



ACTION

**Homelessness & Behavioural Issues Task Force
Minutes**

**Wednesday, February 13, 2013
12:00 noon
City Hall Council Chambers**

PRESENT: Councillor Louis Roussin
Debbie Lipscombe, Treaty 3
Dave Lucas, OPP Detachment Commander
Randy Seller (arrived at 12:05)
Joan Schelske
Jack Martin (left at 12:55 p.m.)
Karen Brown, CAO
Heather Lajeunesse, Administrative Assistant

REGRETS: Councillor Rory McMillan

Councillor Roussin called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

A. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest & the General Nature Thereof:

1) On Today's Agenda

2) From a Meeting at which a Member was not in Attendance

There were none declared.

B. Confirmation of Minutes:

Moved by J. Martin, Seconded by D. Lipscombe & Carried:-

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the Homelessness & Behavioural Issues Task Force held January 29, 2013 be confirmed as written and filed.

D. Items:

Councillor Roussin indicated that the Task Force had agreed on the Terms of Reference for the committee, which was brought to Committee of the Whole for approval on Monday, February 11th. Now that the terms have been passed the next steps can take place. Councillor Roussin summarized the intentions of the Task Force and stated that it is hopeful that any solutions will also support our abutting communities. Many municipalities are in the same situation with the issues in where they are at a point where the services are no longer sustainable by tax payer dollars.

1. Next Steps

- Education/Presentations
 - Substance Abuse & Mental Health Task Force
 - Dave Lucas, OPP Detachment Commander
 - First Nations
 - Patty Hajdu re: Managed Alcohol Program-Thunder Bay
 - Making Kenora Home
 - KAR / Buck's Programs
 - Jubilee Church
 - Morningstar
 - KAR / Northlands
- Empirical Data Gathering
- Identifying Available Resources
- Priority Areas for Review
- Public Consultation-comes under education/presentations?

It was agreed that the Task Force must establish priorities. It is certain that information needs to be gathered and resources identified. It was agreed that there are many resources available and that further data needs to be gathered regarding facilities, locations, groups, sizes, funding, etc. It was agreed that there is a shortage of facilities to be able to provide services in the best manner which may be related to the funding and location of such facilities.

It was suggested that the Task Force agree on what homelessness is as there are different categories of homelessness. Priorities are to be determined as some categories may not apply. It is recognized that there are many types of behavioural issues and the City may only in a position at this time to make recommendations.

There was an immediate suggestion to look into the court systems and medical drop offs to see if it can be determined why people are being released into the community in the first place. They are set up to fail which is very costly for Kenora. It was agreed that things need to be more efficient as behavioural issues account for 50% of the policing costs in Kenora. It would be ideal if these people were released back to their own communities as proactive checks can still be done by different means.

It was suggested that it is important to identify the pathways to homelessness, for example with FAS being a major problem in the community, how it affects people's ability to live independently and that there is no support as they transition to adulthood. It was suggested that a partnership base is needed to assist with solutions.

Dave Lucas provided an update on a managed alcohol program that will be starting at the Fellowship Centre. He indicated that there will be 10 beds available and it is anticipated that there won't be an issue with the ongoing funding once the program is established. It was agreed that facilities and their locations are important for the Task Force to review. These are not the only concerns but do need to be looked at as all services currently available are vital and needed but many are inadequate and in the wrong locations. People need to reside and have access to meals and treatment but the downtown core perpetuates the cycle of addiction in relation to the locations. It was suggested to bring the right people to the table to discuss the issues and determine what a long term solution can be. It

first should be determined who the partners are, where funding can come from and where to locate the facilities and get them out of downtown core. Dave Lucas indicated that the OPP is not the solution. The police are just managing the situation and not fixing the problem and are essentially just preventing chaos. He added that they do not implement the most effective crime prevention programs, that when crime is reduced it is most effective when there is a community wide strategy.

Joan Schelske shared information on how Ontario Works assists their clients. She indicated that clients do have to sign a participation agreement and added that the steps do not always lead to employment as not all people are employable. The case managers get the clients onto the program and if they don't participate they are deemed non-compliant and no benefits are paid. She added that this is a cycle as well as the same people keep coming back after their benefit suspension periods are up. Joan added that Ontario Works does have some provincial funds available to assist with housing and that these funds can be used to pay a portion of rent or rent arrears which can be easier on the system. It was also mentioned that hydro companies have allocated funds to assist with arrears in similar situations.

