



Community Services Committee

Minutes

Meeting #: 06
Date: Tuesday, October 24, 2023
Time: 9:30 am
Location: Champlain Room, 110 Laurier Avenue West, and by electronic participation

Present: Chair Laura Dudas, Vice-Chair Jessica Bradley, Councillor David Brown, Councillor Marty Carr, Councillor Steve Desroches, Councillor David Hill, Councillor Theresa Kavanagh, Councillor Rawlson King, Councillor Wilson Lo, Councillor Stéphanie Plante, Councillor Ariel Troster

1. Notices and meeting information for meeting participants and the public

Notices and meeting information are attached to the agenda and minutes, including: availability of simultaneous interpretation and accessibility accommodations; *in camera* meeting procedures; information items not subject to discussion; personal information disclaimer for correspondents and public speakers; notices regarding minutes; and hybrid participation details.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request.

Except where otherwise indicated, reports requiring Council consideration will be presented to Council on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, in Community Services Committee Report 6.

The deadline to register by phone to speak, or submit written comments or visual presentations is 4 pm on Monday, October 23, 2023, and the deadline to register to speak by email is 8:30 am on Tuesday, October 24, 2023.
2. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were filed.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

3.1 CSC Minutes 5 – Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Carried

4. Responses to Inquiries

4.1 CSC-2023-05 – Swimming Lesson Registration

5. Community and Social Services Department

5.1 Update: Social Assistance Modernization and Employment Services Transformation

File No. ACS2023-CSS-GEN-017 – City-wide

Clara Freire, General Manager, Community and Social Services Department, and Stephanie Bordage, Director, Employment and Social Services, presented an overview of the report and answered questions from the Committee. A copy of the slide presentation is filed with the Office of the City Clerk.

There were no public submissions on this item.

Report Recommendation(s)

That the Community Services Committee recommend that Council receive this report for information.

Carried

6. Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Department

6.1 Commemorative Naming Proposal – Mary Tsai Park

File No. ACS2023-RCF-GEN-0010 – Capital (Ward17)

Report Recommendation(s)

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the proposal to name the preschool park located at 175 Third Avenue, Glebe Community Centre, “Mary Tsai Park”.

Carried

6.2 Commemorative Naming Proposal – Crain Park

File No. ACS2023-RCF-GEN-0009 – Kitchissippi (Ward15)

Report Recommendation(s)

That the Community Services Committee recommend Council approve the proposal to name a new park, located at 375 Byron Avenue, “Crain Park”.

Carried

7. In Camera Items

There were no *in camera* items.

8. Information Previously Distributed

8.1 Tenant Defence Fund Programs in Toronto and Hamilton

Committee carried Motion No. CSC 2023-06-01 (below) to allow discussion on this item.

Clara Freire, General Manager, Community and Social Services Department answered questions from the Committee.

Committee received the following submissions, and a copy of each is filed with the Office of the City Clerk:

- Ashley Reynolds (Ottawa ACORN) letter dated October 23
- John Dickie (Eastern Ontario Landlord Organization) email dated October 23

The following members of the public spoke before the Committee and provided comments on the item:

- Sharon Katz (Ottawa ACORN)
- John Dickie (Eastern Ontario Landlord Organization)
- Tuong Nguyen (Accora Village ACORN Tenant Union)

Following discussions, the Committee considered the Motion No. CSC 2023-06-02 (below).

Motion No. CSC 2023-06-01

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Community Services Committee allow discussion of this item for consideration by the committee at today’s meeting, pursuant to subsection 89(4) of the Procedure By-law

(being by-law no. 2022-410) to receive oral submissions from residents and consider a related motion.

Carried

Motion No. CSC 2023-06-02

WHEREAS Tenant Defence Fund programs in Toronto and Hamilton have successfully helped protect existing affordable rentals, with Hamilton's TDFPP showing a 100% success rate at the Landlord Tenant board for Above Guideline Increase (AGI) applications and over 80% for N13 notices; and

WHEREAS the memo circulated by City Staff concluded that further investigation into a TDF program for Ottawa could be beneficial; and

WHEREAS the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan is due to be commenced in 2024 and to be completed by Q2 2025; and

WHEREAS the Ottawa has fully allocated all available funding from federal, provincial and municipal funding envelopes; and

WHEREAS tenant organizations have raised concerns about an observed increase in N12s, N5s, and N11s being issued in addition to N13s and AGIs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Services Committee direct staff to complete a review of housing loss prevention strategies, which will include a tenant defence fund, through the 2024-25 update of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this engagement include tenant organizations or associations as well as Councillors' offices to capture current and emerging eviction tactics; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Services Committee direct staff to engage the province and federal governments to discuss a pilot program for a tenant defence fund in Ottawa; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Services Committee direct staff to report back to Committee by memorandum in Q3 2024 on the current capacity of available housing loss prevention programs and what resources would be required to scale up those programs to meet demand; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Services Committee direct staff to provide Committee with an information report no later than Q2 2025 with options on next steps to create a comprehensive housing loss prevention strategy, which may include a Tenant Defence Fund, in the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Carried

Councillors D. Brown and S. Desroches dissented on this motion.

