

SISTERING

Sistering Advisory Council Meeting Agenda

May 10, 2018

Working Women Community Centre 533C Bloor Street West

6:00-7:30pm

In Attendance:

Chair Judith Taylor (resident), Shelley Walters (shopkeeper), Charlotte Empey (Sistering)
Claire Burns Community Advisory Associate

In Attendance:

Jessica Smith- Resident/Paradise
Sonya Williams- Resident/Paradise
Stephen Spencer Davis- Resident
Kaitlin Forbes- Julie Dzerowicz's Office
Simone Weir- Outgoing BIA representative
Melody Grant- Sistering Drop In Coordinator
Sally McLean- Resident / Sistering Volunteer
Robert Cerjanec- Councillor Bailao's Office
David Thorek- Paradise
Kalli Pearl- Resident
Angela Surdi- Councillor Layton's Office

Charlotte and Judith- Update on Meeting with Sistering

- Meeting Tuesday May 7th between Judith, Claire, Charlotte, Angela Surdi, Mike Layton, Tekla Hendrickson (Sistering Unit Director), Alice Broughton (City- Housing Manager), Melody, Pat O'Connell (Sistering Executive Director)
- How can the community and Sistering meet half-way to make change?
- How we could move forward with help on Sistering's end?
- Judith pushed for a set of community commitments - for participants, residents, shopkeepers can all aim for- goals surrounding behaviours, mutual respect, community engagement protocols
- Charlotte says that staff at Sistering is just trying to catch their breath - team is committed to co-existing in a healthy manner in the neighbourhood
- Suggestion that Sistering leadership join us at our Community Advisory Council (Board and Executive Staff Member)
- Community Liaison to write roles/responsibilities for Community Advisory Role at Sistering

- Community Liaison to set up tours, 2 at a time from the council to tour the Agency

Executable Ideas/Action Items

- Important for the neighbourhood that there is a peer worker outside mitigating conflicts out front of the building
- Currently peer workers aren't visible - they're not wearing anything to demarcate themselves as peer workers. Agency's justification for not differentiating the peer support worker is that they don't want them targeted by clients and complainants from the neighbourhood - possibility for peer workers to have lanyards as identifying markers
- Hard for folks in the community to know who those people are, more peace of mind for the community members if they knew someone was there monitoring behaviour
- The non-hierarchy that works inside of Sistering makes it really hard for community to see what happens inside of Sistering
- Has a resident ever come forward and made a claim against Sistering for assault from participants? The Agency does try to respond to complaints that are related back to them.
- Crossing the threshold into Sistering a big step for a lot of people
- Biggest issue- how to manage, figure out the front of the building- the interface between local residents, businesses and participants
- Pilot projects- ie. Rush Hour Example: during rush hour no clients on the sidewalk OR have more peers in front during rush hour (certain hours of the day)
- It's been observed that when there's more confusion, busy-ness, there's more chaos in front of the building
- Inspiration table inviting and a calming influence
- Suggestion to put Sistering signage on the Inspirations table, provide pamphlets that include information about the agency - Inspirations could bridge part of the gap between the neighbours and the clients
- Suggestion: Narrow entrance way - hard to get through to the front desk (mother with stroller); if someone needs assistance, a number you can call could be posted outside

Education

- Staff education for businesses through the form of sessions; at the Paradise there's the opportunity for trailer which would screen before films or static slides before films
- Shoppers- a good example/opportunity to train up staff, educate staff about the agency
- BIA could host quarterly educational sessions
- BIA/funding for de-escalation training- Ex. Yonge Street Business Association's The Spots Pilot Program (2016)

Pat O'Connell- Executive Director of Sistering

- Sounds like the council is ready to roll up our sleeves and do something concrete
- Ideas look interesting and good
- Important and valuable work being done at Sistering

- Will the community liaison person have multiple portfolios? yes and might have to do multiple operations roles within the Agency. Charlotte's replacement to be hired by June 2018

Questions and General Discussion

- Council's ideas will be discussed at Staff Meetings, which are run in a non-hierarchical format. What does this mean in terms of actionable items for the council?
- Would the council need to raise the funds for projects that would cost money?
- What is the City's budget for this council? I.e. for educational materials, costs of events, role of Community Liaison etc.
- Question about clarifying the role of Peer Support Workers. Answer: Peer support workers are scheduled 5pm-10pm, six days a week, duties involve supporting the participants, this takes them outside to the front but there's currently no set schedule for them being outside, Sistering will look at the current schedule and try to see how they can be best used in terms of being posted outside. Ex. 7-9am, 11-1pm, 5-8pm
- Sistering has put in a grant application for more peer workers, during the day time hours there are more administrative staff on site upstairs who help deal with issues, that's why the peer workers are originally staffed for evenings- because there's less staff onsite then
- Is there any communication between peer workers, staff about what happens outside? Yes they fill in reports and there are staff check ins. Is it possible to have the peer worker carry a walkie talkie to ensure safety? Should be possible yes.
- How can we take care of people that are walking by and getting assaulted, how can we follow up with those people?
- Communicating the Drop In centre 'three strikes you're out' policy with the community is a possible idea
- One of the common complaints to the Councillor's offices is that people walk on the opposite side of the street now
- Is there a feeling inside Sistering that if the women are off site, they don't belong to us and they aren't our responsibility?
- Is there a capital campaign for the building? Three out of the four landlords want to sell- Pat to discuss with board about capital campaign to buy the building- but the Agency has outgrown the building (9500 sq ft) Agency would need \$12K minimum
- Sidewalk Labs- building equitable communities, King Streetcar Line (Google Campus), down by the waterfront, suggestion for building the shelter down there

Executable Ideas

1. Visibility of staff and peers
2. Self generated ethos for community engagement protocols (for businesses, residents and sistering)
3. De-escalation training for businesses and residents and this council
4. Friend of Sistering Stickers (Businesses that have taken the training, way to signal the support)

5. Pamphlet/magnet for crisis control/numbers to call - trauma informed aid
6. The community creating events that could invite participants to - film screenings, more opportunities for the clients to mingle with the community
7. Community members coming into the agency for volunteer shifts
8. Function for the website- take a tour of Sistering (David Thorek has the site for this)

Next Meeting: Thursday June 14 6-7:30pm Location TBD
June 27th AGM Sistering 6pm