

MINUTES

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

THURSDAY 2 MARCH 2000

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

1:30 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair: A. Munter

Members: W. Byrne, L. Davis, D. Beamish C. Doucet, D. Holmes, H. Kreling, M. McGoldrick-Larsen

Regrets: A. Loney,

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the Community Services Committee confirm the Minutes of the regular and confidential meetings of 17 February 2000.

CARRIED

INQUIRIES

COUNCILLORS' ITEM(S)

1. SENIOR CITIZENS LIVING IN UNREGULATED RESIDENTIAL CARE
- Councillors Alex Munter and Clive Doucet joint report dated 22 Feb 00

Councillor W. Byrne assumed the Chair for the first item of discussion. Councillor A. Munter began by saying there is a crisis in the unregulated, licensed long-term care sector in Ottawa-Carleton. Approximately 2000 seniors are on waiting lists for nursing home beds. In addition,

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the population is aging and the number of people affected by dementia will double in the next 15 years.

The Councillor noted that, since no new regulated, licensed sector beds are being added, the unregulated retirement residence sector is growing. Councillor C. Doucet and he are suggesting that a Community Forum be held in the Spring, bringing together seniors, health advocates, retirement residence operators and other interested parties, to discuss local solutions to this issue and to ensure that seniors are protected. Councillor Munter acknowledged the background research on this issue done by Chris Campbell, a social work student in his office.

Councillor C. Doucet stated this is a poverty issue, since many seniors cannot afford the high cost of care as they are fragile, not only in terms of age but also in terms of income. He noted this is a poverty issue combined with lack of institutional support. The Councillor said that agreement on how to best manage the health and welfare of people in the community should be reached through community discussion, organizational planning and funding. There should also be consensus on how to deal with too many people on waiting lists, lack of space and lack of regulation in some facilities.

The following delegations were heard in support of the Community Forum:

Mr. David Bernhardt, President, Ottawa-Carleton Council on Aging, began by saying that the Council on Aging has been interested in the issue of unregulated care for a number of years. In 1990, the Council made representations to the provincial government on its public consultation paper "Redirection of Long-term Care and Support Services", in 1993 to the Lightman Commission Report "A Community of Interest" and in 1994 to Bill 193 "An Act to Respect Long-Term Care." Recently, the Council participated in MPP Brenda Elliot's public consultation on the regulation of retirement residences conducted on behalf of the Minister Responsible for Seniors.

Mr. Bernhardt continued by saying retirement care meets no provincial standards and the premises are unregulated and un-inspected. In Ottawa-Carleton, there are 18 licensed nursing homes/homes for the aged, home to approximately 3000 seniors. These facilities are provincially regulated, meet standards of care and are inspected. Mr. Bernhardt circulated a copy of the Bill of Rights for Residents in Ontario's Nursing Homes which has been law since 1987. The document lists 19 rights in terms of care and treatment that are guaranteed by law. Unfortunately, there are no such guarantees for residents of retirement residences. Outside of municipal building codes, health and safety regulations and elements of the Tenant Protection Act, there are no regulations about standards of care in retirement residences. Mr. Bernhardt said he saw first hand, during the past five years of his mother's life, the problems that a well run, unregulated retirement residence can have as it tries to operate as an unregulated nursing home. Mr. Bernhardt concluded his presentation by saying the Region should sponsor the

community forum because municipalities have regulatory powers which can be brought to the attention of the provincial government to enhance the quality of life for seniors in the community.

Ms. Winnifred Lukes, representing the Concerned Caregivers' of Ottawa-Carleton¹ affirmed the need for an Action Team to set up regulatory safeguards for the most vulnerable seniors. She said evidence of systemic abuse of seniors is on the rise: doctors, nurses and personal care givers have too heavy a workload and suffer from burnout and fatigue. Many incidents go unreported; workers have large amounts of paperwork making them unable to meet the needs of residents. Ms. Lukes alleged that, in some instances, female residents are being abused by male attendants. She suggested a hot-line be set up with a live, professional counsellor to answer calls from families and residents. Ms. Lukes suggested that front line workers be consulted or be part of the health team investigating changes to the current unregulated system.

James D. Lumsden presented fifteen recommendations for consideration for care homes². He said that, over the past five years, there has been a reduction in the alternate level of care beds in hospitals, a lack of adequate long term care beds and an under-funded home care system. Mr. Lumsden called it unacceptable that similar health care services be delivered in an unregulated manner in a care home when they are closely regulated and subject to compliance review in a licensed facility. He indicated that the lack of adequate funds and ongoing restructuring of the health care system will result in home care services being in greater demand. The need to review the situation is imperative. Standards must be set, terms defined, and the time has come for the community to examine these issues in a public forum.

