

Woodstock, Ontario  
September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023

A meeting of the Mayor's Community and Social Well-Being Task Force was held in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Boardroom, Woodstock City Hall, on the above-mentioned date commencing at 10:00 a.m.

Council members present:

Mayor Jerry Acchione, City of Woodstock  
Councillor Kate Leatherbarrow, City of Woodstock  
Councillor Liz Wismer Van-Meer, City of Woodstock

Staff present:

David Creery, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Woodstock  
Sunayana Katikapalli, Deputy City Clerk, City of Woodstock  
Brian Connors, Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Woodstock  
Reta Horan, Parks and Forestry Supervisor, City of Woodstock  
Grant Drygas, Supervisor of Forestry, City of Woodstock  
Dan Locke, Director of Public Works, City of Woodstock  
Warren Waugh, Public Works Supervisor, City of Woodstock  
Jeff Slager, Fire Chief, City of Woodstock  
Craig Wallace, Chief Building Official, City of Woodstock  
Colleen Collins, Manager of Marketing and Communications, City of Woodstock

Agencies represented:

Canadian Mental Health Association  
Southwestern Public Health  
County of Oxford  
Woodstock Hospital

## **DISCUSSION**

R. Horan circulated a status report and briefed the attendees on the efforts of the core response team. She noted that overall, positive strides have been made and that a significant portion of the \$50,000 budget had been exhausted. Staff raised concerns with encampments that interfered with City maintenance work, specifically contracted services who would not proceed with work until the site was cleaned up.

The group discussed encampments that were not within City limits and encampments that were situated on the boundaries themselves. They discussed billing options for private and public properties.

Staff considered the logistics of keeping the efforts in-house. Mayor J. Acchione asked R. Horan to explore pricing. D. Creery noted that this could be brought forward in the 2024 budget.

C. Collins spoke about the challenges of changing public perception. The County of Oxford stated that Oxford County Council had approved some additional capacity for education and communication. C. Collins stated that messaging and tools that the City provides for businesses could be done in-house, while larger efforts can be supported through larger teams and initiatives that already exist in the County.

C. Collins introduced the group to the County's engagement platform on Bang the Table Engagement HQ. She stated that it could host a campaign with a map that allowed members of the public to drop a pin where they have located an encampment. The group discussed the logistics of such a campaign, and brainstormed plans for communicating the Mayor's Task Force's efforts on the City of Woodstock's website. C. Collins explained the importance of sharing stories that benefit the impact rather than sharing personal details.

Mayor J. Acchione shared that Woodstock City Council had approved an additional \$50,000 for security at Operation Sharing. He encouraged the group to consider other areas that could use funding while acknowledging that encampments would continue to be a priority.

The group discussed the merits of unifying taskforces across neighbouring municipalities. Mayor J. Acchione explained that this taskforce was Woodstock-specific. Councillor K. Leatherbarrow expressed her interest in seeing organizations like DASO and INGAMO sitting at the table. The group then discussed the provision of supplies to those in need.

Staff encouraged the group to keep some funds available should it ever be required when a need arises. They discussed the potential of having an annual budget to fund their efforts on a continual basis.

The group discussed their concerns with the current batch of Fentanyl being used, noting that it has caused users to be extremely violent. They discussed safety training between police and County staff and the best ways to handle irate and irrational behaviour.

The group shared some statistics regarding homelessness and addiction.

#### Next Steps

- Ongoing encampment updates
- Update from the Special Council meeting regarding the possibility of locating a CTS Site in Woodstock
- Mayor J. Acchione's vision on next steps and the challenges of winter

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.