



New Hope Leslieville Community Liaison Committee (CLC) Meeting

Tuesday August 13 2019, 6:00-8:00pm | Maple Leaf Cottage, 62 Laing Street

Participants

- Bradley Harris, Executive Director, Toronto Housing & Homeless Supports, The Salvation Army
- Erin Fiore, Leslieville Community Member
- Morag Perkins, Housing Consultant, Shelter Support and Housing Administration
- Newton Ngo, Leslieville Community Member
- Terry Fagan, Leslieville Community Member
- Troy Ford, Parks Ambassador, City of Toronto, Parks, Forestry & Recreation
- Loi, City of Toronto, Parks, Forestry & Recreation
- Carl Calandra, Leslieville Community Member
- Rob Dixon, Harmonies for Hope Founder
- Leigh Chapman, Leslieville Community Member
- Community member (name not captured) *
- Norm Leung, Community Relations Officer, Toronto Police
- Community member (name not captured) *
- Stuart Slessor, Parks Supervisor, Eastern Beaches, Toronto Waterfront
- Samantha McCourt, Assistant Director, New Hope Leslieville
- Phil Clarke, Director, New Hope Leslieville
- Sandra Vaughan, Agency Review Officer, Shelter Support and Housing Administration
- Lisa Randell, Note-taker

*Names not recorded for these two Leslieville community members. If these names were captured by other members, please let us know.

Welcome & Round table introductions

- Bradley Harris welcomed the group, explaining that this would be the first CLC meeting without Joy Connelly as the facilitator. The main goal of the meeting was to reconvene the CLC for New Hope Leslieville as some community concerns have been brought forward, and also to create better lines of communication.
- Bradley expressed appreciation for those in attendance and said that others may join, before initiating round table introductions.
- It was noted that not all members received an email invite to the meeting. Bradley explained that Joy had two lists, one for the CLC and a larger list going further back. Bradley stated that he would follow up with Samantha McCourt to ensure all people are captured in the list going forward.
- Bradley shared that The Salvation Army has been in contact with Councillor Fletcher's office and is working with their team on an improved communication strategy to respond in a timelier

manner. Councillor Fletcher's office has expressed interest in an active CLC as well. Bradley added that the goal is to establish regular, ideally quarterly, meetings.

- Since the last CLC meeting - Angela Hutchinson, former shelter Director, has moved on to a position at the City; Phil Clarke, former Assistant Director, is now Director and Samantha McCourt, former Community Programming Coordinator, is now the Assistant Director.

Update from New Hope Leslieville (Phil Clarke and Samantha McCourt, Salvation Army)

- Phil Clarke highlighted some of the community concerns that the shelter has received and provided clarification of the terms *neighbours*, *residents* and *community partners*. The types of concerns received included: loitering, noise, Maple Leaf Forever Park (MLFP), substance use, serious incidents and garbage.
- Phil described some of the proactive processes in place that are related directly to the types of concerns that are received; for example, New Hope Leslieville staff make an effort to proactively fill all shelter beds.
- Phil drew attention to the *Community Concern Responses*, which explained the way the staff of New Hope Leslieville responds to expressed concerns; including serious incidents, as well when it is appropriate to give warnings, create behaviour contracts or when discharges are necessary. Phil added, that with many of the concerns received, it is difficult to know if they apply specifically to the shelter and so they employ a more global approach. All shelter residents receive communication through residents meetings and community bulletins. This process has been added to the welcome package that residents receive and includes the *Good Neighbour Policy*.
- The frontline team, available at the desk 24/7, is the first point of contact for the response process. The Community Program Coordinator (CPC) is the point person for community concerns, the role of which Samantha has been filling in the interim.
- Other responses: 24/7 camera monitoring, information on the internal and external rounds conducted, 10:30 pm shelter curfew, a patio policy – acknowledging that many noise concerns are to do with the patio – only one person at a time is allowed on the patio after 11:00 pm. If this does not work, the patio is shut down for a period of time.
- Phil noted that there have been 29 community concerns since October 2018, a 24 hour response rate for community concerns and strategies have been implemented to prevent or respond to community concerns.

Community Check-in – Opportunity for community members to share (Everyone)

- Stuart Slessor reported that the notes from the last CLC meeting, recorded in the minutes, remain the same.
- Stuart noted that he looks after the waterfront and all of the parks south of Queen Street and therefore cannot devote staff to check the park everyday. If residents see litter or needles, he advised them to call 311 where it will get recorded, sent to Stuart and he will then send staff, as needed. Stuart explained that he can dispatch a duty driver for glass, needles and any parks related concern. He clarified that they can deal with any park related litter, but not with people in shelter.

