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The Regional Municipality of Durham

Minutes

Durham Advisory Committee on Homelessness (DACH)

Tuesday October 31, 2023

A regular meeting of the Durham Advisory Committee on Homelessness was held on Tuesday October 31, 2023 via Microsoft Teams at 1:00 PM

Attendance:

Present:

- Ashley McDonald, CDCD
- Billie Dobereiner, Service Canada
- Candice Correa, Durham Youth Services
- Christina Barrow, John Howard Society
- Christine Robinson, Community Living Durham North
- Cindy Murray, United Way
- Clarence Keesman, The Refuge
- Doreen Hume McKenna, DHMS – Lakeridge Health
- Heather Hofmann, BIAD
- Hermia Corbette, CDCD
- Ian Griffiths, VHA
- Jessica Robinson, Community Living Durham North
- Kazzrie Cormick, CDCD
- Kimberly Lepine, CAREA
- Laurie Hudson, Salvation Army
- Marla Walters, Christian Faith Outreach Centre
- Maureen Bandola, John Howard Society
- Maurice Brenner, Councillor, City of Pickering
- Mona Emond, North House
- Nathan Gardner, Backdoor Misson
- Rina Short, CMHA
- Rob Brglez, Cornerstone
- Sandra McCormack, Denise House
- Sheila Gallagher, Lakeridge Health
- Stella Danos-Papaconstantinou, Commissioner, Social Services
- Tracey Hardinge, CMHA

Staff Present:

- Alyxandra Riddell
- Brandy Henderson
- Charmalee Harris
- Jessica Stasiuk
- John Kimmerly
- Katie Hill
- Lisa McIntosh
- Marusia Laschuk
- Megan Huser-Shields
- Mtaness Shaloufe
- Rachel Small
- Sahar Foroutani
- Yvonne Mais

1. Welcome and Attendance & Land Acknowledgement

- Councillor Brenner introductions
 - Continue to stand firm in helping all of the homelessness community
- Record name and organization in the chat

2. Review of Membership

- Terms of Reference & Mandate (slides)
 - Goal is to identify service gaps and barriers

3. 1635 Dundas Update

- Would like to thank all of the Service Providers that have come to the engagement sessions
- An Expression of Interest has gone out and closed
 - Will be going through the next steps for that process
- Question – Dates for opening to service users?
 - Late fall was the original plan
 - Currently undergoing renovations to ensure it is up to Health & Safety standards
 - Community resistance has been a barrier – Town of Whitby held a public council meeting last night to speak to the latest negotiation agreement between the Region and the Town of Whitby
 - Wanting to allow the general public to provide feedback on the publicly shared agreement
 - Because of these barriers we are not allowed to open until after Dec 15

4. System Update

- Sector Tables

- Six of the sector table meetings have already taken place with the additional four sector tables meeting next week
 - Reducing from 202 in February in 2023 to 150
 - Meeting with sector agencies from the agencies
- Focus of the sector table is the Plan Induced Studies Acts
- Helps up identify local issues in the Durham Region as well as pressure points
 - Collecting relevant data
- Trying to focus more on output with the Sector Tables
 - Already begun working on projects we can start working on right away
- Program Reviews
 - Katie Hill – Supervisor for the Service System Team for the Region of Durham
 - Have been meeting with the Service Providers in person to close out the 2022 reviews
 - Will be completing the remainder in the coming weeks
 - Expansion to the team in the last 6 months
 - The team will be assigned to each of the service providers
 - Will be there to provide dedicated support to your agencies
 - Will be meeting weekly & monthly as well as conducting the yearly review
 - In the new year, the program coordinators will be using a quality assurance tool to provide a great foundation to the yearly reviews
 - Team will be reaching out to you shortly to schedule these reviews
 - 2024-2025 Funding Allocations
 - Goal is to ensure the allocations for the next fiscal year are met
 - Clearly outline the needs of your service organization so we can review
- Winter Warming Update – 2023/2024
 - Working diligently to ensure we have winter warming options for the coming winter
 - Put out a call to all lower tier municipalities
 - Currently the number of encampments that are being monitored are even higher than last spring
 - Aiming for the next of next week (Nov 6) to see the plan
 - Will be sent out to all service providers for review and feedback
 - Priority is to bring people in and keep them warm and dry
 - *Question - Is there a plan in future years to make this happen earlier?*
 - The plan for this year was to make it earlier, but barriers have limited that option

5. Direct Delivery Update

- Outreach Team Onboarding
 - Street outreach team – Regional Council identified a need to increase street outreach teams
 - Region will have their own street outreach team
 - Boots on the ground and engaging with people that are homeless to gain that rapport and trust while providing needs

