Regional Municipality of Waterloo
Community Services Committee
Minutes

Tuesday, April 29, 2014
1:08 p.m.
Regional Council Chamber
150 Frederick Street, Kitchener, Ontario

Present were: Chair S. Strickland, L. Armstrong, J. Brewer, T. Cowan*, R. Deutschmann, T. Galloway, J. Haalboom*, B. Halloran, R. Kelterborn, G. Lorentz, C. Millar, J. Mitchell, K. Seiling, J. Wideman and C. Zehr*

Members absent: D. Craig

Motion to Reconvene Into Open Session
Moved by J. Brewer
Seconded by J. Mitchell
That the meeting reconvene into open session.

Carried

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest Under the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act
None declared.

Consent Agenda Items

Request to Remove Items From Consent Agenda
There were no requests to remove items from the consent agenda.

Motion To Approve Items Or Receive for Information
Moved by G. Lorentz
Seconded by B. Halloran

That the following item be approved:

- That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo request the Province of Ontario to increase its cap on the cost sharing of Ontario Works Discretionary Benefits;

  And that this report be shared with all local Members of Provincial Parliament, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association as outlined in report SS-14-017, dated April 29, 2014.

And that the following items be received for information:

- P-14-056, Joseph Schneider Haus and McDougall Cottage 2013 Highlights and 2014 Initiatives (Information)
- PH-14-016, Quarterly Charged/Closed Food Premises Report
- Memo: Ontario Works Caseload: March 2014
- Memo: Emergency Social Services Conference

Carried

Regular Agenda Resumes

Reports – Social Services

a) SS-14-018 Ending Family Homelessness in Waterloo Region Report

*T. Cowan entered the meeting at 1:10 p.m.

Marie Morrison, Manager, Social Planning provided a presentation on the Ending Family Homelessness in Waterloo Region Report. A copy of the presentation is appended to the original minutes. She stated that developing a plan to address family homelessness was one of the forty actions of the 2012 updated Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy. Developing the report included consulting with over two hundred community service providers and over forty families currently experiencing, or with recent experience of, homelessness. She outlined the makeup of families that were most at risk of homelessness and the effects of homelessness on children and families. M. Morrison explained that the report found that the focus should be on permanent housing solutions rather than shelters and other time-limited residential options. She
noted that next steps will include distributing the report and including its findings in operations.

*J. Haalboom and C. Zehr entered the meeting at 1:14 p.m.

In response to a question from the Committee, M. Morrison noted that there has been a decrease in shelter usage recently but it still remains high and the average stay in a shelter is forty-two days.

Chair S. Strickland asked how the Region should reach out to identify families that are at risk. M. Morrison stated that part of the work undertaken to develop the report involved raising awareness of the services that are available.

Moved by T. Cowan
Seconded by B. Halloran

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo receive the report “Ending Family Homelessness in Waterloo Region” and the two-page Report Summary;


Carried

Reports – Planning, Housing and Community Services

b) P-14-057, Community Housing Update and Proposed 2014 Progress Plan

Deb Schlichter, Director, Housing, provided a presentation on the Community Housing Update and Proposed 2014 Progress Plan. A copy of the presentation is appended to the original minutes. She explained a number of successes that Housing staff had in 2013. These included creating more than five hundred new affordable housing units in all areas of the Region, improving housing affordability, and assisting forty-two homeowners with forgivable loans to help maintain the existing affordable housing stock. She noted that staff continue to struggle with reducing the active wait list which is largely unchanged over last five years but may be beginning to increase. In 2014 staff will look to allocate the remaining funds from the Investment in Affordable Housing, maintain the existing housing stock, and ensure that community housing remains viable for providers.

In response to a question from the Committee, D. Schlichter stated that staff are currently looking at how to take advantage of different opportunities including a possible surplus of student housing in Waterloo. They are also looking at identifying possible tenants for shared accommodations.
The Committee congratulated staff on achieving the target of five hundred new affordable housing units.

