



Hamilton

MINUTES
FOOD & SHELTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Thursday, April 12, 2012 - 2:00 p.m.,
Neighbour to Neighbour
28 Athens St., Hamilton

Present: Vice-Chair: Alexander Ramirez
Members: Carmen Salciccioli, Medora Uppal, Scott Jones, Fernando Forero, Robert Foster, Maria Cristina Pelaez, Anne Wilson, Denise Arkell, Thayra Marting, Larry Huibers and Katherine Kalinowski

Absent with

Regrets: Don Jaffray, Karen Brown and Linda Ense

Also Present: Molly Elliott, Senior Policy Analyst, Michele Attard (minute taker), Program Secretary/Housing Services Division; Rob Mastroianni, Hostels Case Manager, Residential Care Facilities; and Mara Fortino, Senior Development Officer - Hamilton Niagara Brantford, Service Canada

Guests:

1. WELCOME

Alex assumed position of chair in Don's absence and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

None

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Declarations of Conflict of Interest)

None

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(Denise Arkell/Carmen Salciccioli/Carried)

Food & Shelter Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, dated March 8, 2012 were approved as presented.

5. PRESENTATIONS

5.1 Micah House - Scott Jones

Scott Jones gave an overview of the Micah House program. Micah House is committed to providing safe shelter and community for newly arrived refugee claimants to Hamilton. Guests will receive resettlement assistance and support as they transition into the broader community.

Scott expressed his concern regarding the Bill C-31 which is a stream line process for refugees coming to Canada. Bill C-31 would impose unrealistic and unfair deadlines on refugee claimants that would force them to make representations, perhaps at the moment they are most vulnerable. This will have a great impact on refugees currently trying to find housing; since opening in 2006 Micah House has served over 500 individuals and their average stay is 2 months, this will change after the new legislation.

5.2 Committee Work plan & linkages – Alex Ramirez

Alex made a presentation to the committee on how he sees the linkages between this committee and the broader community. Alex suggested coordinating monthly brown bag lunches & informal summer barbeques to broaden communication and networking amongst organizations in the emergency food and shelter sector of Hamilton, and also partake in coordinating and organizing food drives with organizations and stakeholders across the city. It was suggested that all members send Molly or Michele a list of all the committee's that they represent in the community and have a draft ready for the next meeting.

Action: City staff will send out a reminder to all members to send their lists before the next meeting.

Action: Alex will connect with Denise Arkell and Carmen Salciccioli, as members of the Emergency Food Action Committee, regarding the possibility of coordinating a food drive with the community groups Alex identified as interested in such an effort.

6. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

6.1 Letter to Provincial & Federal Governments

Molly mentioned that the letter has been amended to include all the feedback from members and she has requested a meeting with Mayor Bob Bratina and clerks to review the letter.

Action:

City staff will follow up with Clerk's office for the meeting with the Mayor to review the letter.

6.2 OMPF Update – Molly

Members expressed concern of what will become of the investment of Provincial \$ with this chance at the Ministry. Molly mentioned that Gillian Hendry could attend a future meeting to talk about this. Deferred to future meeting further discussion.

7 DISCUSSION ITEMS

7.1 Work plan - Molly
Deferred

8 INFORMATION & OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Updates from Committee members
None

8.2 Charlton Hall – All

Carmen explained the dilemma around the Charlton Hall issue, where there is a city bylaw which prohibits residential care facilities to be within a 300 metre radius of each other. The Social Planning and Research Council is developing a report on radial separation which will be presented to this committee at a future date.

Alex read a letter addressed to the City's Mayor from chief commissioner Barbara Hall. It is stated; "Over the past year, we have held an Ontario-wide consultation on the human rights issues faced by people with mental health disabilities. We heard repeatedly that the need for safe, effective housing, and the need to feel welcome and part of the community were key issues. We also heard about the damage that can happen when these needs are not met. So your decision on this centre has the opportunity to either make these vulnerable teenage girls feel welcome, or to inflict further damage on them". ... and... "As you move forward with this report and the zoning application, consider carefully the Human rights impacts on the vulnerable people who already live and use services in that community, whose lives will be affected by the decision you make. You have the choice to say "You are not wanted here" or to say "Welcome home."

There were discussions around the table regarding Human Rights and the concerns of the wellbeing for the young women at Charlton Hall, their safety and any trauma the publicity and messaging around this issue may be causing them.

Motion:

FSAC agrees with the position taken in the letter by Chief Commissioner Barbara Hall to Mayor Bob Bratina in regards to the radial separation bylaw. FSAC recommends Council to reconsider their position of enforcing the bylaw and recommends Council to use the expertise within the relevant City departments to develop a coordinated and cohesive approach to resolving the Charlton Hall issue in a more informed way.

Carmen Salciccioli/Denise Arkell/carried

8.3 Food Bank baby food shortage – All

There was discussion regarding the continued shortage of food in food banks and that this is an issue due to increased usage, increased demand of food and sustainability. Even though funding has been approved for the summer shortfall and Christmas Hamper program again this year, more funding is needed to sustain the food banks.

There was a press conference held April 3rd in collaboration with Hamilton Community Foundation and Hamilton Food Share regarding the shortage of food in food banks. Members mentioned that new legislation regarding Ontario Works rates and changes in the Community Start-up allowance will impact low income individuals and usage in food banks.

It was suggested that maybe an advertisement could be placed in the Hamilton Spectator to have individuals allow \$ be taken from their account to support food banks.

Denise mentioned that there is a Food Charter being developed and committee members can provide their input online. The Food Charter is being prepared by the Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee. For more information visit: www.hamiltonfoodcharter.wordpress.com and send comments to: hamiltonfoodcharter@gmail.com.

A draft copy of the food charter was distributed to committee members and they mentioned that they would support the charter.

It was suggested that a member of the Community Food Security Stakeholder Committee give a presentation to this committee in May or June before the final approval of the document in September.

Motion:

FSAC supports the initiative and intent of the Hamilton Food Charter as well as engaging in consultation with its final document.

Carmen Saliccioli/Denis Arkell/carried

Action:

Molly will contact a member of the Stakeholder committee to attend a meeting in May or June.

8.4 Leave of absence for City staff – Molly

Molly mentioned that June would be her last meeting as she is going on a leave from the City for a year. It is unknown at this time who will be replacing Molly in her absence but there will be a city staff person who will take on the role in Molly's absence.

9 ATTACHMENTS

9.1 Minutes from March 8, 2012

9.2 Spectator Article – Charlton Centre dilemma no further ahead (April 3, 2012)

9.3 Spectator Article – Food banks face baby food crisis (April 4, 2012)

10 DISTRIBUTION DOCUMENTS

- 10.1 Work Plan – updated March 8th**
- 10.2 Hamilton’s Food Charter**

11 NEXT MEETING

Scheduled for May 10th, location to be determined

12 ADJOURNMENT

(Anne Wilson/Carmen Salciccioli/Carried)

That the meeting be adjourned at 4:10 pm.