



February 27, 2019

Re: Letter of support for Tamitik Status of Women Housing Project - Public Record for 461 Quatsino

Dear Mayor Philip Germuth and Kitimat Council:

On behalf of the BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH), I write in full support of the Tamitik Status of Women Housing Project currently under consideration. The Tamitik Housing Project will fill a critical need for safe and affordable housing for women and children who have experienced, or are at risk of violence, in Kitimat while allowing Tamitik Status of Women, a well-respected community asset for over 40 years, to consolidate their supportive services in one location.

BCSTH is a member-based, provincial umbrella organization supporting Transition, Second and Third Stage Houses, Safe Homes and the PEACE and Violence is Preventable programs for women, children and youth experiencing violence. We support anti-violence member programs across the province through training, resources, advocacy and research. BCSTH and Kitimat Status of Women work together to ensure BC women, children and youth receive comprehensive services and support. From our provincial perspective, there is a critical need for women and children to access a continuum of safe and affordable housing options along with comprehensive wrap around support services. Operating in Kitimat since 1976, the Tamitik Status of Women is well versed in the needs of the Kitimat community and the prevalence of violence against women and families. Tamitik has a demonstrated history of providing necessary support services and working collaboratively with partners and have support for the project from the Haisla Nation council, the District of Kitimat and the Province of BC.

Tamitik Status of Women is one of the oldest women's organization in our province, with long-standing relationships, extensive experience, skilled program staff, and a visionary leadership team. They are one of BCSTH's longest serving member agencies and well positioned to develop and maintain this project. Tamitik Status of Women currently works out of six locations in Kitimat, causing an inefficient use of resources and requiring clients who access multiple programs to travel between locations in a region where weather conditions and access to transportation is often challenging for women, youth and children.

Tamitik Status of Women has worked on this proposed project since 2016 with the assistance of the District of Kitimat and a local developer. This thorough consultation considered six potential sites and determined that the 461 Quatsino Blvd. site was the ideal location based on cost of development, lot size, and proximity to services such as hospital, police and stores. BCSTH member programs report continual and growing demand for their shelter and support services and Tamitik Status of Women is similarly affected reporting that from January to September in 2018 the organization could not provide shelter to 71 individuals seeking safe shelter in the Kitimat community. These housing challenges potentially will be exacerbated in Kitimat in the near future by the local industry development that will result in housing and service demands and the often unintended consequences of an increase in sexual violence and physical violence during industry development. Tamitik reports that in the last Kitimat



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boom cycle their services were severely taxed and this project will allow them to address these anticipated consequences.

The Tamitik Housing Project will not only consolidate comprehensive services and resources but will also provide critically needed enhanced housing options – 14 transition house beds, 10 units of second stage housing and 20 units of affordable housing. This project will build a supportive hub for Kitimat women and their families so that they can survive and thrive with the support of the accomplished Tamitik Status of Women team. BCSTH wholeheartedly supports the Tamitik Status of Women Housing Project which will keep women and children safe in perpetuity in Kitimat. Please do not hesitate to contact me by email (amy@bcsth.ca) or phone (604-669-6943, ext. 233) if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy S. FitzGerald".

Amy S. FitzGerald

Interim Executive Director