



February 27 2025

Sent via Email

Dear Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer,

CC: Mayor Fillmore, Honorable Councillors and Relevant Staff

We write in response to your February 25 letter regarding the janitorial services contract changeover at Alderney Gate, in addition to calling attention to serious matters that have recently come to light.

We have heard from several HRM Councillors, as well as yourself, that HRM is committed to "[promoting] sustainable and ethical business practices" including "a Living Wage Requirement to ensure that employees working on HRM properties earn a fair wage". You further state in your letter that the RFQ for the Alderney Gate site (Tender 2024-0634) is subject to the Living Wage Requirement described in Section 8 of HRM's Supplier Code of Conduct. Additionally, in a copy-and-paste template letter that Councillor Sam Austin has sent to multiple members of the public, including our own members, dated February 26, he also notes:

"In short, all bidders are required to pay and treat their staff fairly. Both GDI and the incoming Imperial. This isn't a situation of a minimum wage employer replacing one that treats their people well and pays more.

The difficulty is that the municipality can't just ignore the results of a fairly run tender process."

Through several interviews we have conducted with non-union workers of Imperial Cleaners LTD at multiple HRM-owned properties, it has been revealed to us that **Imperial Cleaners has not been paying its employees a living wage**. This is a direct violation of the HRM Living Wage Requirement that you and many Councillors have professed is being practiced by your suppliers, specifically in eligible contracts that were awarded since the implementation of the 2022 Administrative Order.

Given the pattern that we have uncovered across various HRM sites, in addition to other relevant information, we have strong reason to believe that Imperial Cleaners has been deploying a strategy to underbid other contractors who *are* submitting bids in adherence with the Living Wage Requirement and Supplier Code of Conduct.

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We believe Imperial Cleaners has a strategy to acquire custodial contracts at the lower bid with the egregious intentions of circumventing HRM's procurement requirements. It is reasonable to assume based on our investigations that Imperial Cleaners will continue its pattern of violating the Living Wage ordinance at the Alderney Gate site when it takes hold of custodial services on March 1 2025.

Further, based on a cursory analysis of information shared with us regarding Tender 2024-0634, the bidding amount by Imperial Cleaners *in conjunction with* the service hours required is enough for HRM – as the contracting authority – to discern if Imperial Cleaners intends to pay a living wage.

For these reasons and in the spirit of transparency, we call on you, again, to provide:

- Immediate disclosure of the complete bid documentation and amounts for all vendors related to Tender 2025-0634

In solidarity with the twelve Janitors and their families at Alderney Gate,

Tina Oh

SEIU Local 2 | Justice for Janitors
JusticeForJanitors.ca

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