

MINUTES

COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON

THURSDAY 1 JUNE 2000

CHAMPLAIN ROOM

1:30 P.M.

PRESENT

Chair: A. Munter

Members: D. Beamish, W. Byrne, C. Doucet, H. Kreling, D. Holmes, A. Loney, M. McGoldrick-Larsen

Regrets: L. Davis

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**That the Community Services Committee confirm the Minutes of the regular meeting of 18 May 2000.**

CARRIED

1. NATIONAL ABORIGINAL DAY - LOCAL INITIATIVE

**That the Community Services Committee receive this report for information.**

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Notes: 1. Underlining indicates new or amended recommendations approved by Committee.

2. Items requiring Council approval will be presented on 14 June 2000 in Community Services Report No. 48.



HEALTH

2. RESULTS OF WEST CARLETON BLOOD LEAD SCREENING, JANUARY 2000

**That Committee and Council receive this report for information.**

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3. OTTAWA-CARLETON HOUSING BOARD: COMPOSITION  
AND MEMBERS

**That Committee and Council defer any decision regarding the composition of the OCH Board or filling the existing vacancy until the future ownership and governance of the public housing stock is determined, and that this decision be communicated to the Chair of the Board.**

CARRIED

4. ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL HOUSING WAITING LIST  
IN OTTAWA-CARLETON

Ms. Ishbel Solvason Wiebe, Manager of the Social Housing Registry of Ottawa-Carleton, made a presentation to Committee summarizing the key points of the waiting list report. She noted that the registry was established in 1996 with an initial 5 providers of social housing into one amalgamated list, and has grown to represent 44 housing providers, representing 18,247 units. The first five providers included City Living, Gloucester Housing, Nepean Housing, Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation and a local non-profit.

Ms. Wiebe noted that applicants are dealt with in chronological order, based on when they applied for social housing, with the exception of victims of familial abuse who are looking to leave their situations permanently, and those in the disadvantaged by chronology category, which includes youth aged 16 and 17, the homeless, and newcomers to Canada in their first year.

Ms. Wiebe noted that 80% of applicants for social housing report an annual income of less than \$20,000 per year. Applicants in the familial abuse group report an average annual income of \$15,000 or less, the homeless an average annual income of \$10,000 or less, and those aged 16 and 17 no more than \$15,000 in average annual income, with more than half of these being parents.

There are 15,000 active files on the waiting list, 7,800 of which represent applicants that are responsible for a minimum of 1 child.

Ms. Wiebe noted that there have been 3000 applications made for housing since January 1, 2000, and the average wait for a placement is between 5 and 8 years. In 1999, 2006 applicants were housed.

Ms. Wiebe urged Committee to take the urgent needs of those requiring social housing seriously.

Valerie, an applicant for social housing, noted that she had applied for housing 4 years previously, at a time when she was in dire need of assistance, and has put herself through college and raised her child the last four years, without access to subsidized housing. She noted that people who live in poverty may not always be in that situation, but they need access to assistance when they are.

Dave, father of three children and an applicant for social housing, advised that he applied for housing 3 years ago, and has struggled to support his family in that time, paying more than 50% of his income on housing. He noted that the struggle and the hardship kills dreams and incentive, and more affordable housing is needed.

Councillor D. Holmes noted that with regard to victims of abuse, it is unfortunate that mothers and children are forced to leave while the abuser stays in the home. She inquired whether Ms. Wiebe had any suggestions on how to rectify this inequity. Ms. Wiebe noted that although it is unfortunate, many victims of abuse report that they must leave as the abuser and the abuser's family know where they are and have threatened them. Councillor Holmes expressed dissatisfaction that the justice system fails to represent and protect the victims of abuse.

In response to a question from Councillor Holmes, Ms. Wiebe noted that the homeless represent 70% of the disadvantaged applicants placed in housing on a priority basis, with the remainder of the group made of youth and newcomers to Canada in their first year.

Councillor Holmes commented that if the federal government is making the decision to increase immigration, they should have the corresponding responsibility to provide financial assistance to support the housing required by this group.

In reply to a query from Councillor C. Doucet, Ms. Wiebe stated that the provincial government stopped building social housing in 1995 when the current Conservative government was elected.

Chair Munter noted that the latest report from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation indicated that rents are increasing far above the rate of inflation.

