

MINUTES

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

05 SEPTEMBER 1996

3:00 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair: M. Meilleur

Members: M. Bellemare, R. Cantin, L. Davis, D. Holmes, A. Loney, B. McGarry,
A. Munter

Regrets: D. Pratt

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**That the Community Services Committee confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of
27 June 1996**

CARRIED

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- Note:
1. Underlining indicates a new or amended recommendation.
 2. Reports requiring Council consideration will be presented to Council on 11 September 1996 in Community Services Committee report 32 (Item 7 only) and on 25 September in Community Services report 33.

REGULAR ITEMS

1. FULL FEE RATES IN MUNICIPAL CENTRES
- Social Services Commissioner report dated 24 June 96

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve holding the rates charged to full fee payers in child care centres operated by the Region at 1995 levels as indicated below:

Infant	\$52.45
Toddler	\$41.40
Preschool	\$29.80
Kindergarten	\$21.05
School Age	\$12.50

CARRIED

2. RMOC ROLE IN THE GOVERNANCE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS
- Acting Medical Officer of Health report dated 20 Aug 96

The Acting Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Geoff Dunkley, circulated a Memorandum dated 03 Sep 96, recommending that the Committee only Receive this item for information at the present time, pending further announcements from the provincial Ministry of Health regarding the governance of substance abuse programs.

The Committee heard from Mr. Paul Webber, new Chair of the Substance Abuse Sub-Committee, District Health Council, who asked that the CSC support Dr. Dunkley's recommendation. He indicated a similar recommendation would be presented to the District Health Council at its next meeting. Mr. Webber noted it is unclear where the Province is heading with this matter, however, an announcement is expected by 20 September 96. He speculated the Province would likely recommend that a study of a larger geographical area be undertaken, and he posited this would be a regrettable course of action.

In reply to a question from Councillor A. Munter, Mr. Webber said the report originally submitted by the Health Department invites discussion but does not come to any conclusions: for this reason, it would be proper to consider it as input into the larger process.

That the Community Services Committee receive this report for information.

RECEIVED

RESPONSES TO MOTIONS/INQUIRIES

3. RESPONSE TO INQUIRY NO. 27 RE: CHANGES TO THE ONTARIO BUILDING CODE

- Acting Medical Officer of Health report dated 17 June 96

The Director, Adult Health Program, Adult Health Directorate, Ms. Maureen Murphy, presented the report. She spoke about the consultation paper entitled Back to Basics, saying there are concerns the title of the document is indicative of its intent, i.e., to cut back on gains made in barrier-free design section of the Ontario Building Code (OBC) since 1975. She suggested that “accessibility” be added to the minimum standards of “health and safety” as the primary focus of the OBC. Ms. Murphy also commented on the Back to Basic principles that refer to major increases in construction costs and to the Province’s intention to harmonise the OBC with the National Building Code. She said there are concerns past gains in accessibility will be negated for these reasons.

A number of delegations were heard, and their comments are presented below:

Ms. Judy Lux, Disabled Persons Community Resources

Ms. Lux raised the following points to refute the principles in the Back to Basics document as they relate to accessibility:

- the Building Code must include a barrier-free design section to provide health and safety to persons with physical disabilities;
- building accessible buildings from the outset is more cost-effective than having to retrofit them;
- the Province should focus not only on construction costs, but on the impact of construction decisions.

Ms. Lux concluded her presentation by saying it was important not only to maintain the accessibility requirements currently in the OBC, but also to raise the standards to ensure a wider group of persons with disabilities’ needs can be met. She suggested this can best be accomplished by incorporating the document entitled “Barrier-Free Design” published by the Canadian Standards Association.

Mr. Gerry Purchase, Disability Issues Advisory Committee, City of Ottawa

Mr. Purchase put forward the view the philosophy behind the proposed changes to the OBC is the international trend towards “laissez-faire” in many sectors. He spoke about the impact of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s (CMHC) Building Standards and their subsequent erosion as a consequence of lobbying by the building and construction industry.

