



Mayor's Task Force on Community Safety, Security & Wellbeing June 25, 2021 - Meeting Minutes

- Attendees:** Mayor Dan Carter, Regional Councillor Bob Chapman (Chair), Cindy Malachowski, Noel Coppins, Audrey Andrews, Kelly Brown, Sandra Black, Fred Eismont, Peter Stoett, Matt Bowles
- Guest:** Erin Valant, Program Manager, Affordable Housing and Homelessness Initiatives, Housing Services, Region of Durham
- Staff:** Tracy Adams, Brenda Jeffs, Kevin Alexander, Haik Beglarov, Shannon McFadyen
- Regrets:** Dave Saliba, Stephanie Skopyk, Steve Conaby
- 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 May 28, 2021 were reviewed and no changes were made.

3. Update from Durham Region's Homelessness Support & Coordinated Access System

Erin Valant, Region of Durham

Durham is the fifth community in Canada to have achieved a quality Co-ordinated Access System through the Built for Zero Campaign and the Canadian Alliance for Homelessness.

Provided an overview of the Co-ordinated Access System in Durham Region including:

- where information can be found at durham.ca
- how the Co-ordinated Access System works and steps to finding housing
- outlined the By-Name List
- explained how the assessment process works and the process of matching individuals with available housing

- shared monthly data, specifically May 2021, indicating it was the first month of a reduction in chronic homelessness

Approximately 17 individuals are being housed each month, and ways to increase that number are always being explored. Using the 2020 Data and By-Name List, new onboarding programs and services are being offered and the Region is on track to offer over 100 new housing opportunities this year.

The Housing First support process was outlined including the expansion of other housing programs such as Salvation Army's Housing Program. In addition, there is a variety of capital projects that will add more than 70 physical housing spaces to the Co-ordinated Access System in 2021/2022.

The number of individuals that have been housed since the By-Name List started last summer continues to increase, indicating that housing is being found despite various challenges faced including COVID-19 and there is a focused effort to keep adding housing opportunities.

From January to May 2020, Durham homelessness prevention workers were able to assist approximately 600 people with homelessness prevention to prevent them from becoming homeless.

Answered questions from Task Force Members regarding:

- data that is collected, how it is used and how the Region tracks progress using that data;
- addressed how the Region has prepared for post-COVID including eviction, financial assistance and a landlord support program;
- shared the Region's communications plan, an infographic that will share success stories; and
- explained how the Rent Smart program works for renters.

Indicated that a new Street Outreach Strategy in Durham will be rolled out over the next couple of months to focus on engagement and connecting people to housing-based case management to help find housing. This strategy will also include a proactive and collaborative encampment strategy.

Chair Chapman

Stressed the importance of contact with the unsheltered to obtain information on their needs which assists in making connections between the services offered and the unsheltered. The ultimate goal is to get people off the streets and into better living accommodations.

Noel Coppins, RE/MAX Jazz

Expressed concerns over rising rental rates due to the current selling market and requested more information from Durham Region on the landlord assistance program that can be shared with other Re/Max Jazz members.

Brenda Jeffs, Director, Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Services

Explained that Council has asked that the Residential Rental Housing Licensing program be expanded City wide rather than the current geographic area around Durham College and Oshawa Tech University. A report will go to Council in November with a number of options to be considered.

4. Update on Downtown Businesses

Shannon McFadyen, Manager Corporate Communications

Thanked Task Force Members for their assistance in sharing the digital packages and provided a brief overview of the following:

- the successful use of the QR codes that have been added to the “If you see it report it” campaign signs;
- successful participation from residents across all Wards.

Kevin Alexander, Director Facility Management Services

Provided an update on communications made with and received from residents and businesses on the safety of the downtown area. Indicated there has been positive feedback from front line staff, local businesses; however ensuring a consistent and collaborative approach is critical.

Sandra Black, OSCC55+

Shared the Centre's plans on communications with their clients on the “If you see it report it” campaign.

Cindy Malachowski, Lord Simcoe Place

Shared a recent experience which ended with a positive result and noted there is a significant difference in the area. Thanked Task Force members, DRPS, Corporate Security and By-law as there was a true feeling of community, a sense of responsibility and accountability which resulted in positive feedback from tenants.

Noel Coppins, RE/MAX Jazz

Expressed her gratitude to Task Force members, DRPS and City Officials as there is a noticeable difference in the area.

Fred Eismont, Oshawa Resident

Noted improvements made along the Kolodzie Trail indicating that there is not as much garbage, there is more foot and bike traffic and people seem to be enjoying the trail.

Mayor Dan Carter

Shared with Task Force Members his call with Medicine Hat Community Housing Society. Medicine Hat has achieved zero homelessness since work started in 2011 and there are similarities in what Oshawa is implementing now and what has worked in Medicine Hat. It is important to understand (a) relationships between service providers and the people receiving services; (b) collaboration between service providers is key; and (c) the importance of having a policy for service providers to implement with individuals receiving services as they need to understand that there are expectations that need to be followed.

5. Other business as brought up by Task Force Members

Mayor Dan Carter

Updated Members on his editorial on harm reduction kits and a letter he has written to government officials requesting re-investigation of the program in order to maximize results and to address the public health issue of discarded used needles that are being left in parks and on private property.

Cindy Malachowski, Lord Simcoe Place

Shared two new initiatives: (1) Neighborhood Conversations connecting with area businesses to encourage networking and problem solving; and (2) WEDO Women Entrepreneurs of Downtown Oshawa with a goal to amplify positive narratives about Downtown Oshawa and foster a sense of community, connection and collaboration.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on July 23, 2021.