

The situation in regards to homeless individuals and the services that support them has been confusing for us to understand and has created a great deal of concern for council. There are several agencies involved and several sources of funding. We, as a council, have been called upon in the past to support these services beyond what should be required from this level of government. However, the two other levels of government have not stepped up to the plate and we, the level of government closest to the people, continually find ourselves faced with this difficult issue.

While there has been a great deal of work done in this area there are some significant difficulties with the process and the results.

1. I believe that the Advisory committee has not been representative enough of a broader spectrum of community members who could bring assistance to this issue (as was suggested by the Solutions team in December).
2. While staff have provided a recommendation that calls for an RFP process (recommendation 6 & 7) for shelter provision and outreach services and a recommendation (13) "that the community review the current delivery of emergency shelter services to develop an affordable plan that will meet the need of all of the homeless population" there is no defined process for these initiatives to proceed. A more defined process must be identified to ensure that we have created a solution that is based on criteria that reflect community need and sustainable practices.
3. While there are, and always have been, recommendations (3, 4, & 10) that we advocate to the provincial and federal governments that they should support this serious issue in an appropriate manner there has never been an organized and concentrated effort to do this such as we have seen on health care issues.
4. Council was clearly not satisfied with the recommendation to bring the emergency funds into the Ontario Works department for internal administration.
5. The Affordable Housing Strategy which should provide advice and direction to linking with current provincial and federal opportunities to expand our affordable housing supply (one of the real answers to homelessness) has not yet been received by council.

Given all of these serious concerns with the direction we have taken by adopting all but recommendation 8 & 9 of the staff report and given that we are being presented with a report that indicates that we ended 2005 with a 4.87 million dollar surplus (1.41 that came from housing services and 1.52 that came from Ontario works) I think we have an opportunity to provide more direction to this issue. I also think that we would be criticized for having such a large surplus and not using our own means to further assist in addressing the needs of this vulnerable population.

I am suggestion that we work towards a more integrated transition of services that will include advocacy in the planning phase and while an RFP process will be necessary, more work needs to be done to build the vision of a system that will meet the

community's needs and be sustainable. While we decide how to deliver emergency shelter and supports in a more integrated fashion we should keep the current system in place. We would work towards making these decisions before the end of our term so that the next council can have a clearer picture of what kind of support is actually necessary at the municipal level. There were several recommendations from the Solution Team presented in December which we could follow through on. It really is imperative that we do so now.

I would suggest:

1. That the Community solutions team be reactivated with a broader mandate and longer tenure with some additional members to act as the Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness and Affordable Housing.
2. That this Committee have the chair (Nancy Dube) of the Advisory Committee on Homelessness Initiatives on it.
3. That it report to Council.
4. That it be made up of additional various stakeholders like private developers and non-profit housing providers, community champions (police representation/business representation/ health unit representation), tenant and landlord representatives and that staff from housing, planning, legal, social services and Economic Development, participate to help connect the dots as has been the case in other communities.
5. Community leaders including politicians with access to the federal and provincial governments should be included as part of the advocacy strategy.
6. Board members from the various agencies could act as a resource team.
7. A strong team needs to be put in place to move this issue to the next steps. This group would be responsible for working with the agencies in developing the community plan that would see the shelter and outreach services realigned and would report directly to council. They would decide how the emergency funds would remain an integral part of that community plan. They would lead the campaign to the senior levels of government including accessing the Ministers directly responsible for these issues.
8. That the Affordable Housing strategy be presented to this group and that links be made between housing people and homelessness supports.

9. That we would fund the current services until the end of December 2006 from the current funds available and the 2005 budget surplus as follows:

Available from the 2006 budget	\$ 48,602
Required to maintain services	\$194,407
Total	\$243, 009

This funding would be applied to the homelessness initiatives as follows:

Agency/Program	Allocation
L'Association des jeunes de la rue - Community Outreach Program (red coats)	\$34, 241
Elgin St Mission	\$40,883
John Howard Society	\$10,589
Elizabeth Fry Outreach	\$19,710
Canadian Mental Health	\$32,260
Sudbury Action Centre for Youth	\$32,389
Extreme cold weather alert	\$13, 346
Canadian Red Cross Housing Help and rent bank	\$34,511
Corner Clinic	\$25,080
Total	\$243,009

It is possible that some of these agencies have already made other plans. For example the L'Association des jeunes de la rue has received \$18,000 in funding from the United Way. There may be requirements different than those listed above and each agency will be met with individually to ensure that the minimal amounts of funding to continue to year-end are accessed.

This process would allow for a smoother transition to a new way of delivering services. To just let go of services with the hope that the strongest will survive and come forward with a viable plan is not good community planning. I have spoken with members of the former solutions team who are willing to return to the table. I believe that we can make one more attempt at resolving this very difficult issue given our budget surplus.