

Turning Point recovery house approved in North Vancouver

District OKs nine-bed facility on Burr Place in Seymour

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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file photo Mike Wakefield, North Shore News

Though at one point, it may have seemed the [most acrimonious project on the North Shore \(http://www.nsnews.com/news/anger-brewing-over-north-vancouver-group-home-1.1770210\)](http://www.nsnews.com/news/anger-brewing-over-north-vancouver-group-home-1.1770210), District of North Vancouver council greeted a men's addictions recovery house with open arms Monday night.

The Turning Point Recovery Society will soon be able to build a nine-bed recovery house for men on Burr Place, behind the Kiwanis Care Centre.

In a series of impassioned speeches, often referencing friends and loved ones who died prematurely thanks to addiction, council members voted unanimously in favour of the project.

Coun. Doug MacKay-Dunn, one of the strongest advocates for Turning Point on council, said his support was based on his years spent years as an undercover drug investigator on the Downtown Eastside where he "witnessed the destruction of souls brought on by addiction."

"During this assignment, it became evident to me the addicts were people like you and me. They weren't dope fiends and monsters. Clearly, they had a medical problem and how did we deal with that? We sent them to jail, rather than send them to treatment," he said.

Since then, MacKay-Dunn said it's been his mission to ensure treatment options are available.

"I (would) not send those that need help off to some far-off hinterland and certainly, not to the 123 addictions service provides in the eight square block area of the Downtown Eastside drug ghetto," he said. "No, I say we must look after ours and I say ours should get well in a friendly and familiar environment."

The district initially proposed putting the recovery house on Windridge Drive, though that plan blew up into public anger and fears a recovery house in the residential area would put children and property values at risk.

Coun. Jim Hanson said he was "honoured" to speak in support of the motion, and that he believed much of the original opposition came from fears stoked by a few immediate neighbours of the proposed Windridge Drive location.

"Let me say from my point of view, based on what we have heard, all the questions asked and answers given, the alleged public safety threat of a facility such as Turning Point's recovery house on Burr Place, was vastly overstated," he said. "I think there was frankly a certain amount of misinformation put forward by those who sought to oppose this project on a public safety basis. I think we have to look through that a little bit and be a bit skeptical of what was stated."

Others on council echoed the sentiment that allowing men with addictions to receive recovery support at home on the North Shore was something they were proud to support.

The district will provide the land, which is currently an undeveloped, treed lot, and Vancouver Coastal Health will fund the recovery house's operational budget.

The district provided land for a similar women's facility on Lloyd Avenue in North Vancouver.

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