



Hamilton

- MINUTES -
LGBTQ Advisory Committee
Thursday, September 15, 2011 – 5:30 p.m.
Room 222, City Hall

PRESENT: Marlon Picken, Rob Brown, Debbie Wooldridge, Kerry Cranston, Gord Jackson, Michelle Poirier, Renee Wetselaar

ALSO PRESENT: Jane Lee (City of Hamilton)
Jennie Vengris, Molly Elliott (City of Hamilton)

REGRETS: David Gunton, Deirdre Dixon, Ryan McComb, Kristeen Sprague

1. WELCOME

Introductions were made roundtable.

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Renee stated that she sits on the Housing Committee and has provided input to the plan being developed.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

(D.Wooldridge/R.Brown)

That the minutes of the August 18, 2011 meeting of the LGBTQ Advisory Committee be approved as circulated. **CARRIED**

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

(K.Cranston/R.Brown)

That the agenda be approved as circulated. **CARRIED**

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

**5.1 Housing & Homelessness Staff, Community Services spoke re:
Housing & Homelessness Action Plan & Feedback on Engagement
Process**

The Committee welcomed Jennie Vengris and Molly Elliott from the Community Services Department - Social Housing and Homelessness

Division who provided an overview of the Housing Services Action Plan. They would like LGBTQ perspective on housing/homelessness in the City of Hamilton and are developing a strategic plan to address housing instability in Hamilton. Indications are tracked to measure housing needs, i.e. stability/ social housing wait lists, census data, rental costs. Housing costs should not be more than 50% of income. The plan focuses on low-to-moderate household incomes. People most affected by the plan will live near or below the poverty line. The Housing Action Plan Committee is preparing a report/plan for the City of Hamilton. They have received government funding. They want the plan to be an informative guide to City staff concerning administrative decisions. The plan is to be more inclusive & engage with many communities. The deadline for the first report to Council is the spring of 2012. The Housing Committee has already spoken to service providers and are now looking at community-based literature on Hamilton area, however, not much is available concerning LGBTQ community issues in housing/homelessness. They want to reference that Hamilton's LGBTQ community is not well represented in present documentation.

Comments & suggestions made by LGBTQ Advisory Committee members included:

- many transgender community members have a low or fluctuating income & so sustainable housing is as important as establishing housing options. Income or employment may fluctuate depending on stage of transition
- transgender resident personal safety is an issue, also area being safe to travel to and from housing & access to services
- needs of homeless LGBTQ youth need to be addressed, also youth who are currently living in unsafe family situations or in danger of being rendered homeless
- homophobia in housing needs to be confronted. Even subtle forms of homophobia experienced when apartment hunting, etc.
- training for housing & support workers
- housing help centre receive positive space training & having an ally when seeking housing can be very helpful
- unique experiences/concerns of trans groups in homeless shelters & transitional housing should be built into plan
- City funding for transgender transitional intake at YWCA recommended
- support for transgender tenants. Currently YWCA has barriers for this segment of community members - further consultation & policy development would be helpful
- older LGBTQ community needs to be assured that long-term care facilities receive positive space training
- LGBTQ senior citizens can feel isolated. Don't feel support; those caring for them don't understand their unique situation
- may be helpful to engage with those who don't support LGBTQ rights to get a idea of some of the issues the LGBTQ community face every day. Address homophobia "blind spots" of some health care & service providers
- ODSP doesn't pay enough to get stable housing

- hard to get out of transitional housing; wait lists long (2 years or longer)
- staying at YWCA or YMCA considered “homeless”
- difficulty finding housing when new to city
- may be helpful to reach out to LGBTQ community to advise of housing support services
- barriers to female impersonators who live in single-gender housing

Committee members also provided positive feedback concerning a recent housing survey, as follows:

- i) using neutral language regarding relationship status (i.e. partner/spouse; not husband/wife)
- ii) directing people to locations where free computer access available to complete questions
- iii) offering chance to win groceries for survey completion

Safety issues in community housing included: homophobia; drug activity; poor property maintenance; insufficient lighting & security; exit doors often blocked; cars left idling outside with exhaust entering units. Transitional housing should address a policy concerning visitation in shelters when the issue of same-sex domestic violence is present.

