



**ACTION**

**Homelessness & Behavioural Issues Task Force  
Minutes**

**Monday, June 17, 2013  
12:00 noon  
City Hall Council Chambers**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Louis Roussin  
Councillor Rory McMillan  
Mayor David Canfield (arrived at 12:40 p.m.)  
Dave Lucas, OPP Detachment Commander  
Randy Seller (arrived at 12:11 p.m.)  
Joan Schelske  
Jack Martin  
Karen Brown, CAO  
Heather Lajeunesse, Administrative Assistant  
Kerri Holder, Administrative Assistant

**REGRETS:** Debbie Lipscombe, Treaty 3  
Rob Dokuchie

**Councillor Roussin called the meeting to order at 12:03 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 D. Lucas, Seconded by J. Schelske & Carried:-**

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the Homelessness & Behavioural Issues Task Force held February 13, 2013 be confirmed as written and filed.

**D. Items:**

**1. Review Plan Outline / Discussion / Changes**

Since the last meeting staff and committee members have been busy researching homelessness and behavioural issues and much information has been provided for the Task Force to review. Karen Brown has created a draft Plan Outline for the committee to use as a start for their business plan. The direction that the Task Force would like to take from here needs to be determined as well as who needs to be brought in for discussions as per the areas of the outline. Councillor Roussin suggested going through the outline item by item to determine what needs to be done. It was mentioned that the goal will be to make recommendations for solutions to the higher levels of government.

The Draft Plan Outline was distributed to committee members prior to the meeting. The table of contents is the summary of the plan and details are within each section.

*Executive Summary:* There was an inquiry as to whether or not there is a more current study than Making Kenora Home's 2007 Homelessness Costing Study. It was mentioned that the Summit Meeting information is more current and there may be an update in the future to the homelessness study. It has already been determined that the costs of homelessness and behavioural issues cannot be sustained.

Karen brought forward a concern from Debbie Lipscombe, who could not be present at the meeting, regarding Common Ground and Common Land and how efforts may be challenged by relationships and historical experiences. It was agreed that the language from the Common Land and Common Ground be included in the Executive Summary as this is important and should be addressed.

*Underlying Issues and Causes:*

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is a condition of which the rates are high in Kenora. There is no cure for FAS and most living with it are not able to live independently. It was agreed that this needs to be considered in the plan. Karen indicated that she is looking for statistics on FAS in Kenora. Jack confirmed that he could provide some statistics, adding that since 2006 there have been over 200 assessments to date.

It is understood that addictions are the main cause of what the task force is trying to rectify. There was an inquiry as to what could be recommended with this being the main cause. Dave Lucas indicated that he believes a managed alcohol program and a drug strategy coordinator position can make an immediate impact. He had provided the group by e-mail a job posting by the City of Thunder Bay for a Drug Strategy Coordinator position and further indicated that many municipalities on Ontario have such a position or group in place. Dave stated that he believes with the severe issues we have in Kenora it may be impossible to pull all the agencies together without someone to coordinate. It was mentioned that funding is being looked into from Trillium and agreed that if funding is possible this would be ideal. It was asked what the City could do to support this. Karen confirmed that the City can contribute by offering the space for someone but that it would be a hard sell for Council to look at the position without the statistics to show history of shifts in crime and hospital visits. Dave confirmed that there are stats available and Karen indicated she would follow up.

Councillor Roussin suggested obtaining stats from the Thunder Bay business community as well as it would help ensure that something like this would work. Dave indicated that Thunder Bay is new to this but that many other communities have established such a system and can provide information. Dave stated that getting feedback from other places would be a great thing and reconfirmed his belief that this will help address our biggest challenge in Kenora. He stated that all the existing agencies are very fragmented and the coordinator position can make the system far more efficient, which is the main focus.

Councillor McMillan indicated that this is a key element in the Task Force's effort to coordinate and research a plan. He stated that we need to put together a strong business case and it will be key to show a coordination strategy, adding that we would not deliver these programs but do need to identify how things could be done better. It was agreed that there is a need to break down the barriers of all the agencies but not by taking control of delivering services that other agencies are already doing. It would be ideal to see an integration of services and to have a say in the location of the facilities. It was suggested that there be more community accountability by becoming

**J Martin**

**K Brown**

involved with and assisting local agencies as most of them report to the provincial government. It was agreed that this be included in the executive summary.

Dave Lucas suggested the potential to fund this from other sources. He indicated that the City already allocates funds and could look at assigning these funds more efficiently to different areas where it is proven that the benefits outweigh the costs, resulting in further benefits of costs savings and balance. There may be a strong case if the efficiencies are looked into and analyzed. (eg. less police officers due to crime results in cost savings which can then be put into service coordination and development) It was agreed that this is where our role of coordination is key. The organizational structure and operations can be reviewed to determine how in the long run things can be more efficient and effective. A coordinator could identify each of the agencies and what exactly they provide and if overlapping services are provided then the provincial and federal governments should review this. Karen indicated that statistics are critical for this and asked that it be identified during the outline review where to find information. Dave will provide Karen with a resource guide of Kenora area agencies (2009) to use to group agencies by way of function in the appendix of the outline.