- In the last CLC meeting, Stuart was asked to lighten the South East corner of the park and it has just recently been fixed. A community garden has been added as well.
- Stuart added that any further items, including anything damage related, regarding the park, can be requested either through 311 or Stuart directly.
- A committee member asked if this process applies only to the parks or if it would include the alleyway as well. The response given was that it does not apply exclusively to the park, 311 can be called for the alleyway as well.
- Stuart explained that graffiti found in the park can also be dealt with by calling 311. This, however, does not include graffiti on private property as this would be up to the property owners.
- Norm Leung noted that community members can visit the Toronto Police Service (TPS) website to report minor crimes, including graffiti. On the TPS site, an individual can fill out a community complaint form, which is first sent to admin staff, to an officer and then to a community response team that will go out to address the concern. Norm added that they do not know there is a problem until one is reported. Norm will share contact information to connect committee members with the Toronto Police Services website.
- Troy Ford provided an explanation of the role of the Parks Ambassadors including looking after encampments in the park and people living on porches.
- Norm reported that, a year ago, there were more issues in the park and that people need to take ownership of the park and use it.
- Weekly crime management meetings take place to look at issues happening in the community. If there are a lot of complaints in one particular area, more resources will be dedicated to that area.
- Bradley asked if we can we forward information if we see things happening in the community? Community members should not be reporting on behalf of others. Instead, they should only report what they see themselves, not second or potentially third hand information.
- A community member reported that there are lots of parties by Black Lab Brewing and that they have observed people wander into the shelter. Bradley suggested that the shelter could install additional security cameras or improve the lighting where cameras are already in place. New Hope Leslieville would need to work these details out with business owners.
- Norm encouraged community members to fill in a complaint form and that he will reach out to shelter staff to have a conversation, adding that the shelter is not responsible for this.
- Newton said that better lighting would be good, explaining that people can be heard in the area, but not necessarily seen.
- Bradley added that we do not want to have too much lighting which may have a negative impact. We are open to exploring lighting options as long as it is not impacting people in the community. Bradley suggested discussing this point in a future meeting and potentially bringing in a lighting expert.
- Troy provided further explanation of the role of Parks Ambassadors including that they currently work in partnership with Streets to Homes (S2H). Parks Ambassadors provide “soft enforcement” as they do not give out tickets. If a situation escalates, they contact police and

sometimes a ban of 6 months may be given. This situation is not ideal, but they have to ensure that parks are equitable and safe.

- Troy explained that park safety audits take place with those who are trained in crime prevention, and to look through a social lens. Depending on the issues, it will be determined who needs to be brought in and involved. It is only Troy and Loi who are doing this in the city. They receive lots of calls about people living in parks, and in this case, they have to connect with Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA). Encampments are removed when needed, but SSHA needs to be alerted as well as onsite to facilitate finding people a place to stay. Troy provided is cellphone number for the committee: 416-771-3042
- Carl expressed that his main concern is with loitering and drug and substance use in MLFP and that the park be a safe place for his family. Carl noted that he was not aware of the online complaint form and that people should be informed of the process when they call. Carl reported that he was happy to see the cruisers patrolling the area. As he did not receive an email invite, Carl explained that he was not able to prepare for the meeting.
- Carl asked if benches are necessary in MLFP. It was explained that benches are required as per AODA standards.
- Both Carl and Erin acknowledged their awareness that this is not always NHL residents but that drinking, smoking and drug use is a concern.
- Erin Fiore said that drinking, drug use and smoking in MLFP is an issue because of children that also use the park. People have been good for the most part when she has approached them and said something. It is the public drinking that she has been calling about. The issues seem to be worse in the summer than the spring. It is not just the shelter but other people that are in the park and using it. It seems that there are more people on the benches every time she goes to the park.
- Bradley asked if there is a certain time of the day where activity is more prevalent. Knowing this information would help with coordinating when the Gateway Outreach team patrols the area.
- Bradley explained that the Gateway Outreach team will take note of who is in the park and what activities are taking place. Terry asked if the Gateway Outreach team wears Salvation Army branded clothing because he had never seen them. It was noted that the team wears navy shirts and drive a black SUV.
- Norm, in response to Erin's concerns, explained that the protocol would be to fill in a community complaint form. When you fill in a form, and indicate the time, officers will have a better idea of when to visit. In most cases, people want to be left alone and are told to move on.
- Troy explained that there is a 9 metre rule for smoking cigarettes and marijuana near a playground. Parks by-laws are not arrestable offences. Some discussion took place around the potential to relocate or temporarily remove benches, and doing certain things, in an attempt to alleviate the issues.
- Samantha spoke of the process of bringing forward issues at monthly residents meetings held at the shelter, adding that it is helpful for them to know the issues. Troy explained that adults are not to be in the children's area at the park unless they are supervising a child and that this is posted.

