

City of Sequim
2020 Mr. Charles Bush, Manager
Mr. Tim Woollett, Director of Community Development
Elected Council Members

April 5,

Gentlemen:

I have been reading and watching the actions of city staff for the past 7 months; since you revealed to the community that the Jamestown S'Klallan Tribe and the city had been in negotiations / discussions about the establishment of a MAT facility in the City of Sequim. It has been clear to most people in the community that some agreements between the City and the Tribe were in place before the public announcement. Otherwise, why would the City be so resistant to the public outcry of disapproval of the said proposed facility. Recently through the discovery process it has become evident that two City staff members have a bias in favor of the Tribe, and should recuse themselves from all future decisions. All of the above has eroded the trust level between City and Community. A step to regaining trust would be to reclassify the development as C2 rather than the hurried A2 decision made by staff. I hope that City Council Members will direct city staff to rebuild that trust by working with the community at large and not with only one member of the community.

In addition to the disappointment with Sequim City Leadership[, I have reservations about the location of the proposed MAT facility. I am a Pharmacist with experience in serving Opioid Dependent clients. My experience covers both clinic based treatment and community pharmacy treatment. I serves as a medication gatekeeper for over 43 years, and always sought to honor my license oath to preserve the health of my clients.

I acted as a pharmacy clinic supervisor in a Methadone Treatment program in Seattle for three years. During that time I encountered many addicts with psychosocial problems which presented with varying degrees of aberrant behaviors. In the vicinity of the clinic there were thefts, harassment and assault issues which required police intervention. Sometimes these issues were between clients, but the interactions with the general public were more problematic. I think it was naïve of our police chief to conclude that the MAT facility impact will be "negligible". Does our police chief have experience based on work near a treatment facility in a retail and homeowner community?

Mark Sullivan, M.D. with the University of Washington School of Medicine department of Psychiatry has written in the Journal "PAIN", that the harms caused by chronic opioid agonist therapy are significant. Their studies show that antisocial behaviors are not significantly changed by substituting an agonist for the previous "drug of choice". Peer group mores remain the same and by bringing all such clients together in one place, brings increased crime and community harassment to that place. Clients should be treated in small clinics in their own neighborhoods...not bussed in to create an economy of scale for a profit driven industry.

My experience as a prescription watchdog over opioid medication seekers also comes from over 30 years of community pharmacy practice. Every day I analyzed opioid usage by clients who wanted early refills on their Rx medication. It is the physiological nature of addiction that pushes a client to want more and more medication. The advent of new drugs...(Suboxone and Vivitrol), have made opioid weaning easier for clients and physicians. The current "Opioid Crisis" was partially created by litigation against physicians 20+ years ago for "failure to treat" pain. Who then began to prescribe with much less restraint and more refill freedom. Most prescription medication abusers already had become "Dr. shoppers" and were always seeking a new physician no matter what their current "contract" required. Then drug manufacturers entered the fray with long acting morphine, fentanyl and oxycodone options, which proved fatal for many abusers.

In conclusion: MAT is best suited for small neighborhood based healthcare. In today's internet based connectivity it is not hard to co-ordinate wrap around detox and psychological services for a small clinic. The existing services at the Jamestown S'Klallam clinic and other services available in Port Angeles and Port Townsend are not full to capacity. The MAT facility is not something that this community asked for. It's placement near the core of Sequim's retail and housing community is not in the best interests of our people. Please consider a different location.

Sincerely,

Paul Wessler, R.Ph.