Mrs. Edwina Scott, from Unitarian House, described the traumatic experience seniors face when moving into a seniors' residence. She spoke about having a voice as a member of the residents' council in matters of importance at Unitarian House. Mrs. Scott described the hierarchical structure in the residence, noting that, with this set-up, every resident has someone to turn to if they want to discuss a problem, ask a question, an idea or a complaint. Mrs. Scott spoke about a number of programs being undertaken in the facility. She concluded by saying that, apart from their physical needs, seniors' minds and spirits also need care.

Cynthia Goodland-Fowler spoke about the fact that, as residents age, they need more and more attention. In light of the increasing number of retirement facilities, basic standards would provide protection for all seniors.

Sue van Iterson, Board Member, Unitarian House, said the report prepared by Councillors Munter and Doucet states that approximately 55% of retirement homes are members of the Ontario Residential Care Association (ORCA). This association represents for-profit residential care only: not-for-profit residences have no standards at this time. Ms. Van Iterson

¹ The complete text of the presentation is on file with the Committee Co-ordinator.

² The document is held on file with the Committee Co-ordinator.

said voluntary standards are not sufficient, nor is a piecemeal approach through varying municipal by-laws: the standards must be province-wide.

Residents of Ottawa-Carleton want to be key players in the decision-making about future regulations. The need for protective legislation is becoming more necessary as more seniors age and become frail. Ms. Iterson said she applauded Councillors Munter and Doucet for their recommendations, and for including seniors as key players in the process, along with other concerned stakeholders and the Council on Aging. She noted that three associations could be involved in monitoring the potential regulations: these are the Ontario Association for Not for Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, ORCA and the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA). They can be represented at the local community forum and can realistically discuss possible models for regulations, for monitoring and for covering the cost of monitoring.

Sue Beaudry, representing Harmer House, a non profit housing provider in Bells Corners, echoed many of the concerns raised by previous speakers. She was pleased to see this item come forward and she noted many issues need to be addressed and proposals need to be developed.

Peter Hern, a resident of Ottawa spoke about his mother, a resident of a senior's residence for a number of years. Mr. Hern stated that seniors' residences have to be regulated, much in the same manner as child care centres. He said a specific area that needs to be addressed relates to dispute arbitration methods and complaint investigation procedures.

Pursuant to these comments and observations, the Committee considered the following recommendations:

Moved by A. Munter

THAT the Region of Ottawa-Carleton contribute \$6,000 towards the cost of a one-day community forum, co-sponsored and organized by the Ottawa-Carleton Council on Aging, to bring together seniors, stakeholders and interested citizens to focus on the issue of seniors living in unregulated residential care; and

FURTHER THAT a report from the forum be submitted to Community Services Committee with recommendations on what actions could be taken locally.

CARRIED

2. EXOTIC DANCERS' ALLIANCE

- Co-ordinator, Community Services Committee report dated 02 Feb 00

Councillor D. Holmes said she wanted to see whether local exotic dancers would appreciate receiving assistance from the regional Health Department in the form of services similar to those provided to them by the Region of Peel. The Associate Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Geoff Dunkley, indicated that the Department has been doing more outreach to groups at-risk, through programs such as SITE and HIV prevention, and is supportive of working with the dancers. The Manager, Healthy Sexuality Branch, Manon Morin, said the Department has contacted Peel Health who have provided assistance. The regional Health Department will look at all sexual health issues, and will enlist the help of regional health inspectors. The regional police service has indicated it is interested in helping.

Moved by D. Holmes

1. **That the Health Department contact the Region of Peel Health Department to determine how the department assisted with the establishment of the Exotic Dancers' Alliance and how they provide health services to this population, with a view to providing similar services to this population in Ottawa-Carleton.**
2. **That the Health Department provide an update to the Committee in six months.**

CARRIED, as amended

3. NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION EMERGENCY CHILD CARE
CONSORTIUM-SHORT-TERM CHILD CARE PROGRAM

- A/Human Resources Commissioner's report dated 31 Jan 00

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the following:

1. **That the Child Care Consortium's program not be introduced corporate-wide at this time.**
2. **That potential participation be re-assessed post transition to the new city model.**

3. **That, in the interim, the Social Services Department investigate the interest of their staff in a pilot of the program.**

WITHDRAWN

NEXT MEETING

6 April 2000

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

CHAIR

CO-ORDINATOR

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