Mr. Purchase cited a number of reasons why the City of Vancouver is generally regarded as one of the most accessible cities in Canada, noting that City has its own building code which contains 30 pages of additional accessibility requirements. He also spoke about universal building codes having been implemented in certain American municipalities because of the aging of the population.

Mr. Bert Hanmer, representing the Council on Aging

Mr. Hanmer spoke in support of the brief presented by the Disabled Persons Community Resources that opposes changes to the OBC. He cited the following obstacles and difficulties encountered by disabled persons every day of their lives: doors too narrow for wheelchairs or that require too much pressure to push/pull open/close; wash basins that are too high; lack of grab-bars and lack of space to manoeuvre a wheelchair in washrooms.

Mr. Hanmer noted the following situations which make it imperative to have full barrier-free access for seniors:

- the emphasis placed on shortened hospital stays and on home care vs. institutionalization for elderly persons;
- the need for elderly disabled or frail persons to participate in community activities and to access churches, stores, entertainment centres and other facilities.

Mr. Hanmer posited that much of the funding and effort that has gone into fully-accessible public transit would be lost if barrier-free access ceases to be a requirement. (The complete text of the three foregoing submissions is on file with the Co-ordinator).

Councillor A. Munter introduced a Motion calling for Regional Council to express its strong support for provisions of the OBC that relate to the accessibility of buildings to persons with disabilities and to older adults. He stressed the importance of taking a strong position at this time and he requested that staff report back, subsequent to receiving the technical document, with specific recommendations for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The Councillor emphasized the importance of not rolling back the clock with the proposed changes.

A number of amendments were proposed, after which the Motion was considered:

Moved by A. Munter

WHEREAS it is Council's view that access to public and private buildings not only enhances the integration, mobility and health of seniors and people with disabilities, but also stimulates economic activity;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Ottawa-Carleton Regional Council express concern to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing about proposed changes to the Ontario Building Code and express its strong support for provisions in the Code that help make buildings accessible to people with disabilities and older adults; and

FURTHER THAT the Minister be requested to consult with community groups about the need to improve and expand the Code's barrier-free and accessibility provisions;

FURTHER THAT in view of the Province of Ontario's interest in harmonizing its building code with the National Building Code, the Government of Canada demonstrate a leadership role in barrier-free access during its next review of federal legislation in this area;

AND FURTHER THAT this Motion and the accompanying report including the 3 community submissions be forwarded to the Government of Canada, all Ottawa-Carleton MP's and all Ottawa-Carleton MPP's.

CARRIED

4. **RESPONSE TO INQUIRY RE: SOCIAL SERVICES PROJECT (ONE-YEAR) GRANTS**

- Social Services Commissioner report dated 4 July 96

In reply to a question from Councillor D. Holmes, the Social Services Commissioner, Mr. D. Stewart, indicated that up to one-half of the funding anticipated for One-Time Grants in 1997 could be considered to be pre-committed. The Committee heard from Mr. Hugh Griffin, representing Centre 507, who said the grant process is necessary and is a useful means of developing programs to meet emerging community needs. Mr. Griffin added the program has the strong support and backing of the community.

Councillor A. Loney pointed to the fact that the District Health Council has temporarily suspended its granting program, and this underscores the importance of the RMOC maintaining its portion of grants funding for 1997. He added that efforts must be made to preserve the 25% identified for cuts in the Corporate Review. Councillor R. Cantin said there may be some new programs that would have more success than other long-established programs which have yet to become self-supporting: he said he felt Council must have the ability to assist these programs.

That the Community Services Committee receive this report for information.

RECEIVED

NOTICE OF MOTION

5. MOTION FROM 27 JUNE 96 MEETING RE: CHANGE OF REGULAR MEETING TIME

- Regional Solicitor's report dated 11 July 96

Councillor A. Loney put forth the argument the Committee has new information regarding meeting starting times, i.e., that while many persons find the afternoon a convenient time, problems arise when business spills into the supper hour. He posited that since the Committee has the ability to vary its starting time in anticipation of a lengthy meeting, it should have the right to do so on an ongoing basis without having to garner a two-thirds majority of Council.

