



INFORMATION REPORT

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

The Space Needs Steering Committee has continued to meet and has worked on drafting a Terms of Reference. Additional discussion is being proposed for the next three months to ensure that the vision, mission, principles and goals of the group are reflective of the broad community. Spending time to ensure the process is acceptable

to the community should ensure buy-in and greater success moving this initiative forward.

The Steering Committee has commenced 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.

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.

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
- Rehearsal space and performance space for Gay Men's Chorus
- Meeting space for Primetimers Hamilton
- Dedicated space for LGBTQ Wellness Centre (approx. 2000 sq ft downtown)

The immediate needs of two of the three groups, the Gay Men's Chorus and Primetimers Hamilton are being met until the end of the year, with a possibility of extending the arrangements in the new year. Our contact from the group of youth who were requesting space has moved on to post-secondary studies, and we are currently not aware of unmet needs in the youth community as it relates to drop-in space. Staff are working on ensuring through the schools positive space groups that we become aware of any unmet needs or emerging needs, and will address them when we become aware of any outstanding needs.

There were no Recreation facilities with space available that could accommodate the needs of the LGBTQ Wellness Centre of Hamilton (The Well). Staff met 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. There are no City facilities with space available that would meet the needs of the Well. Additional discussions are planned with the Well, to identify other options, if any, for supporting their needs.

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.