**D Lucas**

Mental Health is a contributing factor as people are released onto the streets from facilities when they are mentally not well. Jack confirmed there is information available on this. It was mentioned that mental health is the main health related factor but that there are other health reasons that may lead to homelessness and behavioural issues. The hospital emergency room was suggested as a resource for information on this.

It was suggested that lack of affordable housing a higher priority and moved up the list and this was agreed. It was further suggested that some of the items can be characteristics of this. It was discussed how there is currently no money available to build any new housing. Jack provided information to the group from a provincial association called Hamilton Housing Help Centre, which will come upon invitation to access communities at no charge. He mentioned that it may be good to bring them to Kenora at some point which also would support Making Kenora Home. It was suggested to support Making Kenora Home and to bring the organization to Kenora for discussion and for the opportunity to create working groups. It was agreed that this could help assist with finding a common ground and a sustainable solution, as well may create an opportunity to develop partnerships and coordinate efforts. Jack and Joan will follow up on this.

**J Martin  
J Schelske**

*Empirical Data:* Karen indicated that we need enough information and statistics to quantify for a business plan and asked where further information could be found. Dave Lucas confirmed that detailed information from OPP, detox and the hospital can be sought (no names provided) adding that he will follow up with the hospital on intoxication visits and detox for further insight on their clientele. EMS was suggested as a resource as well. It was mentioned that information from the legal clinic may not be relevant.

**D Lucas**

Karen inquired about the Northland building and Dave confirmed that there are 9 residents that live there and 26 occupants are court ordered. He added that the Fellowship Centre opted out of the managed alcohol facility and that the Northland is not interested in doing it either. It was further suggested that neither place is ideal being that they are located downtown. Karen suggested finding a direct contact for each of the groups in the outline appendix to find out information on numbers and what the worst cases are. The Fellowship Centre was also suggested as a resource for information. It was agreed that quantitative and qualitative data are both factors of the business plan. There was an inquiry on if we have a current count of homelessness in Kenora and Karen indicated that she will follow up on this

**K Brown**

*Main Groups Impacted:* Karen indicated that some of the reports distributed referred to the main groups impacted, adding that it may be good to put in the plan only if using it in a meaningful manner. Jack confirmed that this is relevant and there are stats available. Some key groups impacted were identified such as First Nations and children and youth in foster care and suggestions were made for statistics on these.

*Facilities Assessment:*

It was agreed that the big problem other than funding is facilities and that all organizations have the same issues, including those in Kenora. It was agreed that facility locations in Kenora are an enabling environment and it is wondered if relocating is the right direction. It was agreed that this is not the priority issue to review but that it shouldn't be overlooked either. It was agreed that there has to be a method of coordination to get the people to the facilities otherwise they will not go. There was discussion of enforcing vagrancy and it was agreed that all things need to be looked at in a methodical way. Dave Lucas noted an example of a change in activity from the closure of Zellers; where it has stopped people from hanging around the area as they are unable shoplift.

*Program Opportunities/Strategies:*

Karen asked if the group supports the Housing First Philosophy, adding that are different components to this but wondering if the first thing the Task Force wants to do is to get people off the streets. It was asked how we are going to accomplish this when there are minimal places to rent in Kenora. It was suggested that this will help build the business case to the province and perhaps will encourage them to provide funding for low income housing. It was suggested to keep this in the plan and then adjust to fit our community. It was agreed that a managed alcohol program and/or using the Northland as transitional housing would support the philosophy as these concepts do get people off the street.

**2. Next Steps**

Karen asked if the next steps might be that the group determines what the top five priorities are while concentrating on the big plan and how it will roll out. She added that she wants to ensure that all members are on the same page and want the same things from this process. She inquired as to how the group should go about consultation and implementation and if we should be meeting with the agencies to get feedback.

It was suggested to bring all representatives to the table in a structured environment. It was agreed that the committee can go to the provincial representatives and ask for funding and confirmed that the provincial representatives will look for partnerships so it is important to establish partnerships in advance. It was agreed that the session with Hamilton Housing Help Centre will be a good thing for all partners to attend and will form part of our consultation. The sessions are facilitated and the Task Force can identify items as a group that they would like to be identified and brought forward for discussion. It was suggested that members talk to the administrators, the users, the business sector, and any related local groups as it is believed this information will also help with the plan. It was agreed that there is a need to bring people to the table so that there is a sense of community ownership.

**3. Meeting Schedule / Next Meeting**

To be determined

Meeting adjourned at 1:27 p.m.