Councillor R. Cantin expressed his difficulty with the legal opinion provided by staff. He noted that many municipal councils meet when business meets which leaves evening hours open for community business. He expressed the view that the quality of the decisions made after very long meetings may be adversely impacted.

Councillor Linda Davis said she thought no one should be precluded from participating actively in the political process. She added that, for some persons, mid-afternoon is the worst possible time, as family responsibilities need to take precedence. She posited that the present starting time has not increased public participation in the political process, as it should.

Councillor A. Munter said he felt 3:00 was an awkward time, as some committee members have to leave early for community meetings, members of the public have to hold off having dinner, etc. He said he would be support of starting earlier or of having evening meetings.

Committee Chair M. Meilleur asked that the Co-ordinator provide a report detailing meeting adjournment times for submission to Regional Council.

Councillor Cantin asked whether this matter could be dealt with through a Notice of Motion. The Solicitor, Mr. Tim Marc, responded that the same rules of procedure would apply in this instance, therefore there would be no advantage. He pointed out that the rule of the Committee Chair would be the official rule, i.e., should it be ruled there is new information, a simple majority of the Committee would be needed to carry the Motion.

At this point, the Chair ruled there was no new information available: Councillor R. Cantin challenged the rule of the Chair:

That the rule of the Chair be sustained.

LOST

YEAS: M. Bellemare, M. Meilleur

NAYS: R. Cantin, L. Davis, D. Holmes, A. Loney, B. McGarry, M. Munter

Moved by A. Loney

That the Community Services Committee and Council change the meeting time of Community Services Committee meetings to 1:30 p.m. commencing October 1996.

CARRIED

(M. Meilleur dissented)

COUNCILLORS' ITEMS

6. JOB DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- Community Services Committee Co-ordinator's report dated 29 Aug 96

Councillor D. Holmes said the complaint she received from a constituent stemmed from the fact it was unclear from the staff presentation whether this was a pre-Workfare program. In addition, the Councillor asked whether there were any guarantees that this program will not have an adverse impact on employers taking on other staff who are not social assistance clients.

The Social Services Commissioner, Mr. Dick Stewart, said this program is not related to the implementation of Ontario Works. He noted the department has been providing voluntary placements in private and non-profit sector to its clients for 23 years through the Employment Programs and will likely continue to do so in the future. He added that many clients actively seek the opportunity to participate in this program, particularly new Canadians with little current work experience or work history, who often have off-shore credentials and want to demonstrate their abilities. There is documentation to show that some placements have led to paid employment

Speaking to the second matter, Mr. Stewart said that, while the employer is asked to make the commitment the placement will not replace a paid employee, it cannot be ascertained whether this allows the employer to delay hiring new paid employees. Commissioner Stewart indicated the department's experience has been that employers realize there is a commitment involved in the placement and, in some cases they have asked that a placement be delayed until a less busy time. Mr. Stewart said this implies a recognition the program will not easily be used to replace current or future paid employees..

Councillor L. Davis asked for a profile of the kind of employer that would use this service. The Director, Employment Programs, Bob Crook, said there is a wide range of employers and the mix is dependant upon the requirements of departmental clients. He added that approximately 80% of those currently in placement have high skills, i.e, they are doctors, lawyers, accountants, programmers: there are several placements in the high technology field at the moment.

Replying to a question from Councillor R. Cantin about how many clients actually get job offers, Mr. Crook indicated there are presently 25 persons in placement, some of whom are just completing their three month period, and that 6 of these persons either have jobs or are likely to have jobs as a result of the placement.

