Hope Alley

Al Wiebe's Letter to EPC

As a person with the lived experience of homelessness I know first hand how devastating life on the street can be. Mere survival is in question many days. There are no good days as we know them.

When I brought in the annual memorial service in 2017 honouring and remembering those that have passed away in the previous year , I started thinking : How do we make the word Hope a permanent part of this alley way where the service was held between the Bell and 650 Main St ? Why because HOPE is a life changing and life sustaining word.

When I lost hope as a person on the streets , I attempted to take my life .

Moving forward on Sept 21 , 2022 after an extended Saga, Councilor Santos and I saw the fruits of our work come to reality as Henry Ave was changed to Hope Alley from Main St to King St and the sign was unveiled. Previously Ana from Main St project and I teamed up to put together a proposal for seating in the area (Not City funding)

It is now time to move forward.

Strategic stake holders city public works , Councilor Santos , Centre Venture , MSP , Tbird House , Wpg Foundation United Way and the DT

BIZ , and myself came together with the good folks who pass through and congregate in Hope Alley . We then met several times following and put on paper what Hope Alley needed to be a more vibrant , safe and welcoming place . What you see in the report are some of these.

Today as the visionary of HOPE ALLEY and as a person of lived experience Who has also seen life from the comforts of 200 ,000 a year perspective , I am asking for the simplest of items in the report that will improve the day to day lives of those n the area and perhaps even extend those very same lives. Make no mistake , every item is vitally important but we know budget is always an issue. With help from the " WINNIPEG FOUNDATION " who has promised to partner isn costs my asks today are feasible I believe.

1: The 10 x 30 mural on metal plating on the north wall of the WRHA building at 650 Main St. The mural will be painted by an indigenous artist with content provided by those in the area.

Why the mural ? to give a measure of empowerment and ownership to those who use HOPE ALLEY everyday. They can say " THIS IS OURS "

" We did this ! This is SO important " to uplift people on the streets .

2: Canopies with radiating heat lamps over seating areas. I don't think I have to talk about why we need these but they will offer comfort and warmth to people who need a place to rest and may not have access to shelters . Lets keep rain , snow and the elements a little less uncomfortable for folks there. I know how important it is. I have suffered through uncontrollable shivering thinking my bones would break in the damp cold. Summer rains , late fall ,early spring , early and mid winter, lets build in comfort because we can , and we can now.

This is all I am asking this body for today , and with help and further conversation with Jennifer Partridge (area coordinator for Winnipeg Foundation) we can pick up these pieces , and bring empowerment and comfort to those in HOPE ALLEY .

Al Wiebe

Director of Housing , Advocate Peer and Community engagement trainer and Community organizer