The Advisory Committee strongly recommends to Housing & Homelessness Action Plan Committee that they seek input from The Well who have a much broader contact with LGBTQ community and specific Hamilton-area concerns. The committee suggested speaking to the trans group, youth group, etc.

The Advisory Committee also requested an update from Housing & Homelessness Action Plan Committee following contact with The Well & prior to report being presented to City Council.

5.2 Dr Albina Veltmen, Suicide Prevention Community Council of Hamilton

Kerry advised that Dr Veltman was unable to attend meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

Following the August meeting, the LGBTQ Advisory Committee was contacted by a member of a coalition of local LGBTQ community members who have been discussing the areas of concern within the Suicide Prevention Strategy. A request was made to the Advisory Committee that the coalition be invited to share their concerns & provide insight about background of strategy.

(K.Cranston/G.Jackson)

That Jae Adams of the Well be invited to speak to LGBTQ Advisory Committee members at the October meeting to discuss community feedback and background on Suicide Prevention Strategy prior to rescheduling of Dr Veltman.

CARRIED

5.3 Curfew Sign Placement at Dundurn Park

In order to give more context to the situation at Dundurn Park, Marlon suggested that the Advisory Committee invite a representative from Hamilton Police Service to speak to this issue in terms of protocol on tickets being issued, gender stats on those ticketed, community complaints received, etc.

(K.Cranston/M.Poirier)

That the LGBTQ Advisory Committee invite a member of Hamilton Police Services who is able to discuss law enforcement of curfew at Dundurn Park to the October meeting.

CARRIED

5.4 11th Annual Conference- Suicide Prevention

The Chair asked if anyone was able and willing to attend conference. Rob expressed interest in attending on behalf of the LGBTQ Advisory Committee.

(G.Jackson/M.Picken)

That Rob Brown attend, on behalf of the LGBTQ Advisory Committee, the 11th Annual Suicide Prevention Conference on Tuesday, October 25, 2011 and report back to the committee at a future meeting.

CARRIED

5.5 Community Space Planning Subcommittee

Following discussion, it was suggested that the LGBTQ Advisory Committee form a subcommittee to liaise with other local LGBTQ organizations to address community space requirements as outlined in the Needs Assessment Report. The budget requested for \$500 to facilitate the resources and work plan necessary to establish this dialogue.

(K.Cranston/G.Jackson)

That Kerry Cranston, Marlon Picken and Renee Wetselaar form the LGBTQ Advisory Committee's Community Space Planning Subcommittee.

CARRIED

5.6 Feedback on Needs Assessment Report

This issue was deferred to the October 2011 meeting.

5.7 Possible Meeting Date & Time Change

This issue was deferred to the October 2011 meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Rob apologized that he missed his first meeting of the Positive Space Collaborative on behalf of the advisory committee, but will be attending the September meeting.

6.2 Passing of David Gunton's husband, Paolo. Committee members expressed their sadness and condolences to David on the passing of his husband.

(R.Wetselaar/G.Jackson)

That the LGBTQ Advisory Committee make a \$50 donation to the AIDS Network in memory of David's husband Paolo. **CARRIED**

6.3 Kerry requested that we add Discussion of Pride Permits/Facilitation to the budget portion of the October meeting. Jane advised that it's within the advisory mandate to partner in planning Pride. Committee members requested that Kerry reach out to HammerPride, the Well and other organizations to see who is planning Pride events & encourage them to seek grant funding before upcoming deadline.

7. INFORMATION SHARING

7.1 Jane discussed the request from Recreation Division consultation. Still awaiting more details from Recreation Division.

Jane announced that she will be job-sharing her duties of the LGBTQ Advisory Committee with a co-worker.

7.2 Gord discussed upcoming 72 Hour Suicide Awareness program.

7.3 Marlon reminded members that the AIDS Walk is September 17th. He also stressed importance of voting in the October 6th election

8. ADJOURNMENT