Councillor M. Bellemare expressed concerns about jobs being taken from students, and he asked whether any of the current placements could be seen to be in competition with students for summer jobs. Commissioner Stewart said he was not aware of any but he reiterated he could not provide absolute guarantees. Mr. Crook added that, although there no strict guidelines, placements are not full time and there is no more than one person in one place at one time; many clients are doing this as a supplement to their job search activity. In response to a suggestion from Councillor Bellemare that the program run only from September to April, Mr. Stewart expressed his reluctance to go to a nine-month program when clients have an obligation to seek employment and improve their employability 12 months per year. He suggested a better recourse would be to educate employers about the service.

Councillor Holmes asked that the participant, as well as the employer, be required to complete an evaluation of the placement. Commissioner Stewart indicated this would be formalized in the documentation.

Councillor A. Munter said he had been intrigued by staff's comment about dealing mostly with clients who have a high level of skill and who are seemingly highly motivated and having only 25 placements. He commented on the fact this was an interesting precursor to having to place 10,000 persons who do not necessarily have high skills and who may not be highly motivated. He asked that staff provide Members of Council with some statistical information on the rate of success in placing these clients, what their skills are, and how this compares to the total caseload.

That the Community Services Committee receive this report for information.

RECEIVED

7. "NEW DIRECTIONS" DISCUSSION PAPER ON TENANT PROTECTION
LEGISLATION

- Community Services Committee Co-ordinator's report dated 29 Aug 96
and attachments

Councillor D. Holmes presented two Motions calling for rent controls being applied consistently to both occupied and vacant units and for the RMOC to be able to continue to impose conditions when dealing with proposals for rental housing conversions.

The Committee heard from Mr. Dan McIntyre, Executive Director, Federation of Ottawa-Carleton Tenants' Associations, who circulated a copy of the Federation's brief entitled "We Would Not Call This Protection" (August 28, 1996) in response to the New Directions discussion paper (document on file with the Co-ordinator) Mr. McIntyre put forward the view the issue of local controls should be of paramount importance to Regional Council. He posited that New Directions would lead to a reduction in the supply of rental housing, and this should not be allowed to happen.

Mr. McIntyre went on to say that local councils around the Province have spoken out on this issue and many have taken a position in support of those who rent. He indicated that the Province is not getting any support for its New Directions, that there is universal opposition from tenant groups and that virtually every landlord who made representations to the Standing Committee made it clear this would not lead to the building of new rental supply by the private market. Mr. McIntyre added that the provincial government has said it would not replace the current system until there was a system that was "provably better" and the point has been made by many, including leading academics on rental housing in Ontario, that the proposed system will not be better.

Mr. McIntyre concluded his presentation by saying Council needs to be concerned about tenants who make up 46% of the population and about those businesses that rely on tenant consumer spending. He asked that the RMOC not buy into the argument that tenants can pay higher rents. He noted that, in the last ten years, minimum rent increases in Ottawa-Carleton represented 54% under rent control; property taxes have been raised by 41% over the same period and the inflation rate was 28%.

Councillor R. Cantin said he was not in support of maintaining rent controls. He pointed out that rents on many units have remained artificially low, especially units built pre-1976, while units built after 1976 have grown to market potential. The Councillor posited the net result has been a reduced rental housing stock and the conversions to condominium housing. Councillor Cantin put forward the view that many landlords would willingly earmark a certain number of units for rent-to-income purposes if they were allowed to charge market rates for other units in the same development. He concluded by saying the building of public housing is increasing municipalities' indebtedness, and this can no longer be supported.

In reply to a question from Councillor A. Cullen, the Manager, Policy Division, Planning and Development Approvals, Marni Cappe, said the Regional policy relating to conversions was prompted by growing concerns about protecting rental housing stock and has been reaffirmed through subsequent Official Plan reviews. She added that, since November 1995, the City of Ottawa has approved the conversions of 576 units and there is interest in having the ability to maintain some control on this kind of activity. In addition, conversions have taken place because the vacancy rate has gone beyond 3% for more than one year. Councillor Cullen asked for the Committee's support for Recommendation 2 in view of these statements.