8.2 Response to Motion No. CSC2023-01-05

9. Motions of Which Notice has been Previously Given

9.1 Councillor S. Plante – Geographically equitable distribution of access to resources and social services

File No. ACS2023-OCC-CCS-0120 – City-wide

Clara Freire, General Manager, Community and Social Services Department answered questions from the Committee. In response to questions from Committee, staff confirmed their interpretation that the motion would not require the creation of new shelters in every Ward but rather is aligned with staff's current city-wide approach to planning for and providing services including emergency shelters.

There were no public submissions on this item.

Motion

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Ottawa address homelessness by funding the development of new emergency shelter spaces in all areas of the City of Ottawa;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Ottawa take matters of equity and diversity into consideration before investing new funding and making decisions with respect to the relocation of emergency accommodations and shelters.

Carried

9.2 Councillor M. Carr on behalf of Councillor C. Kitts – Community Garden Action Plan review and update

File No. ACS2023-OCC-CCS-0122 – City-wide

Committee received a letter from Barbara Nawratil (Michele Heights Community Gardens) on October 23, and a copy is filed with the Office of the City Clerk.

Kate Veinot (Just Food) spoke before the Committee on this item.

Following discussions, the Committee considered the motion.

Motion

BE IT RESOLVED that the Community Services Committee recommend that Council direct the Recreation, Cultural Facility Services Department and the Community and Social Services Department, in partnership with the Planning, Real Estate and Economic Development Department and Public Works Department, to conduct a comprehensive review of the Community Garden Action Plan and develop an update to the Plan with formal recommendations on processes, scope, lead, and necessary resources for considering and facilitating community gardens and similar green community-led initiatives on City-owned land; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Community Services Committee recommend that Council direct City staff to present the revised Community Garden Action Plan and recommendations for implementation to Community Services Committee and Council by Q2 2024.

Carried

9.3 Councillor S. Plante – Lowertown Community Resource Center relocation

File No. ACS2023-OCC-CCS-0121 – City-wide

Dan Chenier, General Manager, Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Department, answered questions from the Committee.

Karina Potvin (Conseil d'administration du Patro d'Ottawa) spoke before the Committee on the motion.

There were no written submissions on this item.

Following discussions, the Committee considered the motion.

Motion

BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Ottawa consider programming that meets the needs of the surrounding Lowertown East community when deciding on how to manage the operations at 40 Cobourg; and

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City staff be directed to consider a lease agreement with the Lowertown Community Resource Center covering the transfer of its food bank to 40 Cobourg so that it can better meet the food insecurity needs of the community; and

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City Council agrees to waive the section of the City's Leasing Policy that requires public notice of surplus real property available for lease should the parties agree to a lease agreement; and

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City be henceforth responsible for the management and operation of the City-owned building.

Carried

10. Notices of Motions (For Consideration at Subsequent Meeting)

There were no Notices of Motion.

11. Inquiries

11.1 CSC-2023-06 – Sustainability Fund Budget for 2024

Submitted by Councillor M. Carr:

Food insecurity is reaching crisis levels in the city with the cost-of-living crisis. Since 2019, food banks across Ottawa have seen 19% more visits from two-parent families, and 37% more visits from households who receive most of their income from employment. This shows the shifting demographics of who is accessing emergency food assistance city wide. Food security agencies are primarily non-profits responding to the need city wide. The City of Ottawa supports these non-profits through the sustainability fund budget. The yearly increase to this fund is typically 2%. The not-for-profit sector cannot continue to operate at this capacity and respond to the growing need without additional support.

Therefore, could staff please staff explore and advise Committee ahead of budget 2024 on the possibility of increasing the sustainability fund budget for agencies primarily operating in food programming and services by 10%.

11.2 CSC-2023-07 – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT)

Submitted by Councillor A. Troster:

Many frontline staff have informed our office that the homeless population they work with is severely under counted and underserved. This is particularly the case for Ward 14 where we have a growing number of homeless constituents sleeping rough but not accessing traditional shelter systems. We also have a large proportion of people who are dangerously couch surfing or squatting. We know of some individuals who live in unsafe housing with as many as fifteen people at time in a unit.

Many individuals will refuse to complete a Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) as they find the process invasive, repetitive, and re-traumatizing, and many of these individuals would also be ideal candidates for the new supportive housing units the City has committed to building, should they been officially assessed. In the interest of understanding the level of need in the community and the process of data collection, can staff please clarify:

1. How does the SPDAT criteria determine if someone is homeless?
 - a. Does this criteria capture individuals who are unable or unwilling to access the shelter system?
 - b. How is someone categorized if they are precariously housed, couch surfing, or squatting?
2. How long has the City been using SPDAT as an assessment tool? Who is authorized to SPDAT unsheltered individuals?
 - a. How are unsheltered, precariously housed, couch surfing, and/or squatting individuals contacted?
 - b. What is the capacity of the organization(s) authorized to do SPDATs? Can this capacity be increased?
 - c. Have alternative assessment tools, such as BC's Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT), been considered for local use?

3. In June we were told that there were 115 unsheltered individuals in the city of Ottawa, acknowledging this group was likely under counted. Staff estimated 280 individuals were unsheltered as of mid-October. How was this estimation reached?

a. What steps, if any, have been taken to better capture this population? What could be taken steps moving forward?

4. Due to the transient nature of living homeless, many people do not stay in a single location. We have been told by frontline staff and homeless constituents that an individual must remain in the same location for up to a week to be captured as homeless. Does being transient restrict the services unsheltered residents can access, and, if yes, in what ways?

12. Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 28, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 11:47 am.

Committee Coordinator

Chair