

C Anonymous

I hate to be "that lady," but... These properties were shelter services for people experiencing homelessness before they shut down. For months after shutting down, people seeking services kept coming. They would live in the doorways, behind the garbage bins, or in the bushes. They would urinate and defecate in the grass. They would pull garbage out of the bins and leave it strewn on sidewalks, along with charred square pieces of foil and used needles. The smells were awful. I was often harassed, cat called, and one man threatened to kill me as I walked alone one early morning. Eventually they broke into the vacant buildings and started living there too. I'm not sure if the fire that started in one building was the result of a person's negligence or the building deteriorating.

If these buildings are to be redeveloped into shelter and program services again, I would like to see measures taken to: 1) Protect passersby from harassment by residents of these buildings; 2) Employ security staff; 3) Clearly indicate alternative services on the exterior of the building in the event these buildings close again, in a weather-proof fashion. When the buildings closed, there was a paper taped to the front door that might have listed some helpful information, but as you can imagine, printer paper taped to the front of a door doesn't last long in the elements.

I believe housing is a human right. I also believe safety at home is a human right. I'm low-income myself and felt lucky to snag affordable housing nearby after divorcing my husband. So I get it. Hope everything shakes out in everyone's favor. Thanks for reading.