- One community member reported that the issues she had experienced previously on her property have not been as much of a concern since the last community meeting.
- In response to a question about why New Hope Leslieville could not be a dry facility, Morag explained that there is a harm reduction component at all of the new shelters and that the focus is to work with people from a harm reduction perspective. Strong partnerships with community health organizations and shelter resources are in place to support this. This is important to the City.
- Phil noted that evidence-based practice, including Housing First and Trauma-Informed Care, is more effective than abstinence. Morag added that abstinence is not an effective approach and that shelters are moving away from this approach.
- The focus in the shelter is on managing behaviour, including following the *Good Neighbour Policy*. Restrictions and discharges given are based on the behaviour of residents.
- Leigh Chapman added that there are no overdose prevention sites (OPS) in shelter where individuals can openly use drugs.
- In response to a question about the average length of stay at New Hope Leslieville, Phil reported that the largest percentage of residents stay in the shelter for a period of less than three months. Terry suggested that long-term shelter residents might care more about the neighborhood than those who are passing through. Phil explained the triage process and that the purpose is to have a length of stay that provides appropriate supports. These supports are created in housing.
- Norm reported that he ran stats and that the calls of service and police issues are very minimal and are mostly mental health related. Norm explained that he reviews all mental health reports that come through and indicated that the shelter is managing well.
- Morag noted that it is important for the SSHA to know about community concerns in order to work collaboratively to respond. A contact number for who to contact at the SSHA will be circulated.
- Bradley asked the committee for feedback on the best way to communicate beyond these meetings as it was already noted that not all people had been made aware. It was agreed that a contact sheet, including specific contacts for different issues, would be best.
- Troy suggested requesting a copy of the contact list form used by downtown BIA from Councillor Fletcher's office to use as a template.
- Carl thought that the most recent list might have just gone out to the people who attended the meeting in October. Samantha will ensure this is corrected going forward.
- Norm explained how to access the TPS website: find the red banner about Toronto Police Services, and select 55 Division for more information.

“What to do if...”

- Phil asked the committee if it would be helpful to have information about how to address specific issues.
- Erin said, when it comes to drinking and drug use, she does not want to approach and say anything and that she is aware that people see her calling and know that she is doing this. Norm

reiterated that this is why the community complaints form is available. If certain behaviours are observed in the park and off shelter property, either call or fill in a report online.

- Norm explained that if officers discover that people are from the shelter, they will contact the shelter staff directly and coordinate with them on what needs to be done.
- Leigh asked about the difference between loitering and hanging out in the park and if the definition is different if one is homeless. Troy, referring to a by-law, explained that loitering applies to all patrons. The by-law is to let people know that they do not have entitlement to the shared space, no one does.
- All people, as long as they follow the code of conduct, are allowed to use the park.
- Terry inquired about if New Hope Leslieville staff walk around the neighbourhood. Phil explained that both he and Samantha have been visiting the park, on a daily basis, for the last month and a half. Terry added that it would be good if the New Hope Leslieville staff made a point of saying hello to community members when they are patrolling the area.

Communication Strategy & CLC Membership

- Going forward, there will be CLC meetings on a quarterly basis. Samantha asked for feedback about the possibility of a September meeting, as people were not able to attend that day, and suggested that a date for this can be figured out over email.
- Samantha reported that the new Community Programming Coordinator for New Hope Leslieville is expected to be in place in the coming weeks. This person will do some neighbourhood outreach including handing out flyers and invites. They may also do a community engagement survey to find out the needs of neighbours and make sure that these are being addressed.
- Bradley said that he had discussion with Phil and Samantha about hosting a BBQ for the community, possibly an evening or weekend in early September. It was confirmed that The Salvation Army would host a BBQ in September. Samantha offered that Rob Dixon, who leads Harmonies for Hope jam sessions at the shelter, could provide entertainment for the BBQ.
- It was agreed that there would not be the need for a CLC meeting in September because of the BBQ.
- Attendees were asked for ideas on how to expand CLC membership and were encouraged to forward these to Samantha.
- Phil stated that the CLC minutes will be posted on the Toronto Housing and Homeless Supports website.
- Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm
- Next Meeting: TBD

For questions concerning the CLC and community concerns, please contact Samantha McCourt, Assistant Director at 647-362-3062 ext. 108 and Samantha_McCourt@can.salvationarmy.org