



April 22, 2021

Mayor John Taylor and Town of Newmarket Council Members,

Mr. Mayor, Council Members, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

I take you back to an article in the Newmarket Era dated January 11-2021.

In it, Flynn Scott is quoted as saying: “The town is now updating its bylaw to properly capture the difference between spas and body rub parlours. The new bylaw would strengthen language indicating body rub parlours include services that are sexual in nature. And that’s the kind of clean-up we need to put in place to, really, catch up to the times and how business practices have evolved.”

Mr. Scott is right to want to catch up with the times. However, he is way off base in thinking that body rub parlours have a place in your municipality. In fact, the operations of body rub parlours were made illegal back in late December 2014. Made illegal by the Parliament of Canada when it passed Bill C-36 – also known as the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act.

The ongoing debate that is before Council and the citizens of Newmarket, muddies the water. On the table are 4 models to explore:

1. Repeal BRP classification and replace it with new classification: Personal Wellness Centres.
2. Adopt two classifications: BRP and Personal Wellness Centres with emphasis on training qualifications.
3. Adopt two classifications: BRP and Personal Centres, with emphasis on erotic vs non-erotic services.
4. Do not introduce a new classification and revamp existing BRP regulations.

At their core, all these options decriminalize the buying of sexual services through legislative process.

My questions to you are:

- One, why is so much time, energy and effort being spent to legitimize BRPs – those that appeal to the sexual appetites of entitled men -- when Bill C-36 made BRPs illegal 7 years ago. It’s definitely time to “catch up with the times” as Mr. Flynn has stated. It’s time to get out of the pimping, selling and exploitation of women business. It’s that clear and it’s that simple.
- And two, when did the City of Newmarket, its Mayor and Council become responsible for ensuring the sexual appetites of men are satisfied?

What about your responsibility for the young women – also your citizens – who are exploited and abused? What about your responsibility to uphold the law? And what about your responsibility to future generations – daughters, sons, grandchildren – to ensure Newmarket stands out as a place they can aspire to be their very best?

Ladies and gentlemen, based on the 4 models placed on the table today, you are misguided if you think any of them address the real issues at hand. BRPs are illegal. They exploit women, they traffic them, abuse them and scar them for life.

- If you think by-law inspections and police oversight makes a difference ... you are wrong.
- If you think BRPs qualify as legitimate businesses ... you are wrong.
- If you think that no illegal activities take place at BRPs ... wrong again.

Listen to what survivors of sexual exploitation in local BRPs have to say. I quote:

- I was hit, spit on, choked and beaten
- The owner called us his 'stable', after hours he'd send us out to parties, stags, to his own friends ... where ever he could make money
- It wasn't a massage parlour, it was a brothel, the owner was my pimp. A pimp licensed by the city.
- Police and by-law officers inspected our facilities and yet it continued to operate. No one appeared to care or notice that our situation was unbearable. End quotes.

And here's what Casandra Diamond, also a survivor has to say. Again I quote:

"The licensing system degrades the value of the women exploited within it from humans to mere objects of trade. It turns them into commodities. The women and the services they provide are exchanged and traded for money. When women are reduced to a simple dollar value, they are debased and left with no sense of human worth or dignity." End quote.

As you can see, this discussion goes beyond the "to license, not to license" debate. It's one of moral ethics and values. Quite simply, Body Rub Parlours are illegal and they need to be shut down.

In closing, Mayor and Council, this is your opportunity to take a truly leadership role. Say no to the licensing and operations of Body Rub Parlours in your municipality. Commit to make Newmarket the first Sex Trafficking Free Zone in Canada.

If you are ready to make this bold move, we are here to help.

On behalf of the Council of Women Against Sex Trafficking in York Region and the many brave survivors, I thank you for your time.



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