



Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety, Security & Wellbeing August 27, 2021 - Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Mayor Dan Carter, Chair Bob Chapman, Audrey Andrews, Kelly Brown, Fred Eismont, Dr. Peter Stoett, Leisa Davie, Steve Conaby, Stephanie Skopyk

Guests: Erin Valant, Program Manager, Affordable Housing and Homelessness Initiatives, Housing Services, Region of Durham, Alan Robins, Director, Housing Services, Region of Durham

Staff: Paul Ralph, Tracy Adams, Brenda Jeffs, Kevin Alexander, Haik Beglarov, Shannon McFadyen

Regrets: Noel Coppins, Cindy Malachowski, Sandra Black, Matt Bowles, Dave Saliba

Meeting Location: Cisco Webex Meeting

Time: 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

1. Welcome

Chair Chapman welcomed and thanked all Task Force members for joining.

2. Review and Approval of the Minutes

The minutes from June 25, 2021 were reviewed and no changes were made.

3. Update on Community Engagement and Review of Proposed Action plan

Community Engagement Update

Shannon McFadyen, Manager Corporate Communications

Provided an overview on the recent community engagement indicating that there was a large cross section of the city who participated with 75% indicating that they felt the downtown area was “unsafe” or “very unsafe” based on personal experience. Illegal drugs was the number one area of concern followed by disorderly conduct and loitering. The results of the community engagement will be provided to Council in a public report along with a recommended Action Plan in September.

Review of Proposed Action Plan

The proposed Action Plan was discussed. The proposed action items have been organized under five categories: Social Services, Downtown Businesses, Health and Safety, Enforcement, and Revitalization/ Image as well as timing, lead and support roles are identified. The Task Force Members support the proposed Action Plan being recommended to Council.

Alan Robins, Region of Durham

Items in the proposed Action Plan are actionable through contributions by all parties involved, citing there has been lots of cooperation and that there is a common goal to move forward on all initiatives with a housing focused approach.

Mayor Carter

Indicated that he has sent a letter to Dr. Kyle at the Region requesting (a) a review of the current needle exchange program; (b) a change in the colour of the needles to make them more identifiable by people in parks, trails and play areas; and, (c) that the needles being handed out be retractable.

4. Other business as brought up by Task Force Members

Erin Valant, Region of Durham

Provided a brief update on the Region's analysis of unsheltered data on the "By-Name List" and that a street outreach strategy is being implemented. The Region is also exploring ways to expand the On Point Program by adding another team for needle clean up.

Alan Robins, Region of Durham

Updated Task Force Members on the Micro Home Project in Oshawa. The Region received an allocation under the Rapid Housing Initiative and is working with CMHC to provide long-term quality housing options.

Mayor Carter

Updated Task Force Members on the August 23 joint statement with Region Chair Henry which acknowledged the concerns from residents, Oshawa downtown businesses, organizations and visitors regarding concerning activities in the downtown, homelessness, mental health and addictions, as well as economic development concerns. A review of the concentrated support services offered by the Region and community partners, as well as identifying gaps and duplication of services is underway to ensure the right services are in the right locations.

Advised Task Force Members of his joint letter with Chair Henry to the Premier of Ontario, Minister of Health, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Attorney General that advised them of the challenges of homelessness and unlawful behaviour

occurring in the downtown. The letter requested: 1) consider alternatives for repeat offenders who are not deterred by fines and cause property damage, use illegal drugs, trespass, and are aggressive towards residents and business owners; and, 2) allocate funding and supports to Durham to address root causes of homelessness and address the opioid crisis including supportive housing with wraparound services, mental health, and addiction services, and community paramedicine programs. The letter also extended an invitation to them to visit and walk in the downtown area to see the damaging effects that drugs, crime, and homelessness are having on our residents and downtown business owners.

Advised Task Force Members of his letter to the Durham Region Mayors requesting their support as he and Councillor Chapman advocate at the Region for: additional police resources to address the unlawful behaviour occurring in downtown Oshawa; for more resources from social services and health departments to provide on and off hour street outreach to meet the needs of the unsheltered; and, to actively work on reducing the concentration of services in Oshawa.

The Mayor also overviewed his findings after a walk of the downtown area with City staff and informed the Task Force that there are now daily clean-up efforts occurring by Oshawa Works staff. There are also other measures taking place including an increase of D.R.P.S. foot patrol, individual meetings with local businesses owners, increase of Municipal Law Enforcement staff as well as Parks staff to clean up the parks and trails. He also reminded Task Force Members of the upcoming Community Clean up on September 18.

Mayor Carter will be appearing on TVO's "Blind Date" to talk about homelessness.

He thanked all Task Force Members for volunteering and for having open conversations.

5. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on September 24, 2021.