

6.2(a)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES Housing Issues Working Group Meeting Notes

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

Virtual Webex Meeting

10:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

Those in Attendance: Paula Kilburn, Anthony Frisina, Lance Dingman, James Kemp, Tom Manzuk

Others Present: Jennifer Chivers (Coalition of Residential Care Facilities Tenants)

Those Absent: Michelle Dent, Jayne Cardno, Sophie Geffros, Mary Sinclair

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Approval of agenda
3. Approval of minutes
4. Residential Care Services Presentation from Lance Dingman and Jennifer Chivers: This is a brief summary of a very thorough and detailed presentation.

Residential Care Services and Residential Care Facilities were created in an effort to deinstitutionalize and reintegrate persons with disabilities that need some assistance, but don't need to be cared for on a full time basis.

There are currently Ninety RCFs in the City of Hamilton. Fifty of them are subsidized. Some use a for-profit model, others a non-profit model; For example: Indwell

RCFs are licensed by the City but mandated by the province. This creates some issues in regards to guidelines that owners and operators must abide by. For example: There is no safety net if an owner/operator decides to close down or sell the property. Those residents would be on the street. As there is no rating system for RCF performance, residents have no choice as to what facility they are put in.

In 1995, tenants established the RCF Coalition and with the help of the HHC Community Legal Clinic, have worked to improve the rights and guidelines of tenants in the Residential Care System. Despite all that, there are a number of areas that still need attention and improvement. I shall list a few major issues with some explanation:

Privacy is a major issue. Tenants are often housed two or three to a room. While there are common areas, there is very little opportunity for solitude or the chance to form private, romantic relationships with others. The staff feel entitled to intrude at their leisure without prior notice.

Staff training is another concern. There are no requirements to work at an RCF other than a grade twelve education. There needs to be specialized skills training for employees of an RCF. Ideally it would be best if they had training in social work. Employee pay is an area that needs attention, as they are often earning minimum wage. Perhaps they could attract more skilled labour if they offered a higher wage.

No activity planning or skills development training. If becoming more independent is the goal, why doesn't the government offer skills training? They could at the very least plan activities for their residents in order to enrich their lives

for the better. There needs to be access to hobbies or recreation, especially in the cramped conditions they endure. There was talk about a possible clubhouse for residents of RCFs. A place that people could go and hang out with others, perhaps some sort of recreation and skills training program could be also be provided onsite.

The system needs to look towards moving people in the direction of independence if their conditions warrant it. There are many that could lead a fuller life if they were only given the option, but the system is more geared towards maintaining the status quo.

Until recently, there was no complaints process inside the RCS system. No mechanism for a tenant to air grievances against operators or employees of RCFs, but the City has started a one year trial program that began in June. It remains to be seen as to how effective it is in its current form.

The personal needs allowance is woefully inadequate. At present it is currently \$150 per month. This is to cover all incidental monthly expenses; clothing, entertainment, snack foods, hygiene products, etc. While this is probably based more on ODSP payments there is not much the City can do; but it still needs to be said that is in inadequate.

In the time of the pandemic, there has been no effort to increase the number of RCFs in order to lessen the crowded living conditions. RCFs are at great risk of breakout due to the population density and the need for increased support.

In conclusion, we decided to review the Schedule 20 of the LTC and see if there was something that we could do in regards to the AODA.

5. Terms of Reference: We gave the TOR a final review before sending it off to ACPD.
6. Motion regarding Homelessness: We deferred this until next meeting as we were a crucial member short.
7. Motion regarding Accessible Housing: We gave the Motion a final review before sending to ACPD. It was suggested to modify it in regards to Universal Accessibility.
8. Adjournment