

Meeting Minutes

Sistering Community Advisory Council

Thursday January 11, 2018

Working Women Community Centre

533C Gladstone Ave

Co-Chairs: Charlotte Empey, Community Liaison Sistering & Judith Taylor, Resident

Meeting Minutes: Claire Burns, Community Liaison Associate, Sistering

In Attendance:

Judith Taylor and Charlotte Empey, Co-Chairs

Isabella Tatar, MP Julie Dzerowicz office/resident

Ann Ball, resident

Angela Burns, resident, Board member of CONC, 14 Division Community Police Liaison

Shelley Walters, Angel Hair Salon

Maya Shapiro, resident

Rachel Singer, resident

Anne-Marie Quan, volunteer/supporter

Sally McLean, resident/volunteer

Kalli Pearl, resident

Christine McGlade, resident/volunteer

David Thorek and Sonya Williams, The Paradise

Ana Bailao, Councillor, Ward 18

Angela Surdi, Councillor Layton's Office, Ward 19

Debra Neil, Peer, Sistering

Regrets:

Simone Weir

Kiera Toffelmire

Samantha Vite

Celia Harte

Lyneisha Shea

Mandate The Sistering Community Advisory Council is a conduit, helping to communicate messaging to the community from Sistering and to bring messages to Sistering from the community, and to educate each for the purposes of mutual understanding and continued positive interactions and integration.

Terms of Reference: Discussion

Term of Reference accepted with minor changes.

Neighbourhood Complaints

(not necessarily ALL complaints attributed to Sistering Participants)

- Theft
- Yelling; fighting with one another
- Verbal Abuse to staff and patrons outside of businesses
- Garbage around parkettes and businesses
- Physical assaults/aggressive behaviour
- Publicly drinking alcohol, using drugs, discarding drug paraphernalia
- Loitering and monopolizing benches and seating areas in the neighbourhood
- Public defecation and urination observed.

Discussion:

- Shopkeepers see the same faces again and again, so identify them as Sistering participants
- Sistering is a low barrier shelter but not a safe injection site. There is no onsite dispensary, and no formal monitoring of participants with respect to taking their prescribed medications. If necessary, case workers will pick up prescriptions or accompany clients to pick up prescriptions
- The fire code dictates a maximum number of women allowed to stay overnight, but Sistering does not turn women away.
- participants are not permitted to use substances onsite.
- Behaviour that violates the Code of Conduct for participants may result in a time out from the Drop In.
- There was discussion around the need for context for complainants: Do people know about the over capacity at Sistering? Over capacity and crowding are challenges.
- What can we do: Immediately, mid-term and long- term?
- Questions from Council members: what kind of data does Sistering collect. How does the agency get to know the participants? Does the agency know how long they are staying? How long are women allowed to stay overnight at Sistering? Are policies different for women who use the agency during the day? Is there a three-strikes-you're-out kind of restriction for particular kinds of behaviour?
- The police are called if there is criminal behaviour; emergency services are called for episodic behaviour that the Drop In team can't handle.
- Discussed inviting a representative from the LHIN to sit on the Council, given the mental health issues of many participants that contribute to behaviour that results in complaints.
- There was discussion around the tension that residents and shopkeepers feel. They support Sistering but want to speak up about the issues and work for resolutions but are reluctant to do so for fear of being labelled as unsupportive. They also are looking for information and help in how to deal with behaviour.

Communications:

- Discussion focused on how we let the community know the Council exists, how we circulate meeting notes and how we engage the community to share their experiences.
- Suggestion that a page be added on the Sistering website

- Consider communicating through the BIA website and community boards such as Christie Pits, Dufferin Grove, Dovercourt Park; community newspapers such as West End Phoenix and Annex Gleaner
- Discussed pros and cons of a Facebook page; communicating through churches, schools, parent-teacher events; community drop of newsletter/press release.
- Ambassadors: all Council members are ambassadors.
- Transparency re: what the Council does. We will post/publish this online and take pains to note that this body is arm's length from Sistering
- Communication Strategy Subcommittee: Sonya, Claire, Kalli, Christine

Complaint Strategy

- Strategic planning re: how to deal with some of the recurring complaints and put an information-sharing mechanism in place such as a regular meeting with staff from both Councillors' offices and a Sistering representative
- Need for protocol in how these complaints are being filtered
- It was noted that complaints abate in the winter
- How to make a difference at the municipal, provincial, federal levels
- Invite Patricia O'Connell, Sistering Executive Director, to the next meeting to talk about strategic planning for the agency
- Immediate vs. long term goals. Where we are, where do we need to get to, what kind of support would we need to get there?