Moved by J. Brewer
Seconded by J. Wideman

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo approve the Community Housing Update and Proposed 2014 Progress Plan, as described in Report P-14-057, dated April 29, 2014.

Carried

**Reports – Interdepartmental**

c) CR-RS-14-031/P-14-054, Sand Hills Co-operative Homes Inc. Update

Received for information.

**Information/Correspondence**

a) Council Enquiries and Requests for Information Tracking List was received for information.

**Other Business**

a) Memo: OMSSA Local Municipal Champion Award

The Committee noted that an additional memo had been submitted by staff regarding the Canada Learning Bond initiative. A copy of the memo is appended to the original minutes. The initiative has received a Local Municipal Champion award and will be recognized by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) at its June 2014 annual conference. The Committee congratulated staff on the award.

Received for information.

**Next Meeting – May 27, 2014**

**Adjourn**

Moved by L. Armstrong
Seconded by C. Millar

That the meeting adjourn at 1:39 p.m.

Carried
Committee Chair, S. Strickland
Committee Clerk, T. Brubacher
Ending Family Homelessness in Waterloo Region

Region Community Service Committee
April 29, 2014
Highlights

• Ending Family Homelessness in Waterloo Region Report

• CSC Report
  – Two-Page Summary
  – Executive Summary
  – Actions
Ending Family Homelessness Project

Families in Emergency Shelter 2008 - 2012

- Families in Shelter: 65 → 214 (330% increase)
- Children in Shelter: 105 → 420 (400% increase)
- Average Length of Stay: 28 days → 42 days (50% increase)
Ending Family Homelessness Project

- Funding from federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy
- Input from over 200 community service providers and over 40 families

- Supporting Documents
  - Literature Review
  - Inventory of Housing Stability Programs for Families
Findings: Why, Who & So What?

Why families experience homelessness:
• Lack of Affordable Housing
• Financial Challenges
• Relationship Breakdown

Impact on Children:
• Anxiety
• Depression
• Hunger
• Sleep difficulties
• Developmental delays

• Interaction with peers
• Physical health
• Success at school

7% male-led
31% two-parent
62% female-led
How to End Family Homelessness

• Focus on ending rather than managing family homelessness

• Adopt a comprehensive approach
  – Primary prevention
  – System-Based Responses
  – Early Intervention
Diversion - A Promising Approach

Diversion Pilot – Phase I:

• Cambridge from Oct 2013 – March 2014
• Supported 35 families to avoid a shelter stay or significantly reduce length of time in shelter
• Through the pilot identified...

The average cost to support a family to housing stability through diversion is approximately $1,200...

...compared to the average cost of $4,150 per household to stay in emergency shelter.
Overall, while still high, demand for emergency shelter for families decreased between 2012 and 2013. At the same time, average length of stay for families increased.

- Decrease in number of families sheltered: 13% (214 to 186)
- Decrease in number of children sheltered: 15% (420 to 357)
- Average length of stay has increased to a record high: 45 days (42 days)
What's Next

• Sharing the Report

• Incorporating actions into existing work where possible

• Monitoring progress on actions as part of the Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy
Community Housing Update
and
Proposed 2014 Progress Plan

Community Services Committee Presentation
April 29, 2014
Our Housing Vision

We envision well-designed, safe, healthy, diversified housing and communities that enhance the quality of life for everyone in the Region of Waterloo
Overview

Our Accomplishments in 2013

- Improved housing affordability
- Helped maintain existing affordable housing stock
- Improved effectiveness of Community Housing
2013 Accomplishments

Exceeded the Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) goal of at least 500 new units of affordable housing by Dec 2013

- 26 new units completed & occupied
- 61 new units under development
- 16 new homeowners
2013 Accomplishments

Kitchener Housing Inc.  35 David Street

Cambridge Kiwanis Village Non-Profit Housing Corporation, 365 Linden Drive
2013 Accomplishments

Provided Rent Supplement assistance to 791 households

Provided Temporary Housing Assistance with Supports (THAWS) to 14 households
2013 Accomplishments

Assisted 42 homeowners with forgivable loans for repairs and improved accessibility through Ontario Renovates ($0.5M)

