



310 Division Street Community Liaison Committee

Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2025
3:00 p.m.

555 Courthouse Road, Cobourg Ontario
Council Chambers

Attendees:

Community Members:

- Chloe Craig
- Erisa Katona
- Kendra Simmons
- Bob LeDrew
- Hillary Allen
- Beth Bellaire
- Liz Greaves
- Brenda Whitehead

Delegates:

- Jennifer Bogart, DBIA
- Daniel Gaito, Trinity United Church
- Chris Challenger, Town of Cobourg
- Janice MacDonald, Cobourg Police Services
- Ike Nwibe, Executive Director, Transition House

Regrets:

- Rob James
- Kim Gay
- Sheri Syer
- Carolyn Rutherford, Community Health Centres of Northumberland
- Kim Wilkinson, Community Paramedics
- Emma Taylor, Northumberland Hills Hospital Community Mental Health
- Meaghan Macdonald, Board Chair, Transition House

County Representatives:

- Bill Smith
- Rebecca Carman

Facilitator:

- Chris Gorman, OrgCode Consulting Inc.

- **Welcome and Introductions:**

- Chris Gorman, Facilitator called the meeting to order
- Land acknowledgement
- Chris Gorman led a roundtable discussion
 - Concerns brought forward included:
 - Businesses ongoing issues, including break-in attempts
 - Some hearing user feedback with concerns at 310
 - Identified concerns still existing within community
 - Overnight issues common seen after the fact on security cameras
 - Concerns that some neighbours have not received flyer on 310 and ECE phone number
 - Successes shared included:
 - As a neighbour: security and police being good partners to neighbours
 - Neighbour experience of someone unwell in community, and security provided information and referrals
 - Landlord sharing quick reference guide with her tenants

- **Shelter Updates**

- Ike Nwibe gave a shelter update. Ike shared data that included:
 - Provided 427 Meals
 - 149 unique clients in the warming hub and the shelter. Shelter occupancy was an average of 25 and that of the warming hub fluctuates (12-15), depending on the time of the day.
 - Four Pets
 - In December: 7 clients housed in permanent housing, 4 families used family diversion programs
 - Services provided include: laundry, shower, telephone, case management and navigation, food and drink (from Food4All and Donations)
 - External Services include:
 - Hope & Light outreach: 2 meals per week Monday and Thursday; Art therapy group (Engaging clients and working therapeutically; Noted that there's a body of evidence for this)
 - NHH mental health supports
 - medical support through the Northumberland County Community Paramedicine program
 - Help & Legal centre
 - collaboration with Cobourg Police and building relationships between CPS and clients
 - Schedule of community agency visits under development.
 - Challenges:

- Complaints are trending downward. A system for complaints, appeals and suggestions/feedback from client has been put in place.
 - Prioritized being responsive to community concerns and working on that.
 - Example: smoking area with noise, light, smoke issues raised. Exploring options and trying to find solutions such as: considering moving smokers, reduce light intensity; continue reminding smokers of being respectful of neighbours.
 - There has been a continuous decline in service restrictions and discharges as clients become more aware of the expectations
 - There has been a continuous decline in visits from fire department, Police, EMS for emergency cases
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- Group discussion on the update was had, some observations made included: Chris Gorman shared the permanent housing numbers are impressive, conversation about using art product somehow
 - Question: what are the numbers in the warming room and other services
 - Ike Nwibe: typically 16 in warming room and 25 in shelter beds
 - Question: what about age limits – people under the age limit at 310 also in need.
 - Ike Nwibe: generally 18+, but younger can stay in warming room; goal to connect with CAS and County
 - Some members have heard from other organizations wanting to connect into 310 – sharing Ike’s contact
 - Discussion had around public perception of emergency services responding to 310 Division compared to reality
 - Lack of understanding as to why emergency services are attending – emergency response v. relationship building and outreach
 - Neighbour indicated that there was a higher presence of emergency services responding with lights flashing when it was a seniors residence
 - Ike Nwibe shared experience from previous shelter where there were much higher level of calls
 - Visibility of shelter and location is a consideration
 - Chris Gorman indicated that sometimes people have a hard time treating people who are different than them with the same respect we treat ourselves
 - Conversation had about the perception of people not wanting to go to Transition House shifting
 - Shared perspective of community members experiencing homelessness wanting to attend and it looks different
 - Conversation had about the resource needs of Transition House:
 - CLC members sought clarity around outreach and map of what services are available for people – understanding coordination of services and supports