Speaking to Recommendation 1, Councillor Cullen pointed out that the rental rate for Ottawa-Carleton is 46% which represents approximately 120,000 dwellings and 300,000 persons. He quoted from the staff report which states that over 40% of private rental housing is occupied by people on social assistance: if 25% of tenants move every year, 70% of units will be at higher rental rates after 5 years, effectively taking away the supply of affordable housing from those who need it most. He noted that the bulk of the approximately 90,000 persons in Ottawa Carleton living below the poverty line are in rental housing: the percentage of tenants having affordability problems has increased from 21% to over 28% in 1991. In addition, rents have increased between 16 to 20% over the last five years, whereas the Consumer Price Index has increased by only 12.8%, hence there is a real affordability issue. Councillor Cullen concluded by saying that while there may be problems with rent controls, vacancy de-control will bring about the end of rent controls over time and will mean higher rents for tenants. He put forth the view the Province should be told the New Directions document needs to be seriously reconsidered.

Councillor A. Munter asked for the Committee's support for the second Motion. He drew attention to the City of Kanata where the rental housing rate is 18%, and he pointed out this represents a serious problem in instances of family break-up, when there is loss of employment or when young people move away but wish to remain in the community. Councillor Munter added the low rental rate also impacts on businesses who have a hard time finding people to work. He said he felt the Region has played, and must continue to play, a critical role to protect existing rental stocks. Speaking to an earlier suggestion that lifting rent controls would result in a profusion of new rental housing, the Councillor posited there is no evidence to support this assumption.

The Committee then considered the following Motions:

Moved by D. Holmes

That the RMOC respond to the Provincial Government's consultation paper "New Directions" on proposed tenant protection legislation by requesting that:

- 1. WHEREAS the RMOC has 46% of its population in rental housing (among the highest municipalities in Ontario);**

WHEREAS regional staff, in their *Background Paper on Rental Housing in Ottawa-Carleton*, have indicated that there is currently a crisis in the supply of affordable rental housing in Ottawa-Carleton;

WHEREAS according to provincial studies, each year 25% of tenants move, with the effect that within 5 years over 70% of rental units have new tenants;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT rent control be consistently applied to both occupied and vacant units.

CARRIED

2. **WHEREAS since 1976, the RMOC's Official Plan has had a policy (Section 6.2.2.2, policy 8) governing rental housing conversion, permitting such conversions only when vacancy rates exceed 3% in order to protect rental housing stock;**

WHEREAS regional staff, in their *Background Paper on Rental Housing in Ottawa-Carleton* have indicated that there is currently a crisis in the supply of affordable rental housing in Ottawa-Carleton;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the RMOC continue to have the authority to control the loss of rental units due to conversions;

AND THAT the RMOC continue to have the ability to impose conditions when dealing with such proposals.

CARRIED

Moved by A. Munter

That Council be requested to waive the Rules of Procedures to consider this item at its meeting of 11 September 1996.

CARRIED

INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY DISTRIBUTED

1. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION - SPECIAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPLEMENTARY AID
- Social Services Commissioner memorandum dated 18 June 96
2. ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRE IN OTTAWA-CARLETON
- Acting Medical Officer of Health memorandum dated 12 August 96

OTHER BUSINESS

1. DIRECTOR, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION DIRECTORATE, REGIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Committee Chair, M. Meilleur, introduced Mr. Greg Geddes, the new Director, Finance and Administration Directorate. Chair Meilleur welcomed Mr. Geddes and congratulated him on his appointment to the post.

2. CHILD CARE REFORM REVIEW

Committee members were informed that the provincial child care reform report has been released. The Director, Child Care Services Division, Ms. Gayle Preston said staff would be apprised of the document on 06 Sep 96 and that a full report on this matter would be presented to the Committee as soon as possible.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

19 September 1996

COMMITTEE CHAIR

CO-ORDINATOR