

INFORMATION REPORT

TO: Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: April 10, 2012	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Update – Needs Assessment of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Community of Hamilton (FCS11104(a) (City Wide)	
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Item 15 of the November 23, 2011 Audit, Finance and Administration Committee Report directed that staff report back to the Audit, Finance & Administration Committee, on a quarterly basis, respecting the status of the Implementation of the Needs Assessment of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Community of Hamilton.

Information:

Community Space Needs

Following Council's direction to investigate and plan for accommodating the space needs of the LGBTQ community, the LGBTQ Advisory Committee has established a sub-committee to start a process for community consultation. The purpose of the community consultation is to start preliminary community dialogue with various stakeholder community groups, agencies and organizations to gather preliminary information about the need for space in both a short- and long-term timeframe. In addition, the plan is to discuss the development of a process for moving forward with the direction from Council, and to get input/feedback about what process would be preferable, what factors need to be considered in designing a process, who needs to be part of the process, and how they will participate.

The sub-committee facilitated a community stakeholders meeting on February 29, 2012 to discuss the objectives outlined above. The community stakeholders in attendance included representatives from The Well, Prime Timers, Trans Peer Support Group at the

Well, Hill Park Positive Space and Hamilton Positive Space Collaborative. The sub-committee has also extended an invitation to several other community stakeholders not present at the table including the Aids Network, McMaster University LGBTQ Community Centre, Sir John A. MacDonald Positive Space Group, RADAR, Mohawk College LGBTQ Group, Unitarian Church, Centenary United Church, Big Susie's, Hamilton Police Services LGBTQ Task Force, Golden Horseshoe LGBTQ Bowling League, Embassy Night Club, The Werx, Labour Union Representative, Women and Liminal Committee.

During the consultation with community stakeholders, feedback from participants discussed the need to explore two streams of space needs focusing on the immediate and long-term needs of specific organizations, groups and agencies. To address the immediate community space needs, staff will be exploring the possibility of utilizing existing suitable space within the City's corporate facilities. In this respect, community stakeholders have been requested to submit information on various factors in order to determine their space needs. Factors to take into consideration include location, square footage, proximity to transit or major arterial roads, parking needs, handicap accessibility, space planning, loading requirements, date service is required, list of amenities required, anticipated date of occupancy and term, security interests and signage needs. Once the needs of the LGBTQ community are identified, the request for space will be presented to the City's Portfolio Management Committee for review and recommendation.

Other issues being considered at the roundtable discussion with community stakeholders include costs associated with leasing space, income-generating component to help offset operating costs of space, positive space training, issues surrounding needs for space as it relates to programming. Moving forward, the sub-committee will be working on establishing a steering committee with interested community partners required to move forward toward a feasibility study to address long-term space needs. A follow up meeting is being planned for a date yet to be determined.

Feedback on Suicide Prevention Strategy

At the March, 2012 meeting of the LGBTQ Advisory Committee, a representative of the City's Public Health Department attended and outlined the role being played by Public Health on the Suicide Prevention Roundtable. The high number of youth suicide and attempts was noted, as well as the many community partnerships who are working to address this issue from varying perspectives, including Youthnet and the Health Action Teams in the schools. It was acknowledged that the particular concerns of members of the LGBTQ community were not as well addressed in the Strategy as should be. Many avenues in people's lives that bring them resiliency (family, friends, etc.) are not necessarily safe or available for LGBTQ youth and other community members.

The LGBTQ Advisory Committee discussed a recommendation for Positive Space Training for Public Health staff working in the schools and will continue the discussion on the Suicide Prevention Strategy at their April meeting.