- Ike Nwibe indicated that Transition House is looking to connect with services to determine how they can complement the work happening at 310 Division Street. E.g. food services not funded currently, working to connect with other services providing food to bring it in 310 Division.
 - Suggestion made to connect with Trinity United Church on bagged lunches
 - Importance of creating two-way communication to hear what the needs are from the Shelter – Food Provision.
 - Adding a sub-group that focuses what the shelter needs and they're the connectors to go get it
 - CLC member suggested a need to understand the funding agreement and program requirements, policies and procedures to understand where there are gaps.
 - Chris Gorman – it is important to remember the intention of this group is not oversight
 - Ike Nwibe shared some of the goals of Transition House in terms of food security: making efforts to mobilize resources, including grants, to operate a dietary program, including a chef that can cook and support with life skills transfer for clients
 - CLC members requested a list similar to 'Fare Share' of what is needed immediately to make services better at shelter, the community is looking to support
 - Ike Nwibe confirmed that there is a list on facebook and becoming more specific
 - Consideration of a larger facebook page that gets more traffic than just Transition House
 - **ACTION:** Create Sub-Committee of CLC to take direct asks of Transition House and take it out in the community – as it is getting launched with success stories it makes it easier to build connections.
 - Reference made to 'The Mission' in Ottawa, where they have a program where it's not just lifeskill but also job readiness and created a pipeline for job prep.
 - Identified skill gap in this community.
- **Review of ECE Requirements**
 - Rebecca Carman gave an overview of the actions taken by the County to comply with the ECE by-law; confirmed both Transition House and County have a license, requires annual renewal.
 - CLC members request for data to be brought to the CLC as a standing agenda item.
 - **ACTION:** 310 ECE compliance and 310 data highlights brought forward to CLC moving forward
 - Discussion had on the breadth of knowledge in the community about the phone number provided by the County

- **Action:** County and CLC consider doing a blitz for the community on information about 310 success and ECE phone number
 - Discussion on the intersection of requirements of ECE and considerations on Code of Conduct, discharge, etc. and challenges in communicating to the public in meeting needs of expectations of drug use both onsite and offsite.
 - Chris Gorman outlined that shelter work across the board is now considering how you move from an enforcement perspective to an expectations perspective – it will be a bit harder at 310 Division; understand why it exists, but from a narrow perspective of shelter operator
 - Awareness of constraints that 310 Division is operating within
 - Discussion on liability for the committee – update provided that report will go to Council in April as required under the County’s Indemnification By-law (**Action:** County Staff to take this forward in April).
- Breakout Group Sessions
 - The small groups reported back to the large group; each group worked toward the creation of an Outcome Statement; Action Plan and Key Performance Indicators

1. Neighbourhood/Community Safety Strategies

- Outcome: “To create a safe and secure environment where local residents, businesses and clients have the confidence to live together in our community”
- Brainstorming to action plan
 - Community safety will be influenced greatly by other variables being addressed including more housing options, mental health and addiction needs.
 - Community safety will be influenced greatly if proper housing solutions are created for those living in the shelter system for several years, having high/very high acuity and may likely never live independently.
 - Important to create a concrete set of expectations and then reinforcing those expectations to create positive feedback loops.
 - Consequences to poor behaviour other than being kicked out. This only pushes the problem outdoors to the neighbourhood that absorbs the impact and negatively affects perception, safety and willingness to partner with the shelter in any capacity.
 - Security changes
 - Moving security to front of building to have consistent access to views of the front of 310 and neighbouring buildings, street, sidewalks. This makes it much easier and faster to address issues of loitering, trespassing, smoking within 9m of neighbouring building entrances etc.
 - Need for increase in security

- Need for security to facilitate taking on agency of surrounding properties and/or communication to public on how to do this.
- Clear pathway and communication on how neighbours can consent to allow police on their private property and provide trespass orders.
- Amendment to Code of Conduct to include staying off Private Property, and consistent reinforcement of the Code of Conduct.
- Possible inclusion of neighbourhood introduction during Intake process – walk, clear and easy-to-read posted signs.
- Clear pathway for communication of issues – who to call for what issues and distribution to entire community as all residents of Cobourg are passing by shelter, and/or working/living/shopping/driving through within the 500 m radius - and don't know who to call if they see an issue.
 - Phone numbers and pathways – social media – reach out to DBIA or others to get the information out re: numbers, chamber of commerce
 - Tax information mailout
 - Include Transition House number for referrals for intake
- Key Performance Indicators:
 - Number of security calls down over long period of time. Needs to be done over long period given number of variables – residents actually having proper info/numbers, weather, periods of time when businesses closed or residents away
 - Resident perception over time – qualitative survey – few questions to get some general info on overall confidence of public and shelter guests, feeling that shelter is accountable, what percentage of issues are you actually reporting to the shelter etc.
- During Discussion with broader group:
 - Ottawa Police Services has a program that includes the posting of a small decal on their business that tells officers that paperwork has been filed for no trespassing for easier enforcement
 - Chris Gorman spoke about opportunities for more restorative justice, welcoming people back in – following best practices
 - Qualitative perception of between before and after.

