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Mar. 24, 2026

Mayor Alto & Council
City of Victoria
City Hall
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Subject: Request for Zoning Bylaw Amendment – Barbed Wire Security Fencing at 247 Russell Street

Dear Mayor and Council,

We are writing to respectfully request your consideration of a bylaw amendment that would permit the retention of existing barbed wire security fencing at 247 Russell Street.

Background

The barbed wire in question was installed several years ago in response to serious and repeated security incidents at the property, including daily drug use, overnight trespassing, and multiple fire incidents — one of which required a response from the Victoria Fire Department. Some years ago, the adjacent building was a victim of arson and was completely destroyed. Since installation of our barbed wire, we have had zero incidents. The wire has proven to be an effective, low-cost deterrent that protects both our property and the safety of the surrounding neighbourhood.

The wire consists of a modest two-strand horizontal installation angled outward to prevent climbing — it is not razor wire, and it is not aggressive in appearance. It has been largely obscured by two large murals installed on the property, which have been well-received by the community.

Our Position

We have engaged constructively and in good faith with City staff over the past several months, including Bylaw Officer Kevin Braun and Planners Rob Bateman and Matt Kuziak. We understand and respect that the current Zoning Bylaw prohibits barbed wire. However, we believe the bylaw, as currently written, does not adequately account for the legitimate safety needs of industrial property owners in areas where trespassing, drug use, and arson pose real and documented risks.

We note that several neighbouring businesses operate with similar barbed wire installations for the same safety reasons. We are not seeking preferential treatment — we are asking to be treated fairly and consistently and request a practical solution that acknowledges on-the-ground realities.

Request

We respectfully ask that Council consider one or more of the following:

1. A specific variance permitting the retention of the existing barbed wire at 247 Russell Street.

2. An amendment to the Zoning Bylaw — specifically Schedule S (Fences) — to permit barbed wire (distinct from razor wire) on properties zoned for industrial use, subject to reasonable conditions.

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3. A formal review of how the bylaw is applied consistently across the neighbourhood, given that comparable installations appear to exist without enforcement action.

We are committed to working cooperatively with the City and are open to any reasonable conditions attached to approval. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Robbins
Dan Robbins, owner

Fraser McColl
Fraser McColl, owner