

Bates, Tamara

Subject: FW: The Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary and Transgender Community Sub-Committee

From: Jennifer Hompoth <>

Sent: December 7, 2020 10:59 AM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Fwd: The Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary and Transgender Community Sub-Committee

Please forward correspondence to members of the Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary and Transgender Community Sub-Committee.

Thank You!

Jennifer Hompoth.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Jennifer Hompoth <j>

Date: Mon, 7 Dec 2020 at 10:36

Subject: The Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary and Transgender Community Sub-Committee

To: <nrinder.nann@hamilton.ca>, <chad.collins@hamilton.ca>, Wilson, Maureen <maureen.wilson@hamilton.ca>, Jason Farr <jason.farr@hamilton.ca>

To Councilor Nrinder Nann, Chair, and members of the Expanding Housing and Support Services for Women, Non-Binary and Transgender Community Sub-Committee,

I applaud this committee's collective efforts to recognize the need for targeted housing for women, non-binary and transgender people.

When the Mountainview shelter was the New Dawn Reception Centre under SISO, it was able to host approximately 40 people, in family units, in one section of the facility. As a building, it has a huge footprint, with a lot of potential. Several million dollars were already added to the facility directly funded by the federal government in 2005. Valuation of this facility to its fullest requires a municipal investment-- an investment which would soundly add value to a property which has demonstrated utility.

While short term shelter beds are needed, the pressure to expediently turn over high quantities of guests also places operational pressure on agency staff, who are dependent on funding models that privilege # of guests over the quality of their care. This attempt at increasing short-term beds must also be accompanied by a concurrent attempt to raise the liveable permanent housing stock for women, non-binary, and trans people. I have had colleagues who are housing workers, funded through Housing First, who are unable to find their clients, women, non-binary and trans folks with complex needs, any shelter despite working together with them for periods over 20 months.

Lastly, I ask that you consider the significant fact that Hamilton has no dedicated not-for-profit organization whose mission is Queer and Trans community health or housing. While there are organizations with a significant research and advocacy interest, such as the SPRC Hamilton, we do not have a single dedicated LGBTQ2SI+ health organization. Research tells us that homelessness for trans and non-binary people often

begins in youth; however, there are a lack of dedicated Queer and Trans housing supports for youth. Many youth who I have encountered as the Founder of a youth centre which saw 10,000 visits annually did not feel safe in existing youth temporary housing, and cited lack of culturally appropriate safety in existing youth shelters as a reason.

I urge you to take a position as a Committee which prioritises:

- increase net number of permanent shelter beds for women, trans, and non-binary people
- value-for dollar investment in facilities, with a view to their long-term benefit to helping women, trans, non-binary people to find and keep long term housing
- operational review of how "serve as many people as possible" policy emphasis contributes to funding pressures faced by Not-For Profit Housing agencies and agencies with housing contracts
- Use of a Diversity & Equity lens to assess agency success. (i.e. not penalizing Indigenous organizations who are not as "successful" in housing clients.
- Increase to net number of beds for temporary & long term shelter for victims of Domestic Violence

Several issues come to bear, here.

1) Historic resourcing & profile of larger, more connected, Christian faith-based organizations- have ongoing funding & support from members of faith congregations, national networks (International, in the case of Good Shepherd).

2) Client base, "multiple and complex" health and social needs: Need to distinguish the unique and systemic nature of barriers for particular homeless populations. Indigenous clients may face multiple and complex traumas based on loss of land, displacement, residential schooling.

Given this disparity, the additional attention to funding, and diversion of municipal resources to equity seeking groups can help bolster universal access.

- creation/rentention of Indigenous & LGBTQ2SI+ housing advisory committees, with role of advising & informing housing framework for Indigenous, Two Spirited, and Trans, non-binary people.

I thank all members of this subcommittee for their dedicated efforts to understand the policy implications of operational- real life, on the ground issues- as pertaining to expanding housing options for women, non-binary, and transgender people in our municipality.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hompoth.

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"What are the standards that we have? If we're concerned about unarmed truth--understanding this condition of truth is allowing suffering to speak--and unconditional love--understanding justice is what love looks like in public--then the question is, what suffering voices do we hear...and what kinds of concerns about justice are made manifest...? Cornell West