2. Education and Awareness

- Outcome statement: Educate the community about homelessness while keeping them “in the loop” about the local situation while staying focused on transparency and clarity of information.
- Brainstorming to action plan:
 - We need to let the world know:

- Who the CLC is – Why we are part of the “picture”, How we came about and were selected, role we play in the matrix of support and community building
- The **piece** we play but also what role other play too - agency, county, town, neighbours, community groups, hired partners (like security)
- The **facts** – lets share stats, processes actual struggles and concerns, areas with less support but also wins
- Solutions – problems that arise and how they are solved – i.e. smoking on property – lets share the human touches that make the world look at things differently
- These should be short term goal and then on going – continuous –
- You don't have media power if you talk behind a closed door – need to be transparent and out with this information
- Resources needed would be a Communication Person and then an External Communication Plan
- We also believe that information to educate needs to be shared. Things like:
 - **Facts and data** that tell the actual story and can be done on some level of comparison to before and after 310
 - Housing Continuum (what is and how big are the pieces) – where do the services at 310 fit and how many are at each place in the community – not just at 310 – show the impact
 - Limit of Liability – who is responsible for what and where does it lie (from staff to residents to neighbors to the community) and where do people go next
 - Partners – who are they and what do they do – services they provide, resources they make available or share and background on how long they have been doing it
- Also consider working with Ike to be make community asks – specific and what's needed
- Goals for Committee (after 10 months)
 - Help create a “process” for sharing information for the 310 team. Take into consideration:
 - What info on the regular (dashboard details)
 - How often
 - What channels
 - Target audiences
 - With what partners and others to share out too

- Identify key messages and info the public needs about homelessness, mental health, addictions and any other Social Issues that are identified for learning
- 2 community pop-ups with info to share about homelessness, the continuum and sharing of info and awareness stuff.
- In discussion with broader group, it was noted by the group that external communication may be a County responsibility; important to tell the continuum (within 310 and out) and understand partners and where they fit within this conversation

3. Communication

- Brainstorming to action plan:
 - Create a monthly paper flyer for 500m radius area to highlight activities and what's coming up
 - What's worked, what we're working on; what hasn't, what's next
 - Monthly repeat in Northumberland News; Local Blogs (Burd, Draper), Substack
 - Questions asked: who is doing this, how to measure success
 - Idea: Student project through Downtown Business Improvement Area, monthly summer survey of residents downtown – Are you feeling safe today? Safer than last year? Cleaner?
 - Need to clarify pipeline to send info to County and Transition House – email and to make sure responses are given to the person who asked
 - Considerations:
 - Tactics: online, offline, in real life
 - Various audiences (in paper for 500 m, others for farther away)
 - How is it delivered, who will read it, cost – use flyers to generate subs and feedback, who does it come from – Transition House, CLC
 - Clear community understanding of when to speak to CLC directly and when to go to County or Transition House

4. Coordinating with Local Resources

- Resource Committee presented action plan
 - Immediate Actions (0-3 months)
 1. Meet with the Executive Director
 - Confirm priority needs (food, clothing, personal care, etc.).
 - Align with current efforts to avoid duplication.
 2. Compile a List of Available Resources
 - Identify which services 310 Division is already using.
 - Determine which organizations can be approached for support.

- Create a working document to track resources and contacts.
- 3. Establish Communication with Local Businesses for Food Support
 - Identify potential restaurant and bakery partners.
 - Develop an outreach script or letter for initial contact.
 - Assign team members to handle follow-ups.
- 4. Clarify the CLC's Role & Avoid Duplication
 - Ensure the Board of Directors is informed.
 - Clearly define CLC's role to complement existing efforts.
- Mid-Term Actions (4-6 months)
 - 5. Liaison with Local Pet Shops & Veterinarians
 - Develop a proposal for discounted or donated pet care.
 - Pet-friendly policies for coordination.
 - 6. Coordinate a Service Database & Outreach to Underutilized Resources
 - Work with volunteer hair stylists to make use of existing salon at 310
 - Build a simple database of services available.
 - Identify 310 resources that are not being used (e.g. hair salon) and reach out to them.
 - Contact local service clubs for targeted support.
 - Long-Term Actions (7-9 months & Ongoing)
 - 7. Engage the Broader Northumberland Community
 - Working with the Communications Team and the Education Awareness Team, develop a public awareness campaign (e.g., social media, local news, flyers).
 - Create a process for residents to request specific donations.
 - 8. Strengthen Partnerships with Local Organizations
 - Build ongoing relationships with businesses and service providers.
 - Track engagement and ensure sustained collaboration.
- i. Where does the Transition House Board fit into all of this – do they have subcommittees that already exist i.e. fundraising and connecting to resources
- Discussion with larger group identified that Resource Committee needs to meet with Transition House to determine immediate needs in the next 3 months; wish list; building inventory of services, what they are providing and how they could provide more
 - Consider Connection between medical system and homelessness system – how do we meet the needs to alleviate strain in other systems
 - Work to avoid duplication

- How to connect Transition House clients with what the broader community needs and can support – outside work, shoveling, etc. work, shovel, etc.

- **Closing Remarks and Next Step**

- Rebecca Carman shared that County Council has requested biographies of CLC members
 - Discussion carried over until next meeting
- Terms of Reference to be circulated by email and reviewed and approved via email.

Next Meeting:

- Next meeting to be scheduled through email canvass