

MINUTES

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

THURSDAY 3 AUGUST 2000

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

1:30 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair: W. Byrne

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

Regrets: A. Loney, A. Munter

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

That the Community Services Committee confirm the Minutes of the regular meeting of 20 July 2000.

CARRIED

PRESENTATION

1. ANNE HUBBERT - CUTS TO HOMEMAKING SERVICES
- A/Committee Coordinator report dated 20 July 00

Ms. Hubbert addressed Committee, expressing concern about cuts to homemaking that have reduced the services she receives from 12 to 6 hours per week. Homemakers assist her with food preparation, shopping and laundry, and as a result of the cuts, she is becoming depressed and having trouble coping emotionally and physically. Her problems with homemaking services began in July

Notes: 1. Underlining indicates new or amended recommendations approved by Committee.

2. Items requiring Council approval will be presented on 9 August 2000 in Community Services Report No. 52

1992, when she left the hospital after cancer treatment to find that all her homemaking services were cut off. At that time, she went public with her experience, and the provincial government responded by funding homemaking services for 150 people, which was complimented by money from the Region. There is also the problem of getting homemakers, because the visiting homemakers association said they are very short of staff. There are an increasing number of referrals for palliative care and inadequate staff to respond to the need. Ms. Hubbert noted that she is requesting an increase in funding for her homemaking services up to ten hours a week and thanked Committee for their time and consideration.

Councillor L. Davis requested that staff comment on the possibility of increasing homemaking. Mr. L. Legault, Director, Area Operations West, noted that the situation will require assessment by staff. He confirmed that staff will review Ms. Hubbert's case and report back. The Councillor commented that there have been an increase in the number of calls to her office expressing concern about care received, and cuts to service.

Ms. Hubbert commented that there is a contact person for the Visiting Homemakers Association, Ms. Valerie Bishop de Young, and she can be reached at 238-8420.

With the concurrence of Committee, Acting Chair Holmes directed staff to report back on Ms. Hubbert's case, as well as on any other problems relating to homemaking services, and whether the Province should be asked for more cost shared dollars, whether services have been reduced, whether there's a waiting list for services, and what the effect is on the clients.

Mr. Legault noted that there have been cutbacks on the intake for people being provided homemaking services. He added that the Department has an initiative in terms of employment development where they are trying to train a number of people in this area. Mr. Legault confirmed that a report will be brought back to Committee in September.

Councillor Davis reiterated concerns about deteriorating homemaking services being provided to those in dire need and thanked Ms. Hubbert for bringing these concerns to the attention of Committee.

Ms. Sue Clark, Anti-Poverty Activist, advised that she supports Ms. Hubbert, who has required homemaking services for several years because of ill health. If Ms. Hubbert does not receive adequate homemaking assistance she will be unable to remain in her home as an independent person, and will eventually have to move to a seniors residents at the age of 54. Ms. Hubbert's independence is a right whether she has disabilities or not, and her freedom and privacy should not be compromised for the sake of saving a few dollars. Ms. Clark suggested that there should be an assessment of the whole homecare system in the Region with a focus on evaluating how effective the hours of homemaking are

for each client. The priority of the project should be maintaining a person's independence at home for as long as they are able.

Councillor M. McGoldrick-Larsen inquired whether there surveys are conducted to get feedback from clients on the homemaking services that are delivered, and whether suggestions for improvement are acted upon. Mr. Legault replied that he will inquire about this issue. The Councillor emphasized that it would be very beneficial to get feedback from users of the service, as Ms. Clark indicated.

Acting Chair Holmes vacated the Chair, and Councillor W. Byrne assumed the role of Acting Chair.

That Committee receive the presentation for information.

RECEIVED

REGULAR ITEM

2. COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN - UPDATE 2000
- A/Director, Social Housing, Medical Officer of Health,
A/Commissioner, Social Services joint report dated 11 July 00

Ms. Cappe, Acting Director, Social Housing, emphasized the urgency of the matter, noting that the sooner the Action Plan is approved, the sooner some of the community partnership money identified by the Federal Government can be accessed and directed back to the local community. In the report being presented to Committee is a request to adopt the community action plan update and to ask that the plan be forwarded to the Minister Responsible for Homelessness, Claudette Bradshaw, to use as a basis for allocating federal funding.