- Trying to prevent addictions and get the community housed
- *Question - Where will they be working from?*
 - The goal is that 1635 Dundas will provide a space for them to work out of as a home base
 - Excited about the opportunities that it will provide as a 24 hour facility
- Question – Plans for transition – is there a plan in place to further collaborate with other agencies throughout the region to provide all of the wrap around supports to the clients?
 - We are absolutely wanting to work in collaboration with agencies
 - PCOP & MHOP are already in works with us and are already in some of the Hubs and agencies
- Encampment Strategy in Partnership with Durham Region Police Services
 - DRPS has an encampment strategy that they are already working on
 - Working towards a collaborative approach that works for both the Region and DRPS
 - Would like to include By-Law in this process as well as they are involved in encampment work and moving people involved
 - Having the extra people available to assist is beneficial
 - Goal is to have consistent meetings between the Region, DRPS and Bylaw is the goal to working together

6. Homelessness in Durham Region: Strategies to Address and Strengthen Community Mobilization

- Councillor Brenner – there are so many stereotypes that are becoming a major barrier in developing a homelessness strategy across the Region
 - Example from Councillor Brenner
 - City of Pickering - The Community is becoming part of the solution – seeing someone that is homelessness and finding solutions to help them
 - Came up with their own community town hall with the a focus on homelessness and come up with solutions rather than problems
 - There is an urgency that we need to push back in a positive way
 - Goal is to come up with a model and strategy to help us push back with some of the stereotypes that we’re dealing with in Whitby
- Yvonne Mais, Data Analysis Coordinator – Region of Durham
 - Strategy exercise to strengthen community mobilization
- Region facilitator will be in each room Breakout Rooms
 - How might we mobilize the Durham Region community by improving public perception of individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness?
 - **Breakout Room 1**
 - Group talked about utilizing Social Media as a tool to inform the community
 - Many of us are a couple of pay cheques away form being homeless
 - Redefining what homelessness is and what it looks like

- Involving success stories from the community – making it specific to communities rather than just municipalities
- Resources on the website
 - GAP Committee – changes the face of homelessness
 - CDCD
 - BDM did an initiative that was posted to YouTube where they interviewed people that were homeless
 - Changing the narrative with the youth
- Debunk the misinformation on immigration
 - CDCD developed a video and had an appropriate response to debunk myths regarding immigration
- Stakeholders
 - GAP Committee
 - Landlords
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Service Providers
- Outcomes/Deliverables
 - Increase the positive views of homelessness
- *Question – is anyone currently a member of the Chamber of Commerce?*
 - Backdoor Mission is a member
 - Different communities have different membership fees – some are very affordable
 - Could be a real opportunity for engagement
- **Breakout Room 2**
 - Main messages – changing the perception of homelessness
 - Tools
 - multiple campaigns – bus builders/bench campaigns
 - Social media or local bulletins
 - Using storytelling – with stock photos and voice actors for privacy
 - Using business partnerships
 - How can the community actively support (matching skills)?
 - Resources
 - Partnerships and getting to know people at the table
 - Outcomes
 - Nicer reactions from the community
- **Breakout Room 3**
 - Main message – focusing on the journey and the way people enter homelessness – a journey not an identity
 - Tools

- Strategic and personalized storytelling - Focusing on pathways
- Sector could come together with a vision statement
- Post Secondary schools to be involved as additional educational experiences
- Individuals with lived experience and service providers
- Outcomes
 - Very difficult to change peoples minds
 - Building resilience for those experiencing homelessness or entering into homelessness or being previously homeless
- **Breakout Room 4**
 - Leveraging past projects
 - Work that was done in 2020 – included timelines and different components of the project
 - Publicly providing reflective numbers rather than always using the By-Name numbers
 - Ensuring we continue to focus on engagement efforts prior to planning efforts to making sure people are heard
- Next Steps
 - Will be taking some of these ideas and bringing them back for next steps
 - Developing key partners that would like to be involved in working groups to bring some of these ideas together
 - Can then share back with the larger group for execution

7. Service Provider Update

- Marla – CFOC - Doors of compassion shelters still have 30 beds operating and have extended intake hours from 11am-11pm
- Ashley McDonald – Restarting our walking through outreach – 10am-4:30pm people can walk in
 - Every other Tuesdays will be walk in clinics for ODSP clients
- Margaret Eskins – DARS - Wednesday Lunch – added a Thursday evening Dinner
 - Grandma’s table
 - Anyone is welcome to come whether they are unhoused, or just lonely
 - Hot meal is prepared in their kitchen
 - Guest speakers and games

8. Other Items

- Access points – Question
 - Margaret Eskins – DARS – By-name list question – currently 2 access points – is there another option for people who can’t get there?
 - Region will definitely connect to make it more feasible

9. 2024 Meetings

- Meeting invites will be going out soon for the 2024 dates:
 - January 30th, 2024, 1 pm-3 pm
 - March 26th, 2024, 1 pm-3 pm
 - May 28th, 2024, 1 pm-3 pm
 - October 29th, 2024, 1 pm-3 pm