In response to a request for clarification from Councillor Doucet, Ms. Marni Cappe, Acting Director, Social Housing, stated that rent controls were lifted in 1997, and tenants are protected unless they move, when rents can be raised. She added that the theory was that if rent controls were lifted, more developers would be interested in building rental properties, however in reality the return on investment is less than in building property for sale. The impact of the lifting of rent controls has been negative, particularly on low income members of society. There is a severe shortage of moderately priced rental housing. She noted that rent controls were lifted in British Columbia prior to those in Ontario, and there has not been a corresponding increase in rental housing built.

Councillor A. Loney inquired how many applicants were in the 16-17 age group. Ms. Wiebe replied that there were between 80-100 applicants in this category, and more than half of them are parents, and none of them have an income of more than \$15,000 per year. She noted that they must be at least 16 to apply, and once they reach 18 they move from the disadvantaged priority list to the general list.

Councillor Loney inquired whether single parents under 16 years of age qualify for any type of assistance. Mr. Dick Stewart, Commissioner of Social Services, stated that individuals under 16 are not considered adults, however as single parents may be eligible for some benefits under special circumstances.

Councillor M. McGoldrick-Larsen commended Ms. Wiebe and her staff on the valuable information provided in the report, and recognized the initiative of the first five social housing agencies who joined together to begin the registry. She suggested that the data concerning placements in social housing for newcomer Canadians in their first year in Canada should be forwarded to the federal government requesting funding specifically for this group. Committee concurred with this suggestion and agreed it should be part of a motion.

Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen requested that the Health Department provide information on the rates of teen pregnancy in Ottawa-Carleton, and the programs in place in schools and the community to address this issue. Ms. Stephani Roy, Committee Co-ordinator, confirmed that she would forward this request to the Health Department, and request a reply to Councillor McGoldrick-Larsen's office with copy to Committee.

Moved by Chair Munter

**That Community Services Committee and Council receive this report for information.**

**THAT the Analysis of the Social Housing Waiting List, which illustrates the urgent need for all levels of government to invest in the provision of new affordable rental housing in Ottawa-Carleton, be circulated to:**

- Ottawa-Carleton's federal and provincial elected representatives:**
- All Federal and Provincial Party Leaders;**
- Minister of Labour/Federal Coordinator of Homelessness Claudette Bradsaw, Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Tony Clement and Federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Elinor Caplan;**
- The Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.**

CARRIED as amended

5. **RESPONSE TO DIRECTION FROM COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL RE: CHILD CARE SUBSIDY POLICY AMENDMENTS REGARDING RRSPS**

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Councillor D. Holmes, inquired whether the Social Services Department could provide an update on the status of the pending court case concerning the child care subsidy policy and RRSPs. Mr. Dick Stewart, Commissioner of Social Services, stated that initial funding of \$10,000 has been advanced for the legal challenger, and preliminary research is being conducted. He added that updates will be provided on the case, as they are available.

**That the Community Services Committee and Council receive this report for information.**

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## COUNCILLOR'S ITEM

### 6. OUR VISION FOR THE NEW CITY OF OTTAWA

Ms. Christina Marchant, representing the Family Service Centre, presented a vision statement for the new City of Ottawa that reflects the welfare of all members of Ottawa-Carleton. She noted that a number of non-profit community based groups came together to develop the vision, to reflect a concern about those disadvantaged members of society, in order to ensure that the new city is built on strong social values as well as strong economic values. She noted that the groups are tentatively scheduled to present the vision to the Transition Board on 12 June 2000, and would like Committee and Regional Council to endorse the vision.

Ms. Marlene Cherun, representing Jewish Family Services, thanked Committee for always being sensitive the needs of the disadvantaged in the community. She expressed concern for the recent trend in society that only recognizes the value of those members of society who contribute financially. She noted that it is incumbent on elected officials to be a voice for the disadvantaged and to not abandon them.

Ms. Lynn Sherwood, representing the Child Poverty Action Group, made reference to the recent report on Child Poverty that indicated that 23% of children in the community are living in poverty. She noted that society should not value only those people who contribute financially. She added that this type of value leads to a dehumanizing and devaluing of society, and expressed concern that these types of issues are not being presented to the Transition Board.

