



**ACTION**

**Homelessness & Behavioural Issues Task Force  
Minutes**

**Tuesday, January 29, 2013**

**12:00 noon**

**City Hall Council Chambers**

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Louis Roussin  
Debbie Lipscombe, Treaty 3  
Jack Martin  
Randy Seller  
Karen Brown, CAO  
Dave Canfield, Mayor  
Heather Lajeunesse, Administrative Assistant

**REGRETS:** Rob Dokuchie  
Joan Schelske  
Dave Lucas, OPP Detachment Commander  
Councillor Rory McMillan

**Councillor Roussin called the meeting to order at 12:07 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 14, 2013 be confirmed as written and filed.

Councillor Roussin provided an update on moving forward with the direction from the province to local DSABs for social service and social housing reviews. KDSB has to have their plans in place for October 1, 2013 for approval on January 1, 2014 and would like input from municipalities on what their recommendations are. All programs are to be bundled together for one lump sum of funding. The employment issue was mentioned as a huge concern for all DSABs.

The City has to determine what they can do within their mandate to assist with finding a solution for homelessness and behavioural issues in Kenora. It was stated that there are issues with finding treatment and programs, but what is missing are the facilities and funding. It was added that the municipality turned their social services over to the KDSB but is now being asked to look at the issues that face Kenora.

## **D. Items:**

### **1. Round Table Discussion – Addressing Homelessness & Behavioural Issues**

It was suggested that it could be valuable to share how each member views the topic and added that further information and links can be sent out for members to read. The suggestion of a managed alcohol program is interesting and more information will be circulated on these.

Behavioural issues may be the underlying concern or root of the homelessness issue as a high percentage of those on the streets have a dependency on alcohol or drugs. It was agreed that this is what the Task Force needs to understand and determine what percentage of the problem it is. It was asked if we are looking at treatment or what the City can control and is suggested that the City needs to look at what is under their control. It was questioned what the City could do in response to the LOWDC recommendation, to aid with the Kenora re-branding and in regards to removing the situation from the downtown core to assist merchants. It was suggested that that the current contributing facilities be removed from the area to a more effective facility somewhere else but to make it accommodating to "Pathways to Employment" plan. (Eg. detox, fellowship centre). It was agreed that these services and facilities still have to be in place regardless of where they are located. There was mention of relocating the liquor and beer store as this has worked in other areas but there are concerns that the problem will migrate to other areas.

It was agreed that it is important to ensure that the right partners are in place and that placement of facilities could be a suggestion for lobbying. If partnerships are not put in place the City will inherit the cost. The staggering numbers of child welfare, as well as cases of fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) were mentioned as contributing factors to behavioural issues and homelessness. As many as 80% of people with FAS will not be able to live independently and many end up on the street as they have no executive functioning. It was mentioned that First Nations is a big piece and could be looked at for potential partners.

There were concerns raised about the word "solutions" in the Terms of Reference for the Task Force indicating that this does not reflect the depth and complicity of the issue. The City currently has social services through the KDSB and it is a matter of moving forward with the services that are out there and meeting the social service review and "Pathways to Employment" plan. It was agreed that it is a cycle, and that is everything contributing to this cycle is downtown and there is something missing to keep people from continuing within this cycle.

It was agreed that DSABs asking the municipalities look into is a good thing as there are issues that need to be addressed. It was further agreed that current initiatives are all trying to address the same issues and that it is difficult to come up with a new way to focus. Cause and effect is the root of homelessness and behavioural issues and it is important to identify the causes and how they can be addressed. Things have been the way they are for a long time and it will be a challenge to identify ideas for solutions as there are so many different causes and one solution will not fit all. If the City can assist the services board then that is what needs to be done. Councillor Roussin explained how Ontario Works addresses issues and their pathways to treatment, adding that funding comes from province for treatment programs. In order to obtain support through Ontario Works people have to sign on to the "Pathways to Employment".

Debbie indicated that on the First Nations side the current system does not work. There is a need for transitional housing. There was reference made to a hotel in Winnipeg that has been converted into supportive housing. In Kenora the people that live on the street do not have the option of transitional housing to long term housing. It was suggested that the City partner and advocate for this. There needs to be a continuum of options. Services that are currently provided should be reviewed and

gaps identified as many communities are already using all support systems in place. It was suggested to get more people at the table to discuss and brainstorm solutions. It is believed that there are things that can be addressed, or at least pieces of it falling within different pathways.

It was agreed that it needs to be identified who are the problem and why. It should be determined who the Task Force can get input from and pull the empirical data together. It was agreed that the Task Force does not need to identify the data but find the right resources that can provide the information.

There was an inquiry as to what the City's responsibility is to address these concerns and was confirmed that the City does not have a responsibility at all but they will try to aid with the solution as it is a concern of the community. Perhaps the consolidation of agencies or committees will aid in bringing ideas together and from there the City can address if there are opportunities that will make a difference.

In closing Councillor Roussin stated that the City funds 2.2 million in related costs and the policing costs are immense with 80% of police issues being downtown. He further added that this is not sustainable by the municipal tax base

## **2. Review Terms of Reference**

The feedback on the draft of terms was positive and what was discussed today is echoed in the principles. It was suggested that the homelessness definition be simple. Under the purpose the word "solution" will be amended to say "strategy" and some wording of the definitions can be changed slightly. It was agreed to switch the second and third principals listed to reflect order of importance. It was also suggested to change wording from "city responsibility" to "city involvement". The amended terms will be sent out by the end of the day and feedback is required by the end of the week so that a report can go to Council.

## **3. Kenora Substance Abuse & Mental Health Task Force Meeting**

It was shared that the next meeting of the Kenora Substance Abuse & Mental Health Task Force meeting is on Wednesday, February 5, 2013.

## **4. Next Steps**

- Education/Presentations
- Empirical Data Gathering
- Identifying Available Resources
- Priority Areas for Review
- Public Consultation

The next steps will be to pull together the data needed in order to determine the underlying causes of the issue. There was an inquiry as to whether or not presentations are required. It was suggested that presentations be given in writing to save time and to bring the people in to answer any questions. Nan Normand, Peter Kirby, Kenora Fellowship Centre, Frank Kowal of Jubilee Church, First Nations organizations, Buck Matiowski were all suggested as resources for information. Task Force members will look into contacting these resources. Next Steps will be reviewed at the next meeting.

## **5. Meeting Schedule / Next Meeting Date**

- Wednesday, Feb 13/13 at noon

Meeting adjourned at 1:20p.m.

**K Brown**

**K Brown  
R Seller  
D Lipscombe**

