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Councillor Diane Colley-Urquhart, Chair
SPC ON COMMUNITY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

% Ms. Corrie Smillie
Legislative Assistant
Legislative services Division
City Clerk's Office



RE: Submission on City of Calgary Prostitution Response Framework

My Name is Shirley-anne Reuben; I am speaking as a community resident that has had first hand experience with dealing with the issue of a prostitution stroll in Inglewood, as the Chair of the Inglewood Community Association.

I have had extensive experience in working at the community level in a coordinated effort that included CPS, Calgary Police Commission, and the community. The direction in which Federal Government legislation is moving is encouraging, as is the direction of the City of Calgary's framework. In particular the fact that there is recognition that prostitution is not a victimless activity; further that prostitutes themselves are the victims of exploitation and that there is an unequal relationship between the prostitute, the john, and the pimp.

I encourage The City to recognize that prostitution is a social issue, and more specifically a community issue. As such communities must be involved and take ownership of their communities and the problem. Much of the report referred to working with agencies, and that community engagement took place; it falls short of recommending any meaningful community involvement.

In Inglewood's case the community association worked with the police on enforcement; residents reported licence plate numbers, and any associated

activity. The community leadership sought out agencies that offered “a way out”; and worked to increase awareness and raise funds to support programs. Years later, Inglewood welcomed SAS Calgary with open arms.

I urge SPC on Community & Protective Services to work with communities as an integral part of the solution and recognize the key role that communities can play an active in the process in the following ways:

1. Enforcement

- Resources be made available to educate communities on how to safely participate in enforcement, while preventing dangerous action and vigilanteism; and
- The Police Service has adequate resources to respond to community resident reports;
- The Police Service also enforce the law on businesses and ancillary groups, which condone, host, encourage, and benefit the activity.

2. Education

- Communities are educated on the factors, which promote prostitution; and in particular that exploitation and abuse occur many years prior (often in childhood) to a person working the street corner. The effects carry on long after, the lifestyle often repeats generationally. Many children born to women involved in prostitution, are damaged for life and most often apprehended by Child Services;
- Communities & individuals are educated on the dangers that are far closer to home and the mainstream than commonly expected. The risk can in fact, touch our own children;
- Communities are aware of the components in their community, which promote prostitution activity. Generally speaking, as in Inglewood there are businesses, which allow and possibly encourage the activity such as a bar, hotel or local business; and
- The City engage the active participation of the Boards of education to educate our children on the issues of exploitation and abuse as well as promote peer respect and healthy personal images.

3. Meaningful Community Engagement

- The City recognize communities as a resource and a true partner and engage them beyond questionnaires and occasional opportunities for input;
- The City resists underestimating the power of communities and the inclination to attribute their concerns to “NIMBYism”. They have a capacity to work comprehensively, with appropriate education.

SUMMARY

Federal Legislation and The City's Framework appear to deal with prostitution comprehensively. I hope that policy, implementation, and actions that follow do not focus simply on the "nuisance" issues, which are undeniably difficult. However, they are a manifestation of a much larger social ail.

It is apparent that present legislation, which was successfully challenged essentially avoided the root causes and attempted to mitigate the "nuisance" factor. As such, it left the door open for a legal challenge. We urge The City of Calgary to commit to the more holistic approach that is contained in the Framework presented today, and more importantly truly act in a comprehensive manner that includes meaningful community involvement. Preventing abuse and exploitation of those who are vulnerable is our collective responsibility.

Respectfully submitted,

Shirley-anne Reuben