Bathroom before

Bathroom after modifications
2013 Accomplishments

Consulted with community for Housing Action Plan (HAP) update
2013 Accomplishments

Assisted Housing Providers to meet requirements

Developed the Housing Collaborative Initiative (HCI) information technology system
2013 Accomplishments

Evaluated Waterloo Region Housing sites for revitalization potential

Housed 649 households from the Community Housing Wait List
Community Housing Wait List

• Average 3,000 households 2008-2013
• Wait time increasing
• Less households being housed
• Priority groups shifting
2013 Accomplishments

Impacted more than 10,000 households through Community Housing programs

- Regionally-owned Community Housing (WRH) 2,722 units
- Oversee 47 Community Housing Providers 4,621 units
- Rent Assistance Programs
  - Rent Supplement (RS) 791 units
  - Below Average Market Rent (BAMRs) 208 units
  - Temporary Housing Assistance with Supports (THAWS) 14 units
- Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) 2,062 units
- Ontario Renovates (OR) 42 units
Proposed 2014 Actions

• Allocate remaining $1.09 M Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) for 2014-2015 capital programs

• Prepare for continuation of IAH (April/2014 - April/2019) with new Affordable Housing Strategy

• New opportunities for financing/leveraging assets
Major Issues we are dealing with

• How do we improve the Wait List system?
  – Those trying to get into community housing
  – Those trying to stay/maintain community housing
  – Those ready and are able to move out of community housing

• How to meet the need for affordable housing units with limited funding?

• How to keep our aging housing stock in good condition?

• How to help keep our community housing sector (providers) viable?
Thank you

For further information on Housing, go to:

www.region.waterloo.on.ca/housing

or contact:

Deb Schlichter
Director of Housing
Email: dschlichter@regionofwaterloo.ca
Phone: 519-575-4521

Doc 1616932
Social Services

Employment and Income Support

Date: April 29, 2014

Memorandum

To: Chair Sean Strickland and Members of the Community Services Committee
From: David Dirks, Director, Employment and Income Support
Copies: Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, Commissioner, Social Services
File Code: S09-80
Subject: OMSSA Local Municipal Champion Award

Local Municipal Champion

Staff is very pleased to advise that the Canada Learning Bond initiative will be recognized by the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) at its June 2014 annual conference. It has received a Local Municipal Champion award. This award is presented to recognize the great work done in advancing excellence in human services integration and service system management by teams from amongst municipal staff across the province.

Canada Learning Bond

The Canada Learning Bond (CLB) is a federal education grant that can amount to a total of $2,000 from the Government of Canada for any child born on or after January 1, 2004 who is eligible for the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS). The fund can be used for a diverse range of post-secondary education and training options and the
child has up to 36 years to use the fund. All Ontario Works participants with children born after this date are eligible for these funds. As the existence of education savings in any amount increases high school graduation rates by fifty percent, the Canada Learning Bond (CLB) can be an important step to breaking the cycle of poverty; however, the funds remain vastly underutilized in the region especially among those receiving social assistance.

**Achievements**

Through this initiative staff from Social Services has been able to:

- Provide coordinated, seamless, timely and easy access to the CLB
- Enhance awareness of the CLB amongst Ontario Works staff, tax Clinic volunteers, Ontario Works participants and external agencies
- Establish working partnerships with Opportunities Waterloo Region, Service Canada, Scotiabank and the Royal Bank of Canada as well as internal departments including Information and Technology Services
- Two sign up events were held in our offices as well as three follow up information sessions
- In 2013, 70 children were registered for the Canada Learning Bond, with an overall 98% satisfaction rate for the events

Staff will continue in 2014 to work toward increasing the number of children and families who access the CLB.

This work supports the Region’s 2011-2014 Corporate Strategic Plan, Focus Area 4: Healthy and Inclusive Communities; specifically, Strategic Objective 4.1 (to) work collaboratively to reduce poverty.

For further information please contact David Dirks, Director, Employment and Income Support at 519-883-2179 or ddirks@regionofwaterloo.ca