



**Sistering Community Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes March 8, 2018
533C Gladstone Ave**

Tri-Chairs: Charlotte Empey (Sistering), Judith Taylor (Resident), Shelley Walters (Shopkeeper)

Sonya William - Paradise/Resident
Jessica Smith - Paradise/Resident
Anne Marie Quan - Resident
Christine McGlade- Resident
Robert Cerjanec - Councillor Bailao's Office
Cristina Martins- MPP Davenport
Ann Ball - Resident
Sally McLean - Resident/Sistering Volunteer
Angela Burns - Resident/BIA
Roona Maloney - Shopkeeper/Resident
Karen Harding Brown - Shopkeeper/Resident
Stephen Spencer Davis - Resident
Melody Grant - Sistering Staff
Caitlin - MP Dzerowicz's Office
Simone Weir - Bloorcourt BIA
Brenda Luu - Councillor Layton's Office
Alexander Nanoff - MPP Martins' Office

Guest Speakers

Sally Bryant, Agency Review Officer, City of Toronto Shelter, Support and Housing Administration and Jelica Vrana, City of Toronto, Housing Consultant

Roles/Responsibilities of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration

- Administration and oversight of agencies that receive funding
- Priorities: shelters, drop ins, street outreach, housing/community services
- Division went through organizational restructuring in January 2017, merged all teams in the unit
- Restructuring came from a need to ensure organizational continuity between different facets of the housing process
- "Housing stability services framework" focused the framework on clients

- As a team, they share a portfolio of agencies. Jelica's background is in social housing, Sally comes from community grants
- Housing stability services unit is where they are located (five teams in the unit, 8 people per team)
- Trying to work more with community based agencies to make connection
- Dual role of oversight and administration, helping agencies, tenants, residents, clients
- Frontline partnership with agencies in their portfolio
- Liaison between shelters and drop ins and the City
- Responsibility for winter respite drop ins, develop standards to match with new services
- Potential gap between low barrier and standards
- Clients deserve to have basic standards and the very basic standard is to keep people safe and healthy
- Checklist Health and Safety Standards including:
 - Review of general site (chairs, mats, room temperature, safe electrical, washrooms), communications (daily schedules, program information displayed, meals schedule, allergy food guides posted)
 - Operations: logs, records, ttc token distribution, list of emergency contacts, incident reports, food prep and handling
 - Facilities: cleaning schedule and log, disposal bins, schedule for waste pick up, fire safety plan, locks, infection prevention and control
- If the agency doesn't meet the standards, they support the agency to do so and conduct follow up inspections
- Currently, inspections are conducted weekly but the plan is to inspect less frequently once a baseline has been established and the standards are being met
- Do the agencies know what they're being audited about? Or is like a pop quiz? These standards designed for winter respite sites- checklist is provided to the agencies prior to audits
- Checklist used to see what exists, and standards will be created based on the checklists (drop ins and winter respites)
- All shelters have standards already
- One of the issues at Sistering is capacity: how many women can safely stay? That capacity number was set by Sistering
- Sistering files the number of women in the Drop in at 11:00 pm and 4:00 am. If Sistering is often over capacity; the team helps Sistering identify where participants are coming from: release from hospital, referral from police, unable to find a shelter bed etc. and then supports the agency to develop a strategy to ensure capacity is safe but that no woman is turned away
- Where are the records of the number of women staying at Sistering overnight kept? They are sent to the team and have been since 2015. Is the data publicly accessible? Good to get a sense of where the women are coming from, where the spikes are coming, any trends
- Jelica to send links to reports and budget information our group, including the list of new shelters and target opening dates
- New budget commits to 1000 new shelter beds

- Note: POS is purchase of service (agency running the shelter), DOS is directly operated shelter (City run)
- Most of the new shelters are connected to the closing of George Street Rehabilitation and the need to find beds for the men who have been staying there
- There is across-the-board appetite at Council this year to take steps to solve the crisis in homelessness and affordable housing
- Council is reframing conversation, changing the approach to the issue and consulting with communities, exploring appropriate siting of shelters, talking to real estate experts, marketing experts, faith agencies and more to work together to develop a new model for shelters that will include more on-site support services
- 8 years ago you couldn't get the media to report on homeless. Something has shifted at City Council and in communities; increased awareness about affordable housing and homelessness
- New shelter funding: has a portion been allocated to 24/7 drop ins to expand services? The emphasis seems to be on opening new shelters
- Sistering doesn't get the same funding as a winter respite site; receives funding based on drop in status
- Housing doesn't get funding increases every year
- Is there a discrepancy between DOS (City staffed, City owned buildings) and POS? It's possible the DOS might have a better capital reserve than Sistering (ie. the agency doesn't own the building)
- Where is the Sistering overflow going? Based on the list Sally and Jelica passed around, are the new shelters planned for TTC proximity? What about the high school property at Dufferin and Bloor or the Galleria property? Those spaces are close to Sistering and TTC and would be appropriate to take women from Sistering. Potential space at 702 Kennedy and elsewhere and taxi chits are available to take women there. However, some of the women at Sistering aren't able to maintain in traditional winter respites/shelters, and across the board the women's shelters are at 99% capacity

Renew Focus of the Mandate of Council

- Strengthen ties and communication between Sistering clients, staff, residents and shopkeepers
- Touring Sistering, getting to know staff
- Residents going to speak with the BIA
- What are our concrete next steps? Practical ways in which we can participate? Volunteerism? Donations? Opportunities to engage Sistering participants, residents and shopkeepers in collaborative activities?
- Come to the next meeting with ideas to implement our new Mandate
- Acknowledgement of participants, including them, allowing them to feel safe in businesses
- Stickers for supportive shopkeepers
- Fundraisers - makeup drives, feminine hygiene drives
- Creative new programming for participants

- Community garden at Concord and Bloor, engaging participants in and with the community
- Different buckets/priorities for brainstorming for next week (topics)

The Unconference

The Advisory Council's Letter of Interest for a City grant to support the Council's proposed one-day community engagement was positively received and we have been invited to submit a detailed proposal.