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Committee Agenda 18 Sep 97

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TO/DEST. Chair, Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Director, Residential Services

SUBJECT/OBJET **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE REOPENING OF
NELSON HOUSE**

You have requested a progress report on the reopening of Nelson House.

BACKGROUND

As a result of serious stability and accountability issues at Nelson House, a 15-bed transition home for women fleeing situations of family violence, Regional Council endorsed a plan put forward by the Social Services Department and the Ottawa Area Office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The goal was to ensure that stable and accountable services for women and their children would be put in place. A Community Advisory Committee worked with the Department and the Ministry to determine the types of services that should be purchased and to develop a detailed Invitation to Submit Proposals.

The proposal submitted by the Nelson House board was chosen at the end of February. The Department and the Ministry presented a framework for the terms and conditions to ensure stable and accountable services for women and their children to the board of Nelson House. The framework addressed issues of governance, service delivery, financial management systems, and community collaboration around matters related to violence against women. The framework was well received by the Nelson House board.

UPDATE

The Department and the Ministry have met on a monthly basis with a negotiating team from the Nelson House board and have also had a meeting with all the members of the Nelson House board. The Ministry has provided funding to Nelson House to hire a consultant to assist the board in the development of a comprehensive work plan to address the issues presented in the framework.

The Nelson House representatives presented a draft of the work plan at the end of June. Currently the board is refining the work plan to ensure it meets the terms and conditions agreed to with the funders. The Ministry, which will take over sole responsibility for the management of shelters for women fleeing situations of abuse in January 1998, intends to use the work plan as the basis for the contract that will be entered into with the Nelson House board for the provision of services to women and their children.

Agreement on the work plan could come as early as sometime this month with a contract entered into in September. The work plan sets out the reopening of the shelter for women and their children in the 2nd month of the plan. This would suggest that the earliest the shelter would reopen would be in the month of October.

In the meantime, interim services continue to be in place to support women and their children through the other local transition houses and at one of the Region's family shelters. The Ministry has funded support services provided by a network of community agencies for women and their children similar to those found in other women's shelters at the Carling Family shelter. Close to 70 women and their children have been sheltered at the Carling Family Shelter in the first 6 months of 1997.

The Department will inform you and members of Regional Council when agreement on the work plan is achieved and the opening date for Nelson House is determined.

Approved by Luc Legault

cc: Members of Regional Council