Councillor W. Byrne read a motion into the record endorsing the vision for the new City of Ottawa.

Councillor M. McGoldrick-Larsen stated that the issue is a timely one, and that she has a Bell South Nepean Advisory Committee which is working on a similar document to present to the Transition Board on 26 June 2000. She suggested that there would be more impact if these items were presented together, adding that many residents in Ottawa-Carleton have a concern about the impact amalgamation will have on services for people. She added that it is important to maintain the quality of life in this community, and expressed support for the motion.

Councillor D. Holmes noted that it may be more effective for the new Council of the City of Ottawa to endorse the vision rather to send it to the Transition Board. She added that this type of visioning should be incorporated into Official Plan policies for the City.

Councillor Byrne accepted the amendment as friendly that the vision should go forward to the first meeting of the new Council for endorsement.

Councillor A. Loney stated that he believes that presentation at the first meeting of the new Council is too late and that Councillors running in the election should be asked to support the statement and come out in support of a vision that represents more than the economic and high technology sectors of society.

Councillor C. Doucet, noted that the The Ottawa Partnership (TOP) recently presented a vision statement for the growth industry, which recognized three sectors: economic growth, the environment and social equity. He suggested that when this motion is presented to the new Council it should be expanded to include a green plan and social vision for the entire Region.

Chair Munter suggested that the motion could be forwarded to TOP for endorsement. Councillor Byrne accepted this suggestion as a friendly amendment.

Councillor Byrne noted that a vision statement is necessary for the new City, in order to ensure that values that represent a livable community for all are represented. She concurred with Councillor Loney's suggestion that the vision be distributed to candidates in the election asking for their response and support of the vision, as the issue should be placed high on the agenda.

Councillor H. Kreling noted that the high technology and corporate sectors of the community have been supportive and influential in supporting visions that support social equity and the environment, and endorsement by these groups would garner the recognition of the Transition Board in a more effective manner than a motion passed by Regional Council.

Councillor Kreling suggested that local community groups contact corporate sponsors for their support of the vision.

Chair Munter noted that the business community has recognized that one of the great advantages of being in an area like Ottawa is that social and environmental issues are held in as high regard as economic issues, which provides a high quality of life for all. He added that in many areas that have experienced strong growth, like Silicon Valley, without concern for other issues, a myriad of social and environmental problems have arisen.

Moved by Councillor W. Byrne

**THAT Regional Council endorse "Our Vision for the New City of Ottawa" developed by many of the Region's community partners and calls on the Ottawa Transition Board to adopt this vision statement to help guide it's work; and,**

**FURTHER THAT this motion, and the vision, be forwarded to the Transition Board for it's action; and**



**FURTHER THAT this motion, and the vision, be also forwarded to The Ottawa Partnership (TOP) to be incorporated in TOP's work; and,**

**FURTHER THAT this item be placed on the agenda of the first meeting of the new Council of the City of Ottawa.**

CARRIED as amended

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Dick Stewart, Commissioner of Social Services, provided Committee with the encouraging news that the provincial government recently announced that it will recognize community placements that result in permanent jobs as being counted towards workfare targets.

Commissioner Stewart noted that the official guidelines will be forwarded to members as soon as they are received from the province. He added that the likelihood of meeting the targets provided by the province are much more obtainable with this policy change.

Councillor A. Loney suggested that a motion be passed by Committee and Council expressing appreciation to the province for making this change.

Councillor M. McGoldrick-Larsen suggested that the Department release the information as a "good news" story.

Moved by Councillor Loney

**THAT Regional Council congratulate and express our appreciation to the Provincial Government for recognizing the Region's successful efforts in placing social assistance clients in permanent jobs and counting these successes as part of our workfare targets; and,**

**FURTHER THAT this motion be forwarded to the Provincial Minister of Community and Social Services (and Francophone Affairs) John Baird.**

CARRIED

Councillor W. Byrne made an inquiry concerning the Home Help program administered by the Social Services Department, requesting clarification whether a case conference is held with CCAC to ensure that care remains seamless. Ms. Stephani Roy, Committee Co-ordinator noted that she will forward the inquiry to the Social Services Department, with a request for a reply to Councillor Byrne.

NEXT MEETING

**15 June 2000**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:53 p.m.

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CHAIR

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CO-ORDINATOR