

MINUTES

Beaverton Supportive Housing Liaison Committee

August 9, 2021

5:00 pm

In Attendance:

Alan Robins	Region of Durham, Director of Housing Services
Alison Burgess	Region of Durham, Manager Corporate Initiatives
Rachel Hirstwood-Judd	Region of Durham, Adult Community Support Worker
Cindy McCreight	Region of Durham, Administrative Assistant
Arielle Fegan	
Jill Proctor	
Rick Benoit	
Mary Beddows	
David Ellins	
Brett Bloxam	
Karen Hakonson	

Guests:

Rob Brglez, Cornerstone Community Association

Regrets:

Brian Harding
Courtney-Anne Craft
George Hewitt

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Alan welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Members that missed the meeting of June 17, 2021 introduced themselves.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Karen Hakonson, Seconded by Brett Bloxam, That the Agenda be adopted.

CARRIED

ADOPTION OF JUNE 17, 2021 MINUTES

Deferred to the September 13, 2021 meeting to allow further time to for member feedback.

Questions arising from the June 17, 2021 minutes:

There was considerable discussion about the meaning of certain parts of the draft minutes. In response to members' questions regarding statements in the OrgCode Suitability Study regarding the proposed breakdown of supportive housing units, Alan re-iterated that no resident would be housed at the Beaverton site unless supports needed by such person were in place. He further clarified for committee members that the OrgCode report was provided to Council for information (2020-INFO-103) and as such there were no associated recommendations for Council to approve. He stated that the Report is a reference document to be used to inform decisions.

In response to further questions about the nature of the supports that would be available to residents, Alan pointed to a developing partnership with Lakeridge Health that would see qualified mental health supports provided to residents of the site. There were questions raised regarding when these on-site supports would be available and that resident issues can arise outside of the 9-5 workday. Alan noted that the supports provided by Lakeridge Health are part of the total supports available on the site and that trained staff will be available for residents 24/7. Many of the committee members are concerned that the quantity of mental health supports needed by residents will be insufficient to make the project successful.

Following the discussion it was agreed that approval of the June 17, 2021 meeting minutes would be deferred until the September 13, 2021 committee meeting. All members were asked to provide comments on such minutes within two weeks.

GUEST SPEAKER ROB BRGLEZ, CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Rob Brglez, Executive Director of Cornerstone Community Association provided an overview of the organization. Cornerstone started in 1967 in Oshawa to address the needs of homeless men. They operate five locations (91 units) that include:

- transitional units,
- a 40-bed shelter for men,
- a 20-bed correctional halfway house,
- an emergency senior's motel program for those not appropriate for a dormitory environment and
- a shelter program for families.

Cornerstone focuses on housing the hard to house, they see about 750 men per year and 25% of those are new to Cornerstone. They have experience housing high acuity people and have been doing so for 30 years. There are about 47 staff, the main shelter facility is staffed 24/7. All staff have been trained in Crisis Intervention, First-Aid and CPR. The Other locations have 24/7 contacts available to tenants through a phone line that automatically connects to a staff person. Individuals do not require professional contact all the time, the key is to have someone to talk to daily as needed. Housing stabilizes individuals quite radically and they have very few evictions (2-3) per year. The largest challenge is maintenance. In January Cornerstone filled their 440 Bloor St. facility (21 units). A selection committee reviews each applicant for a unit. About 90% of their residents stay housed with them for 5-10-20 years. Onsite supports include Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous, Psychologist (3

days/week), Art Therapy, and a part-time volunteer Physician. Regular consistent contact is important to success. Rob commented that *“this is a model that works”*.

Committee members asked Mr Brglez if he had ever heard of a similar scaled project (Beaverton Supportive Housing Project) in such a small town that has very limited services, doctors, EMS, police, transit and recreation available. Mr Brglez said that he would certainly try and look for something comparable. He mentioned a new shelter in Ajax but that is not supportive housing nor is it in a rural setting. Mr. Brglez noted that a critical thing is that we have a model (Housing First) that does work that takes people out of crises and moves them through a continuum into independent living. Committee members did not disagree with the Housing First model but rather the scale of the project in an area lacking services.

Committee members then asked Mr. Brglez for his opinion on occupancy at the Beaverton project. Mr. Brglez noted that, he couldn't see sending anyone to Beaverton who couldn't be suitably managed. Alan Robins reiterated that only those that can be appropriately supported on site will be offered occupancy and that this would be applicable for all occupants regardless of where they originate.

PROJECT UPDATE

The Federal Government has announced further funding under the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) and the Region has received an allocation of \$10.3 million. The RHI program has tight timelines with project completion dates required by the end of 2022.

Committee members asked for more information regarding the services that would be provided at the site. Alan noted that residency will be phased in based on supports required and available, this is a fluid process as needs are client specific and supports will constantly evolve. Clients will only be admitted if the appropriate supports are in place. Supports will be provided through partnerships with Lakeridge Health/Durham Mental Health, Brock Community Health Centre and other community resources.

The Region will issue an RFP to hire an operator to provide the 24/7 onsite supports.

More information will be provided as the model evolves and will be informed by other Regional initiatives such as the Oshawa Microhome Pilot.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference was approved with the following edits:

Item 6 – Removed: One alternate can be appointed to attend meetings when the designated member is not available. Added: If a member is unavailable to participate in the group going forward a designate will be appointed.

Item 7 – Added: LC meetings will be co-chaired by a chair selected from the LC and the Director of Housing Services for the Region of Durham. The chairs' role is to conduct these meetings in an objective and neutral manner that provides all participants with a fair opportunity to participate in the discussions.

Moved by David Ellins, Seconded by Karen Hakonson, That the Terms of Reference be Approved.

CARRIED

NEXT STEPS

- The Committee would like further clarification on the Intake process and guidelines for those that will be selected.
- The Committee would like to be presented with similar models in a community the same size as Beaverton.
- The operating budget will be added to the next agenda.
- Appointment of a Co-Chair has been deferred to the next meeting.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Monday September 13, 2021 at 5:00 pm.

MEETING ADJOURNED

Moved by Karen Hakonson, Seconded by Brett Bloxam, That the Meeting be Adjourned at 7:15 PM.

CARRIED