

SISTERING

Sistering Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

July 12, 2018

Sistering, 962 Bloor Street West

6:00-7:00pm

In Attendance:

Chair Shelley Walters, Patricia O'Connell (Sistering)
Marian Lupu – Sistering Fundraising Associate,
Sonya Williams- Resident/Paradise
Stephen Spencer Davis- Resident
Melody Grant- Sistering Drop In Coordinator
Sally McLean- Sistering Volunteer
Christine McGlade – Resident
Deborah Neil – Sistering Peer
Angela Surdi - Constituency Assistant for Mike Layton
Meg Marshall – Bloorcourt BIA
Kalli Anderson - Resident

General introductions:

- Shelly called meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance
- All participants introduced themselves
- agenda adopted
- Minutes of June 14th meeting approved by Sally, seconded by Deborah

Website:

- A bit of background was given: Communications Committee was created months ago. A preliminary google doc was created; then later a web page was created for the community to be added to Sistering's website. Can be a placeholder for now, and can be tweaked later if needed.
- The page will include Terms of Reference, FAQs, resources and links to other relevant sources and pages on Sistering's site and city of Toronto sites, to give context of what Sistering does
- Still need to discuss processes, responsiveness to issues, etc.
- Suggested to issue a neighbourhood flyer to inform the community about the purpose and efforts of the advisory council
- BIA can also do a news blast
- FAQ should be the first item on the webpage

- Meeting minutes will also be included in the webpage, summarized, Focus on action items and key points.
- The community needs to know about the committee – a literature drop in the neighbourhood is encouraged to advise the community of what we're about.
- Downtown Yonge offers seminars/workshops on how to deal with various populations
- Discussion of setting up training sessions and invite residents, shop owners for further education - how to talk to participants, de-escalation, etc.
- Meeting attendance was discussed and decided that meetings are limited to invitees, but if someone wants to attend to bring up an issue, they can request to be invited
- Privacy and confidentiality forms were distributed and filled out

Review of Last Meeting:

- Follow ups on action items and committee reports should be included in agendas
- Regarding new Service Provider/ liaison position, we didn't get funding for it, but there is a possibility we may be able to get \$10,000 from the city towards the position. We haven't yet found a way to have a regular representative.
- Outside peer supervision – it seems to be working well. Participants and peers are following the lead of other peers. In May and June Sistering had intense outside coverage with staff and peers
- More peers will be hired in the upcoming weeks. Sistering is trying to build an advanced peer program with more training
- It was generally agreed that the most intense time seems to be at rush hour when the sidewalks are very busy, the worst time being around dinner time.
- We are still working on the issue of the cart locked up outside. It belongs to a senior who is always at Sistering and has trouble disconnecting from the buggy. She is connected to the toy, and the buggy helps her mobility as well. We have no space out back for it
- Sistering doesn't enforce the 2 bag limit imposed at shelters.
- We need to put a call into the city to clear away bikes locked up outside, but we want to resolve the buggy issue first
- We have asked the city about the A-frame sidewalk signs in our block, and asked them not to give permits for more – one way to reduce clutter. The city will be asking Union Yoga and Laziza to remove theirs.

General Discussion:

- One of the councillors hears that there is more drug dealing/drug activity in the area. How do we deal with it?
- There is lack of knowledge in the community about Harm Reduction. The bags in the side entrance of Sistering have harm reduction kits specifically for men to access
- Needles are being found in back yards. 311 should be called for cleanup.
- A lot of drug activity near Ossington and Bloor. Seeing more crystal meth use, more erratic behaviours and longer highs.
- The structure at Sistering may result in users moving down the street. Men are preying on the women from Sistering and the women in the area

- What would be helpful? Women can be lured away by the drug dealers and risk rape, bad drugs, abuse
- Staff try to move the men away from Sistering
- We are in touch with police at 14 division to work with us on this. More bike officers may help.
- Relationship with the police varies but has gotten better.
- Perhaps invite 14 Division to some of our meetings to help create ties to the community
- There are officers that go out with a special mental health nurse, but not enough of those – only one per division and they only work until 7 pm. They (MCIT) should be available around the clock and more are needed
- Sistering can also do a presentation at 14 Division, have a discussion with them to build better relationships with frontline officers
- Maybe we can have dedicated/specific officers who we can have a closer relationship with (similar to Wellesley area)
- Sistering has cameras out front and in the back
- Return to communication topic: suggested to have a glossary of terms, i.e. harm reduction, low barrier, etc.
- Tours of Sistering are a good idea. Community members can call Pat and she will make arrangements
- Staff count varies as per time of day: 5 staff on the floor during the day, 4 in the afternoon, and 3 overnight

Meeting Adjourned

Next Meeting: TBD 6-7:30pm Location TBD