Ms. Cappe noted that Committee and Council are being asked to allocate the surplus from the 1999 Social Housing Budget to the Social Housing Reserve Fund as part of a matching contribution against federal funding available for homelessness initiatives. Last year the surplus that was put into the reserve fund leveraged almost 10 times that amount in capital funding. The other reason that it's so important that Council put forward the million dollars from the Social Housing surplus is that one of the limitations to the Federal funding is that the funds are not to be used for permanent housing, although they may be used for transitional housing.

Mr. W. Rooney, Manager, Initiatives to End Homelessness, Social Housing, advised that the Action Plan Update 2000 looks at new initiatives identified at a community forum that was generously funded by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) with participation from approximately 100 people, representing 70 different agencies.

Mr. Rooney noted that recommendations from the forum were divided into 5 areas: Regional ownership and responsibility; Provincial/Federal ownership and responsibility; Housing supply and support; Enabling access; and provision of support services. In the area of Regional ownership and responsibility the community has encouraged improved access and enhanced capacity of services and programs to prevent and end homelessness. This includes improving the capabilities in each official language, more hours, more culturally accessible programs. More research and demonstration projects are required to increase the understanding of factors contributing to homelessness including family violence, street violence, health issues, addictions, and access to services for the chronically mentally ill. Another area we need to refine is the accountability system to ensure the recommendations are acted upon and we have done some work with the University of Ottawa designing an evaluation system. The next area for action is the Housing Supply and Support, to increase the stock of affordable housing. From the private sector we are told that it is not economical to build affordable housing and the non-profit sector says we are losing the capacity to build affordable housing. With regard to the Provision of Support Services, the community has voiced a need to increase the service capacity in key areas to prevent evictions and to identify housing crises early and provide the support networks that help people stay in their homes. We are also piloting some services to help people in or near the shelters or places they are used to going. To access the appropriate health and support services for homeless people is all about helping people connect to the appropriate service and that has a lot to do with the education of professionals and getting the information into the community. The next steps are to plan and oversee the next phase of implementation of the action plan, continue to involve stakeholders and broaden collaboration with other levels of government.

Ms. Diane Morrison, Co-Chair of the Alliance to End Homelessness, noted that she operates a homeless shelter in downtown Ottawa where people have been sleeping on the floor every night for the past twelve months. All of the shelters in Ottawa-Carleton are overflowing with people using the service, and are operating at maximum capacity.

Ms. Trudy Sutton, Co-Chair of the Alliance to End Homelessness, stressed the importance of providing affordable housing and making it available. At Housing Help, one of the things that is done is development of a list of places that are available for rent so that people can come to the office, make some phone calls and try and find housing. There is a network of landlords who work with the organization and call when they have a unit coming available. Last year at this time there were 113 apartments on the list, not counting rooms, and now there are 15 apartments on the list. She urged Committee to continue to advocate the Provincial and Federal governments to provide the funds and the supports to build more affordable housing.

In response to a question from Councillor L. Davis, Ms. Cappe replied that there is presently nothing encouraging to report from the Federal or Provincial governments regarding programs or grants to help fund permanent affordable housing.

Councillor Davis suggested that Ms. Claudette Bradshaw, Minister Responsible for Homelessness, be invited to come to a meeting of Committee to discuss the issue.

Councillor D. Holmes made a motion to send the report to all area MP's and MPP's and Ministers Gagliano and Martin and the Prime Minister, as well as Minister Clement. Ms. Cappe commented that provincial concurrence will be required to become part of the infrastructure program. The Councillor noted that we need to start to insist that the Province of Ontario become a partner in the infrastructure program, so that the two senior levels of government are involved in social housing.

