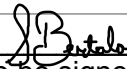




Hamilton

CITIZEN COMMITTEE

To:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee	
From:	Stephanie Bertolo Women and Gender Equity Committee	 (to be signed by the Chair)
Date:		
Re:	Reinstating the COVID-19 Encampment Protocol	

Recommendation:

- a) That the Women and Gender Equity Committee recommends Council reinstate the encampment protocol
- b) That the Women and Gender Equity Committee advise Council to continue prioritizing funding toward building and making available more affordable housing units, in addition to identifying temporary shelter solutions for the incoming cold winter; and
- c) If requested by council, the Women and Gender Equity Committee can prepare a further citizen's committee report on other supports for houseless communities.

Background

At the October 28, 2021 meeting of the Women and Gender Equity Committee, the following motion was approved:

Motion to Advise Council to Reinstate the COVID-19 Encampment Protocol:

WHEREAS, there is presently not enough shelter space or affordable housing units to support houseless neighbors in Hamilton, with a waitlist for affordable housing exceeding 6,000 applications.

WHEREAS, women face increased risk for houselessness resulting from intimate partner violence.

WHEREAS, Black, Indigenous, racialized, and newcomer women and nonbinary communities have been significantly impacted by job loss and unemployment due to Covid-19 and systemic barriers.

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WHEREAS, encampments are not the problem, but a symptom of an extensive and years long housing and affordability crisis across Canada, notably in Hamilton as one of the most unaffordable cities in the country.

WHEREAS, the encampment protocol enabled a person-centered approach to connecting individuals with resources and services in the absence of accessible supports and housing solutions

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- a) That the Status of Women Committee advisory committee recommends Council reinstate the encampment protocol
- b) That the Status of Women Committee advise Council to continue prioritizing funding toward building and making available more affordable housing units, in addition to identifying temporary shelter solutions for the incoming cold winter; and
- c) If requested by council, the Status of Women Committee can prepare a further citizen's committee report on other supports for houseless communities.

The mandate of the Women and Gender Equity Committee is to act as an Advisory Committee on matters pertaining to gender inequities faced by women, trans, and non-binary individuals and to provide Council input on matters of municipal concern.

In alignment with the Women and Gender Equity Committee strategic objectives, of providing recommendations on issues of gender equity and other matters of social or municipal concern the above motion was put forward and carried in the Women and Gender Equity Committee October 2021 meeting.

The Women and Gender Equity Committee was advised that a Citizen Committee Report was required as the recommendations contained in the Motion sit outside the purview of the Advisory Committee as it involves City Infrastructure and would also have financial implications.

Analysis/ Rationale

Encampments are not the problem, but a symptom of an extensive and years long housing and affordability crisis across Canada, notably in Hamilton as one of the most unaffordable cities in the country.

As captured in the motion above, there is presently not enough shelter space or affordable housing units to support houseless neighbors in Hamilton, with a waitlist for affordable housing exceeding 6,000 applications.

Black, Indigenous, racialized, and newcomer women and nonbinary communities have been significantly impacted by job loss and unemployment due to Covid-19 and systemic barriers. Women also face increased risk for houselessness resulting from intimate partner violence.

The encampment protocol enabled a person-centered approach to connecting individuals with resources and services in the absence of accessible supports and housing solutions.

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