



INFORMATION REPORT

TO: Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: September 10, 2012	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Update – Needs Assessment of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Community of Hamilton (FCS11104(b)) (City Wide)	
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Item 15 of the November 23, 2011 Audit, Finance and Administration Committee Report directed that staff report back to the Audit, Finance & Administration Committee, on a quarterly basis, respecting the status of the Implementation of the Needs Assessment of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Community of Hamilton.

Information:

Community Space Needs

Following Council's direction to investigate and plan for accommodating the space needs of the LGBTQ community, the LGBTQ Advisory Committee established a sub-committee to start a process for community consultation. Members of LGBTQ organizations in the City were invited to a preliminary meeting, in order to plan the process of establishing both the short and long-term space needs for the LGBTQ community. The purpose of the community consultation is to start preliminary community dialogue with various stakeholder community groups, agencies and organizations to gather preliminary information about the need for space in both a short- and long-term timeframe. In addition, the plan is to discuss the development of a process for moving forward with the direction from Council, and to get input/feedback about what process would be preferable, what factors need to be considered in designing a process, who needs to be part of the process, and how they will participate.

At the conclusion of the community stakeholders meeting on February 29, 2012, a community steering committee was established to move the evaluation and planning for

long term needs forward. During the initial consultation with community stakeholders, feedback from participants discussed the need to explore two streams of space needs focusing on the immediate and long-term needs of specific organizations, groups and agencies.

Short Term/Immediate Space Needs

Staff contacted community stakeholders to obtain information about the immediate/short term space needs of the groups. Needs were identified for four groups as follows:

After school drop in space for LGBTQ youth and allies:

- Need for after school drop in one day per week after school
- Space for up to 60 students
- Informal space
- Downtown; near or on downtown bus routes

Rehearsal space and performance space for Gay Men's Chorus:

- Regular rehearsal space with piano for choir of up to 50 people
- Wednesday evenings weekly
- Starting September 2012

Meeting space for Primetimers Hamilton:

- Board Room meeting space for Board; one Sunday afternoon per month
- Larger meeting room for General meeting one Sunday afternoon per month (up to 30-50 people)
- Central location on bus route

Dedicated space for LGBTQ Wellness Centre:

- Immediate need for space for 1-3 years; need long term space as well
- Downtown; near or on downtown bus routes
- Dedicated full time space needs as follows: 1000-1200 sq feet of programming space + 2 offices (300-400 sq ft); storage space of 100 sq ft (total of approximately 2000 sq ft)
- Flexible, configurable wheelchair/mobility accessible programming space (lecture style seating, classroom seating, small group tables, meetings, etc.) for use on a daily basis (weekdays, weeknights and weekends)
- Safe, well lit populated area for approach and entrances

Staff are currently having discussions with staff of the Recreation and Corporate Facilities Divisions to assess the ability to meet the needs identified. Options in current Recreation Facilities have been identified for LGBTQ youth, Gay Men's Chorus and Primetimers Hamilton. The groups have been provided with information on location and

costs and have been offered a tour of the facilities that were suggested. We are waiting for further information from the groups with respect to their interest in these facilities.

There were no Recreation facilities with space available that could accommodate the needs of the LGBTQ Wellness Centre of Hamilton (The Well). Staff have requested to meet with the Portfolio Management Committee to assess the possibility of space being available in a Corporate facility that would meet the needs of the Well.

Long Term Community Space Needs

A community space needs steering committee has been struck and has met twice since the initial community meeting to address the longer term space needs of the LGBTQ Community. A draft Terms of Reference has been developed for the LGBTQ Space Steering Committee and Co-Chairs have been selected, Renee Wetselaar and Paul Hawkins. Representatives from various community groups are members, with additional members being sought including representation from LGBTQ youth and transgender individuals. In order to better inform their discussions, the Steering Committee is researching basic models from other municipalities where similar centres for meeting the needs of LGBTQ community members are in place as well as operating models from other community groups and partnerships.

It is expected that the Terms of Reference including goals, outcomes, membership and governance rules will be finalized at the September meeting.

Feedback on Suicide Prevention Strategy

At the March, 2012 meeting of the LGBTQ Advisory Committee, a representative of the City's Public Health Department attended and outlined the role being played by Public Health on the Suicide Prevention Roundtable. The high number of youth suicide and attempts was noted, as well as the many community partnerships who are working to address this issue from varying perspectives, including Youthnet and the Health Action Teams in the schools. It was acknowledged that the particular concerns of members of the LGBTQ community were not as well addressed in the Strategy as should be. Many avenues in people's lives that bring them resiliency (family, friends, etc.) are not necessarily safe or available for LGBTQ youth and other community members.

The LGBTQ Advisory Committee will be finalizing their feedback on the Suicide Prevention Strategy at their fall meetings, including consideration of a recommendation for Positive Space Training for Public Health staff working in the schools.