February 9, 2023

Councillor John Orlikow
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3B 1B9

RE: LAST CHANCE TO SUPPORT A WINNIPEG CHARITY ATTEMPTING TO EXPAND YOUTH TREATMENT SERVICES

Councillor Orlikow,

Winnipeg is watching. While municipal officials work to navigate what has been reported yesterday as Winnipeg's "largest deficit in history" they also continue to find the time and resources to combat a century old charity whose finances are equally as challenged.

The Leacock House is seen by many as a monument to colonialism and criminality. Despite this, Marymound has spent 9 years and the better part of $1,000,000 attempting to rehabilitate this facility in spirit and in structure. Allegations to the contrary by some in our city are simply untrue. With this history in mind as well as the current financial reality faced by organizations across Winnipeg who support the immediate and dire need for community treatment services, it has become obvious to all but a very vocal few that this structure is unsalvageable.

Winnipeg city council and administration are actively taking steps to combat irresponsible property owners. Especially those who board up and leave derelict buildings vacant. Especially those in North Winnipeg. Marymound is actively seeking to align our property and our practices with those actions. Despite this, a number of city councillors have gone on the record to suggest that Marymound simply board up the Leacock House. This direction is irresponsible and frankly hypocritical as pieces of plywood will not stop ongoing decay and danger, nor does this direction even remotely consider the dignity of the children and staff who call the Marymound campus home. This direction certainly doesn't meet the needs of Winnipeg youth seeking help.

A number of Winnipeg councillors, including some who astoundingly voted against Marymound's ability to build a youth treatment facility impacting the footprint of the Leacock House, have recently received training on how to administer Naloxone. There is an undisputed and immediate need in Winnipeg for treatment services. Marymound recognized this need 9 years ago and would be operational today with an expanded ability to service youth in crisis were it not for ongoing bureaucratic opposition and inertia. At the February 14, 2023 EPC meeting, you have the ability to rectify this.

You have been tasked with a figurative life or death decision on Marymound's ability to proceed with the building of a treatment facility for Winnipeg youth at the desired location. Tragically, this decision also comes with very literal life or death consequences on Winnipeg streets.

You can vote in support of 100 year old bricks, or you can vote in support of 14 year old children. I have faith you will do the right thing.

Sincerely



Terry Shaw
Area resident and Marymound Board Chair