will have her hair shaved off in the fourth annual 46 Mommas Shave for the Brave.

The fundraising event’s name comes from a grim statistic: Each weekday, on average, 46 families in the United States are told their child has cancer.

“I know too many families who have lost their children,” Schmidt said. “We need the research. We need to put a stop to it.”

Schmidt is among five Canadian mothers of children with cancer who are travelling to San Antonio, Texas, for the weekend event. All money the women raise will go to Childhood Cancer Canada, with each having a goal of \$10,000. Canadian mothers participating over the years have raised more than \$100,000.

“The money is staying here to do research here,” Schmidt said.

She recently dyed her hair vibrant yellow, green and blue as a conversation starter to talk about the event and raise awareness of childhood cancer. Losing all her hair will be tough for Schmidt, who usually keeps it quite long.

But then she thinks about her daughter, Alex Thornhill, who lost her hair after starting chemotherapy.

“If she could do it for a year, why can’t I do it? It’s just hair,” Schmidt said.

Alex was diagnosed with Ewing’s sarcoma, a rare bone cancer that primarily affects children and adolescents, after a limp in dance class didn’t go away. A bone scan found a tumour about the size of an apple on the right side of her pelvis.

Chemotherapy started soon after — 14 treatments every two weeks that required her to stay in the Hamilton hospital for three to five days.

“She spent a lot of special days in the hospital,” Schmidt said.

New Year’s Eve and Day, Easter, Valentine’s Day, a few birthdays and more special occasions were celebrated away from home, with Alex’s parents and younger sister Rebecca joining her in hospital.

“We just became adapted to having parties at the hospital,” Schmidt said.

Surgery partway through

chemotherapy cut out a large portion of Alex’s pelvic bone. All the cancer was successfully removed to avoid radiation, but reconstructing her pelvis made that leg substantially shorter.

“It took her seven months to learn to walk again,” Schmidt said. “It was a long journey.”

Alex now has a limp and needs specially modified shoes, but it’s not slowing the eight-year-old down. She’s back to dance and playing T-ball, with the only restriction high-contact sports.

Schmidt is thrilled to see her oldest daughter enjoying life again, playing with friends and being back in school.

“For her, essentially she missed an entire year of being a kid.”

Find out more and donate at www.46mommas.com.

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Dealer who ‘loves money’ gets five years

Brian Caldwell, Record staff

KITCHENER — A crystal meth dealer who candidly admitted he does it because he “loves money” was sentenced Monday to five years in prison.

Matthew Stahley, 26, pleaded guilty to a string of drug and firearms charges after police nabbed him and searched his townhouse on Courtland Avenue in Kitchener earlier this month.

Unlike many people who end up in trouble, Kitchener court was told he had a solid upbringing in a good family and doesn’t have a drug addiction himself.

Stahley immediately confessed to police after his arrest, bluntly telling them he is in the business because it pays so well.

At the time, he was still on probation from previous trafficking convictions in 2011 and 2012.

“There is no way to dress this up,” conceded defence lawyer Brennan Smart.

“That’s why we build prisons, and he’s earned his way there.”

Federal prosecutor Kathleen Nolan said police began investigating after getting several tips that Stahley and his roommate were dealing “large quantities” of drugs from their home.

Due to concerns he also had weapons, Stahley was arrested by tactical officers while he was in a pickup truck with two other people.

He had a starter’s pistol tucked in his pants and a realistic-looking pellet gun was found in the truck.

“Had he pulled that starter’s pistol out of his waistband, the police would have shot him,” Nolan said.

Also seized were crystal methamphetamine, smaller amounts of heroin and ecstasy, a digital scale and \$4,700 in cash.

A search of Stahley’s townhouse later turned up two shotguns, ammunition, debt lists and more drugs. The seized drugs were worth about \$7,000.

“Clearly, he had the firearms to protect himself from other criminals who might come to the house,” Smart said.

Nolan argued for a six-year prison term, stressing Stahley’s prior convictions, the mix of guns and drugs, and the devastating effects of crystal meth on users.

“I’ve seen before and after pictures, and they’re dramatic to say the least,” acknowledged Justice David Carr.

The judge agreed with Smart, however, that Stahley deserved some credit for confessing to police, pleading guilty just weeks after his arrest and taking full responsibility for his crimes.

Charges against Stahley’s girlfriend and his roommate were withdrawn, while a fourth suspect is still before the courts.

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Neighbours recognized for fire rescue

Linda Givetash, Record staff

KITCHENER — Two men who saved their neighbour from a devastating house fire were recognized for their bravery at city council on Monday.

Tom O’Neill and Andrew Rolf ran into the burning Maywood Road house just before 5 a.m. on June 8 to rescue homeowner Harold Dey, who was trapped.

“These two individuals risked their lives to save a neighbour,” said Kitchener Fire Chief Tim Beckett, who made a presentation to the two men Monday evening at council.

O’Neill discovered the fire thanks to his dog, Chester, a soft-coated wheaten terrier, that woke him and his wife Rhonda at about 4 a.m. Faintly smelling smoke from Dey’s house, O’Neill went outside looking for the source.

O’Neill then saw the flames and went running to the house.

Hearing Dey yelling for help, he tried to go in but the smoke was too thick.

O’Neill employed the help of



PHILIP WALKER, RECORD STAFF

Kitchener Fire Chief Tim Beckett awards Andrew Rolf (centre) and Tom O’Neill with citations Monday at Kitchener city council. Beckett and Rolf risked their lives to save a neighbour from a burning house.

Dey’s immediate neighbour, Rolf, who called the fire department.

Rolf then went running into the house and pulled Dey, a quadriplegic, out of his bed and onto the ground where there was still some air.

Rolf ran back out of the house to catch his breath and re-entered with O’Neill. The two men were able to pull Dey out of the house

uninjured.

“If it wasn’t for Andrew, I wouldn’t have been able to save him,” O’Neill said.

And they did so just in the nick of time, according to Beckett. “Time was on their side at that moment, but it was quickly diminishing.”

The fire grew so hot it pushed back crews that arrived only mo-

ments after the three men reached the front lawn. One firefighter sustained burns to his hand after the fire destroyed his protective gear.

“Everything that he was wearing has to be replaced, that’s how quickly the fire grew from the moment they got the occupant out to the time when our guys tried to go in — and that was only minutes,” Beckett said.

Weeks later, an odour of smoke remains outside the house, O’Neill said. “Every time that I pass it I say, ‘I can’t believe I went in there.’”

Having spoken to Dey just a week ago, O’Neill said he’s glad the man is in good health and settling into a new home.

While O’Neill and Rolf put their lives on the line, they would never second-guess saving a friend.

“I wouldn’t want to do that again, but I probably would,” O’Neill said. “If you’re in the right place at the right time, you’ve got to do what you’ve got to do.”

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