There was discussion of all of the different support groups available, administrations and organizations, volunteers, etc. each specific to their goals. All these groups are doing good and working for the same goal but unfortunately there are still gaps as people remain homeless. It was agreed that it is important for all these groups and organizations to meet and discuss and work collaboratively on solutions. It was suggested that giving them a certain focus could be attainable by the Task Force. There are many different sources of funding for these organizations and it was suggested that if KDSB is currently looking at rearranging their funding then a different approach may be taken by municipalities in identifying their needs.

It was suggested to not only get the agencies involved but to get the community members involved as well. The Task Force needs to first determine an inventory list of the agencies to see if there is duplication and perhaps some can be merged. It was mentioned that it can be quite difficult to get people together and that leadership may be needed to do so as it is impossible to rely on everyone to come together themselves. This could be the way for the Task Force to assist, to lead by identifying what it is that is needed; for example a managed alcohol facility or determining location of facilities. It was suggested that once the right people are together things may start to happen.

Debbie Lipscombe spoke on behalf of the Grand Chief indicating that he would like more information on the managed alcohol program. She added that the Chief has met with the Mayor and that he is interested in further meeting and working on a plan jointly to address the issues. It was suggested that this meeting is missing commonness and that there should be some improved communication and accountability in place. Debbie indicated that the Chief is looking for data and statistics and is wondering why some programs are still being funded if they are not working. She added that he is aware of the issues with FAS and transitional housing and suggested that the Mayor meet further with other community Chiefs around the issues and then move onto the action items. It was agreed that there should be talks with all the Chiefs and Treaty 3 in order to find solutions that benefit the tax payers as well as all the surrounding communities. It must be determined how everyone can contribute.

Councillor Roussin stated the City is not in direct provision of social services as it was previously turned over to KDSB, but that the City has a commitment to pay funds to the KDSB. The City has to come up with a plan to submit to the KDSB indicating where they feel the funds should be directed. It was agreed that the City should lead this but requires partnerships in place in order to form a coalition. Dave Lucas indicated that he has a list of all the agencies and groups in Kenora which he can provide. Karen asked that anyone with further information on any of these groups to forward this to her as well.

Debbie provided a chart to the group outlining some of the support services currently provided in the City and by First Nations organizations. She believes that the biggest fall out amongst the current structure is communication and suggested working on developing these relationships. She went through the lists on the chart relating the organizations to each other and further suggested how they can communicate and create a dialogue amongst each other. She discussed the many children currently in care and further suggested to inform agencies of good aftercare or a better discharge plan. She stated that youth and families are all at risk for homelessness and people need to be aware of this as well adding that many are just one paycheck away from homelessness and it isn't just the people walking down main street. Funding, programs and infrastructure needs to be addressed and it should be determined who can be contacted to make such changes. It was suggested to come together to approach federal and provincial partners for solutions and that this should start with our local political leaders.

It was mentioned that the Task Force keep on track as there are only certain things the City can do. Requests for funding can be supported but the City cannot get involved in the day to day provision of services as it cannot be expected on limited property tax dollars. It was concluded that the Task Force is best to come up with a business plan that is believed to help solve situation in Kenora and go to the government with the plan. It was agreed that a business plan is a good idea and that we have to build a business case to challenge the province. There is information available to move forward with creating a plan and it can be shown how costs can decrease for the municipality if we determine how it can be done through a strong business case. It was agreed that common ground lobbying offers the best potential, and that the province needs to be pushed on the issue. The funding must change for the municipality to sustain the costs as we cannot continue to sustain the way things are.

Randy/Dave-would like to know more about the funding...Louis confirmed that they are looking for efficiencies, housing issue is fragmented, so when it comes to funding what are your needs and what kind of funding do you need. This will happen with healthcare too.

5. Meeting Schedule / Next Meeting Date

Karen indicated that she would like to ensure the meetings are productive and maximize the use of everyone's time and suggested another meeting in three weeks in order to give time for some research. Karen will come up with a chart of ideas and information to create a work plan document that the Task Force can start working with. Lots of good ideas have been generated and shared so far and the right parties to act on these should be determined. Karen added that she will follow up with the group before the end of February and a meeting date will be determined for March.

K Brown

Dave will provide the list of agencies that he has access to as well as do some research on the court system. Debbie indicated she will obtain the health directory and will discuss items further with the Grand Chief. It was mentioned that the City is awaiting a letter from KDSB to explain what they are expecting of the municipality. Debbie inquired as to whether or not there is a map of the KDSBP area and it was confirmed that the KDSB does have a map.

D Lucas

D Lipscombe

Meeting adjourned at 1:16 p.m.

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