

Hamilton Community Legal Clinic
Clinique juridique communautaire de Hamilton

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Re: Initiative to Increase Affordable Housing and Reduce Poverty by Investing in People

We are writing to express our strong support for a notice of motion to the General Issues Committee that describes an initiative to increase affordable housing and reduce poverty by investing in people. We believe that the proposed initiative will positively impact the lives of the clients and community we serve.

The Hamilton Community Legal Clinic was launched on April 1, 2010. Our organization is an amalgamation of the three independent community legal clinics that had been operating in the City for over thirty years. Our Clinic delivers a variety of services including legal advice & referrals, legal representation, public legal education, community development and law reform. We provide service to individuals, groups and communities and our Vision/Mission speaks to promoting access to justice, improving quality of life and advocating for social change. We are the sponsoring agency for the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, which is housed in our offices. We take a social inclusion approach that focuses directly on how to change the systems and practices that create poverty, exclusion and inequality.

Investing in People is consistent with strategies we have advocated for with Council in recent years:

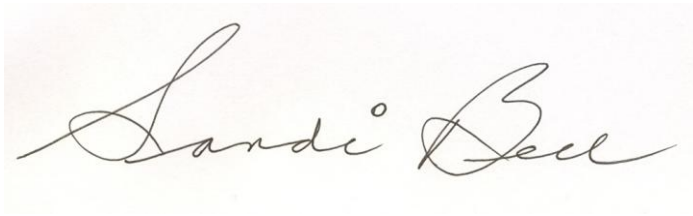
- In 2011, along with others, we suggested Council consider developing a comprehensive Social Investment Strategy that could be achieved with the help of significant community participation and collaboration “to identify and eliminate the root causes of poverty in our community.”
- In 2012, we asked Council to consider including “pro-poor” or poverty reduction economic development strategies in the City Economic Development Strategy.
- This year we are again asking Council to endorse a provincial evidence-based mechanism to set social assistance rates.

All of these initiatives are based on a conviction that Hamilton can best move forward to reach its goal of striving to make Hamilton the best place to raise a child by using collaborative approaches, coordinated actions, and long term investment.

Municipalities have much to offer in the area of poverty reduction as indicated by recent announcements in Edmonton, London and other cities. This made-in-Hamilton initiative would be a significant step towards the development of a community-driven plan to address barriers to realizing the shared goal of social inclusion for all members of the community.

We commend Mayor Eisenberger and Councillor Collins for bringing these ideas forward and urge Council's support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandi Bell". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Sandi Bell

Chair—présidente