



Minutes (Quorum was met)

FOOD & SHELTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, April 9, 2015 - 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
City of Hamilton – City Hall, Room 222
71 Main St. W., Hamilton

Present: Chair: Medora Uppal
Members: Loretta Hill Finamore, Larry Huibers, Don Jaffray, Katherine Kalinowski

Absent with
Regrets: Denise Arkell, Carol Cowen and Karen Efron

Also Present: Nadia Zelisko, Senior Policy Analyst, Homelessness Policy & Programs and Amanda DiFalco, Manager, Homelessness Policy & Programs

Guests: Janet Pilon, Deputy Clerk, City Manager's Office and Mark Weingartner, Senior Policy Analyst, Community and Emergency Services

1. WELCOME

Medora welcomed everyone to the meeting. Medora explained that Janet and Mark were present to seek feedback from Committee members as part of a review of City Volunteer Advisory Committees.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Changes to Committee Membership was added to the Agenda as a Discussion Item.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Declarations of Conflict of Interest)

None

4. REVIEW OF NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Notes for March 12, 2015 approved as presented.

5. BUSINESSBUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

6a. Review of Food & Shelter Committee

Janet and Mark explained that when the report on Volunteer Advisory Committees went to Council in September, only a few recommendations were approved by Council in September and the rest were held over for further review. The results of the current review will be shared in a report going to the General Issues Committee in June. The recruitment for Advisory Committees in the fall will be based on the results of the report. Janet and Mark led a discussion on what is working and what is not for the Food & Shelter Advisory Committee. Key issues raised were:

- 1) What is working: richness of discussion from diverse membership (service providers, citizens, lived experience); good space for developing learning, understanding and building capacity; important feature of the democratic process through link to Council; can take an active role in planning and help determine if an issue is a priority impact issue
- 2) Value of Food & Shelter Committee in comparison with others: focus is emergency food, an issue that can be overlooked in broader food discussions; keeps food and shelter priorities alive at Emergency & Community Services among all other issues; efficiencies are gained as all sectors are represented at the table; important advocacy and timely, current, relevant information from the front line
- 3) Messages to Council: the Committee has taken initiative to develop tools to share with the community, especially before an election; the Committee provides a shortcut for Council to access complex information and system trends in a streamlined way; participation provides members with clarity on the municipal role vs. provincial and federal; City receives request and they use the Committee for advice; helps to balance ideas on food and shelter from multiple sources; could be used more as source of information and advice by Council as it expedites their ability to make informed decisions; there is an opportunity to require more of the Committee in terms of reporting back and sharing information in a proactive way
- 4) Membership: citizens with lived experience encounter barriers to participation which could be addressed through access to childcare, access to transportation support, and consideration of appropriate timing and location of meetings; a number of meetings is needed to build trust and pick up on the process; service providers themselves cannot fully capture the voice of those with lived experience
- 5) What doesn't work: risk to not having the voice of those using services represented; committee would be stronger with a more consistent link to Council; budget is insufficient to engage citizens, should be more generous to support participation in forums such as town hall and coffee house discussions; achieving quorum is a challenge

- 6) Splitting the food & shelter components of the Committee: food and shelter issues may be overshadowed by broader poverty issues; food and shelter issues generally are also quite broad, if the focus on emergency food is diluted there is risk of losing sight of the fact that children are going hungry; as those going hungry are often homeless, the Committee is comfortable with the grouping of food and shelter; unclear if the split will be an administrative decision or a strategic decision about what is most efficient
- 7) Two-way communication between Committee and Council/Staff: staff asks the Committee for advice, Council does not; unclear of the extent to which Council is aware of the Committee as a resource available to them; if Council drew on the information and advice of the Committee it would help with membership challenges as people would feel more valued

6b. Changes to Committee Membership

Karen Efron has requested a leave of absence from the Committee, until the current standing conflict in her schedule is resolved. Katherine moved to accept the request and Larry seconded the motion. All voted in favour. Nadia will communicate the decision to Karen.

The Committee does not currently have a representative from HEDAC, as Laura Workman's role at Native Women's Centre has changed. Loretta moved to ask HEDAC to appoint a new representative to the Committee. Katherine seconded the motion. All voted in favour. Nadia will follow-up with HEDAC.

6c. Women's Housing Planning Collaborative (WHPC) Update

WHPC has made a recommendation to the City on the lack of beds for single homeless women. There is a report tentatively scheduled to go to Council on May 11.

6d. Funding pressures and impact on food & shelter-related issues

Committee members discussed the funding pressures of the following program and decided that Committee members would do some forecasting of what will change in the community that will be more costly to solve. The Committee acknowledged the need for a report and summary of the impact for the Emergency & Community Services Committee. The report must also acknowledge federal and provincial funding decisions and that Hamilton's share of provincial funding is inadequate.

- i. Trusteeship Program: Good Shepherd partner agencies are having discussions with the City. They will be advocating for annualized, permanent funding from the province in recognition of the fact that income support is a provincial responsibility. The advocacy will take place before funding ends on March 31, 2016. Katherine will keep the Committee up-to-date and seek advice as needed.

- ii. Notre Dame Resource Centre: the loss of funding has a massive impact that is intertwined in the system. The young parent housing worker was cut, a significant impact as 37% were young parents. There is now less staff available for the global youth population. Health Initiatives is losing at the 3end of the month; this program relies on another source of City funding. Good Shepherd is in conversation with the City to place the Notre Dame Resource Centre funding where it belongs. Katherine will keep the Committee updated.
- iii. Elizabeth Fry: the loss of funding has significant ramifications for the Centre and for street involved women.

6e. 20,000 Homes Campaign Update

Nadia informed Committee members that over 200 volunteers have signed up to administer a 10 minute survey with community members experiencing homelessness on their health and housing needs during four shifts on April 26 & 27. Survey sites have been almost entirely confirmed and include emergency and transitional shelters, day programs and drop-in programs, as well as one street survey shift. All teams will be led by social service professionals from participating agencies and the City. A poster will be circulated to advise community members of Registry Week. The results will be presented at a Community Debrief event at City Hall on April 30 from 1:30-2:30pm. A poster will be circulated for wide distribution among members' networks: all community members are welcome to attend the debrief.

7. NEXT MEETINGS

May 14, 2015 2 – 4pm (City Hall Room 222)
June 11, 2015 2 – 4pm (Location TBD)

8. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 4:05