

To: The Northumberland County Council Meeting of this date
From: Keith Oliver, Cobourg, Ontario,
Re: "Homelessness"

July 20, 2022

Title: **When Enough is Not Enough:** recommendations that will create a more effective response to those experiencing Homelessness.

Introduction:

I am an 85 year old white male. During my work-life I have been employed in Montreal; Manchester, England; three of the Eastern United States, and in the Nunavik Region of Labrador where I was responsible for a crew of Cree and Inuit Canadians engaged in re-supplying Mid-Canada Early Warning Radar Stations. My favorite country to visit is Italy. I have a BSc with a Minor in Psychology and a degree in Architecture.

Through all of my life-experience I've learned how similar we all are; how, despite cultural, religious, language, class and professional differences, we are all basically the same. We have the same general goals in life which can be characterized as stability, being part of a community, a sense of being successful, a meaningful connection with others, respect from others. As a caring society we have an obligation to offer those in need a hand-up as opposed to a hand-out. To be truly effect, they must have a significant role in deciding what an effective hand-up consists of.

Homelessness:

The recognition of Homelessness as a state in which some of our fellow citizens live, is relatively new. In Washington D.C. where I was living and working in the late 1980s, they began to sleep on the streets. I remember photos of members of the US Congress stepping over bodies on the sidewalk as they went to work. That scene and the lack of a meaningful response was shocking.

After all these years, despite the many well intentioned efforts, Homelessness is still a factor in our communities (and possibly growing). The question is why? Have we been dealing only with the symptoms, while ignoring the causes, and working with the homeless to find effective solutions?

Another life-lesson of mine is that you cannot force changes in human behaviour but you can provide incentives based on good information and rewards.

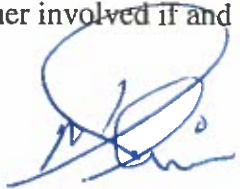
My Recommendations:

By by imagining myself as homeless and wanting to change, I began to search for help. I found many sources especially when it came to addiction. But I also found confusion and the lack of other types of services/information that I felt essential to my successful transition. I suggest it's time for Northumberland County to reassess, to reboot, to simplify; to create four different access points or portals to information that will end or greatly reduce Homelessness. They are as follows:

- (1) **"Northumberland Housing-for All"** which lists all the different housing available in the County, by type and location; how a property owner can create Co-Housing or Co-Living types.
- (2) **"Northumberland Jobs"** which lists full and part-time job opportunities by type, profession, location, and which include apprenticeships, room-and-board in exchange for specific work.
- (3) **"Northumberland Counseling and Addiction Services"**, public or private. An entry point for many to not only medical treatment but to encounter groups modeled on Alcoholics Anonymous, First Nations Reconciliation Groups, one-on-one relationships with others.

- (4) **"Northumberland Connections"** which lists opportunities for any individual to get better connected to the community through joining sport groups, public service groups, faith groups, book clubs, walking groups, art clubs, debating groups, etc.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to County Council. I am more than willing to be further involved if and when appropriate.



PS As an **Addendum** please find the following elaboration of portal (1) "Northumberland Housing-for-All" and a very short list of Sources of Further Information.

(1) "Northumberland Housing-for-All"

... addresses the problem of a lack of housing in general. It provides a comprehensive listing of housing types from traditional to new, and suggests developing relatively new forms with examples taken from successes elsewhere. Types listed include:

Rental housing including short-term, long-term, subsidized and market priced.

Owned housing including single family, town houses, 3 story walk-ups, apartments and condos.

Short-term housing such as bedroom rentals, caretaker occupation while owner is absent.

Setback or centre-block housing ideal for older large-block residential areas as found in Cobourg.

Dedicated Seniors housing including retirement and/or long-term care. When to get on a wait list.

Work or occupation related housing; eg students from out-of-town such as attending Flemming College in Cobourg, or apprentices training at the Cobourg LiUNA Labour's Union facility.

Coop or Co-housing; individuals or families share a traditional family residence that has not been designed to be shared. An ideal way of young families breaking into the housing market.

Co-living; a bedroom with possible bath; includes communal kitchen, eating and living spaces.

Grannie flats; a modest single home added to a lot with an existing structure.

Laneway homes; a development of large-lot residential blocks, many examples in Toronto.

Adding an apartment by converting the interior of an existing home, often in a secure basement, or in the upper floors of an existing building in a downtown area.

Adding an apartment by expanding the footprint of an existing home.

Affordable rental apartments; over a given period of time, mandated as a percentage of new development. Eg, Balder Apartments at the SW corner of William and University streets in Cobourg.

There are many credible sources of information on housing including:

Canada Mortgage and Housing (<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>)

"Future Cities Canada Spotlight: Housing Innovations"

12 very different affordable housing projects.

Canadian Cohousing Network (<https://cohousing.ca>)

UK Cohousing Network (<https://cohousing.org.uk>)

Co-Living Group (United Kingdom) (<https://co-living.group>)

"Co-Living vrs Co-Housing Explained"

An industrial group with 12 years experience in developing several forms of co-living.

Sallbo Co-Housing, Helsingborg, Sweden (Guardian Newspaper article by Derek Robertson)

"It's like family: the Swedish housing experiment designed to cure loneliness."

Highly successful mix of young and old created out of a 51 unit existing four storey building.

Globe+Mail, July 8, 2022 article; "It's taking Canadians years longer to save for a down payment, data show." *and how it now takes 17 years for many to accumulate a down payment.*