Councillor C. Doucet noted that the Region does not have sufficient funds to build the required housing to meet the needs of the community. He cited the example of Toronto which contributes \$4 billion dollars more to the province than is returned to the community. He suggested that Ottawa-Carleton contributes approximately \$1 billion to the province that is not returned in contributions to the community. The Councillor requested that the Finance Department be requested to provide comment on the feasibility of identifying the funds contributed by the Region to the province.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen advocated the need to lobby the federal government and to make a public statement on the urgent need for housing.

Councillor Holmes made a motion to invite the Federal and Provincial Ministers Responsible for Housing to spend a week in a homeless shelter in Ottawa-Carleton in order to understand the dire situation of residents.

Acting Chair Byrne made reference to funding being released into the community for mental health issues, and to provide community supports, and that this should be used to address the homelessness crisis. Mr. Rooney responded that the program is very narrowly focused on the severely mentally ill who are homeless, and is only open to 7 agencies that are already being funded to address issues of mental health. He added that there are however, opportunities for coordination and neighborhood strategies to evaluate where homelessness happens, adding that evaluation is important as it can prevent serious situations from developing.

Moved by L. Davis

That the Community Services Committee request through the Chair's office that Minister Claudette Bradshaw and Minister Tony Clement be invited to a meeting of Community Services Committee in the fall.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That the report be sent to Ottawa-Carleton area MP's and MPP's expressing our concern with both governments lack of provision of social housing and as well send the report with comments to Minister Gagliano, Minister Martin, Minister Clement, Premier Harris and Prime Minister Chrétien.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That Council request that the Ontario Minister responsible for the infrastructure program to negotiate with the Federal Government to ensure affordable housing is an eligible component of the Federal Infrastructure Program, as announced in the February 2000 budget.

CARRIED

Councillor Doucet spoke to his motion, noting that Finance and Planning could be asked to provide comment on the revenue that is sent to the provincial and federal governments, and the funding that is returned to the community. Councillor H. Kreling noted that the issue is very complex, and may be difficult to determine, as in-kind contributions and other funding may be difficult to quantify.

Moved by C. Doucet

That staff provide Community Services with a balance statement, as Toronto is now doing, to indicate how much revenue flows to both the Province and the Federal Government from taxes and fees collected and new development (i.e. growth results in Ottawa-Carleton including tax revenue resulting from increased income tax, PST and GST collected) and how much returns to the Region.

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

That through the Regional Chair's office, the Federal and Provincial Ministers responsible for Housing be invited to stay in a shelter in Ottawa-Carleton for a week in order to understand the need for permanent housing.

MOTION LOST

NAYS - D. Beamish, L. Davis, H. Kreling, M. McGoldrick-Larsen 4

YEAS - W. Byrne, C. Doucet, D. Holmes 3

Ms. Sue Clark, Anti-Poverty Activist, thanked the authors and contributors of the Action Plan for their efforts, noting that she has been a homeless person, and stayed at a number of different shelters in both Ottawa and Toronto. Ms. Clark emphasized that homelessness is a national disgrace and people die in the winter as a result. She urged Committee to take a strong stand on the issue as no one else speaks for those who are homeless.

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council:

- 1. Approve the "Community Plan Action to Prevent and End Homelessness - Update 2000".**
- 2. Forward the "Community Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness - Update 2000" to the Federal Minister of Homelessness and indicate the Plan will be used as the basis for allocating federal funds under the Supports to Community Partnership Initiative.**
- 3. Approve the transfer of the \$1.15 million 1999 Social Housing surplus to the Social Housing Reserve Fund for use in the implementation of the recommendations of the Community Action Plan Update.**

CARRIED

INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED

- 1. HEALTHY BABIES, HEALTHY CHILDREN - FUNDING UPDATE, JULY 2000
- Medical Officer of Health report dated 21 July 00**

2. DECISIONS OF THE ALLOCATIONS COMMITTEE FOR
COMMUNITY-BASED PUBLIC PARTICIPATION COORDINATION
- Commissioner, Social Services report dated 18 July 2000

NEXT MEETING

7 September 2000

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

CHAIR

CO-ORDINATOR