	DATE: November 10, 2009	TITLE: COMMITTEE REPORT Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee	C.A.O.
	REPORT: 2009 Annual Report		
WARD: City-wide	PREPARED BY: Kaye Crawford, Manager Community Relations		
FILE:	DEPARTMENT: COMMITTEE		
ATTACHMENTS: Appendix "A" – Community Garden Council Letter, August 25, 2009	CLEARANCE: COUNCIL: November 16, 2009		


RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Council commit to poverty reduction by:
 - a. Endorsing the Provincial report: "Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy" and that the Mayor communicate this endorsement to the Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction;
 - b. Developing local solutions through partnerships and strengthening the capacity of the services and resources that already exist in the community;
 - c. Supporting the programs currently operating in Waterloo by The Working Centre to assist street involved people – Street Outreach Program, Drop-in Centre, Laurel Street Outreach - by dedicating on-going annual funding in the amount of \$8,000.00 commencing in 2010;

2. That Council establish a community gardens policy in alignment with the Regional Official Plan with appropriate resources assigned for implementation;

3. That Council approve the following recommendations to compliment and support the Recreational Fee Assistance Report R&L 09-35:
 - a. Increase the Fee Assistance Fund to provide financial parity with other local municipalities in order to reflect the need for assistance in the City of Waterloo
 - b. Evaluate the effectiveness of the revised Fee Assistance process by conducting an impartial impact evaluation, as outlined in the report, within one year from the date of implementation. Thereafter, an impact evaluation would need to be conducted every two years. The evaluations are to address the following:
 - i. Eligibility requirements including inclusivity;
 - ii. Ensuring that every eligible resident has access to the service;
 - iii. Language and cultural issues are addressed in the provision of this service;
 - iv. The administration process provides optimal access and respect to users;
 - v. Parity with the City of Cambridge and City of Kitchener particularly in the areas of processes, policies and resources;

APPROVALS

 <hr/> Committee Chair	November 12, 2009 <hr/> Date
--	---------------------------------

4. That Council pursue a reciprocal use agreement with the local school boards for use of school facilities for evening and weekend community based programming.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee (SAHCAC) held its first meeting in August, 2008. Being a new committee the challenge of the first year was to learn about the current issues and concerns being presented to Council and to prioritize concerns that have not yet been brought to Council's attention.

Out of the research and work completed during the past year, the committee has agreed to focus on three key areas to assist Council in their decision making. The key areas are not exclusive but have been areas that have been raised time and again over the year that need attention in the City of Waterloo. The three key areas are:

- Poverty Reduction
- Livable Cities
- Neighbourhood Capacity Building

The recommendations reflect information that has been brought to the attention of SAHCAC.

MANDATE:

The purpose of the Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice and recommendations to Council on a scope of issues related to matters of developing and sustaining a safe and healthy community. This may include advice on programs and services, policies, community and partnership opportunities and proactive approaches, to issues and situations leading to improved safety and security and healthy community.

OVERVIEW:

The Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee (SAHCAC) began meeting in August of 2008. Since that time committee members have been immersed in understanding the issues of the day and gaining an understanding of how best to help city council make the wisest decisions for a safe and healthy community for all. Not all of the membership positions were filled at that time and recruitment for additional members has taken place in October, 2009.

SAHCAC decided that the committee would focus on three areas: poverty reduction, livable cities and neighbourhood capacity building. One of the major tasks of the committee was to gather information and identify standards and expectations for the City of Waterloo. To educate themselves on the work that was already underway, SAHCAC conducted a year of research by reviewing pertinent documents, meeting with key informants/partners and attending workshops and forums:

Documents and Information Sessions

- Making Cities Safer
- Who Leads What When, CSCPC
- Recreation and Leisure Master Plan
- City of Waterloo Official Plan
- Waterloo Park Master Plan
- The Regional Official Plan
- Count Me In – R. Jansen
- Recreation and Leisure Master Plan Open Houses

- A Community Fit for Children – A Focus on Young Children in Waterloo Region
- Determinants of Health and Healthy Communities
- Health in the Built Environment
- Regional Rapid Transit report
- Waterloo Summit
- A Healthy Community: Health & Social, Environmental and Economic Factors
- Vital Signs – Kitchener Community Foundation
- Woolwich Healthy Communities Guiding Principles
- SHOW – Supportive Housing of Waterloo and assistance on development charges;
- Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy – Affordable Housing; Access To Affordable Recreation Programs; Establishing Partnerships To Establish Accessible Social Services; SAHCAC has identified poverty as a barrier to creating safe, healthy and inclusive communities
- Waterloo Summit with Committee Chairs
- Summit with Committee Chairs on Rapid Transit
- The Key to Safer Municipalities II - Municipal Safe & Healthy Communities Advisory Committees

Workshops & Conferences

- Transportation Master Plan Workshop
- Waterloo Community Action Forum - Focus on Inclusion and Social Planning Council
- Walk-on Forum: Planning for People and Places
- Reducing Poverty in Ontario – A Place-Based Response
- Jim Diers, Building a Strong Community

ADVICE TO COUNCIL TO DATE:

- 1) SAHCAC made a presentation to Council on March 23, 2009 focusing on an overview the Committee and its role, the determinants of a healthy community and requesting Council's support of the Ontario Poverty Reduction Strategy;
- 2) SAHCAC supported the launch of the public square and provided advice to Council in the areas of public safety, security and graffiti;

BACKGROUND

The Background and discussion to this report will be delivered under each topic together with the specific recommendation related to the heading:

1. POVERTY REDUCTION

Poverty Reduction Strategy

Poverty Reduction has been recognized as a priority by the Provincial Government of Ontario. The strategy is about creating more opportunity and building a stronger economy, believing in the potential of people living in poverty, that children should have the opportunity to succeed in life and families facing challenges deserve the chance to get ahead. With consultations held in over 50 communities, the message was clear that the number of persons dealing with poverty issues in Ontario must be reduced and the Province has adopted a strategy of a twenty five percent reduction in poverty in five years with a long-term strategy to end poverty for all people not just children and families.

Our level of income has a direct impact on our personal security (housing, food, and clothing) and on opportunities to enrich our lives and be socially engaged with our community (culture, recreation etc). Adequate income creates the potential for positive life chances and choices.

Levels of income don't just affect individuals; they also have an impact on the entire community. The size of the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest in a community is an indicator of the overall community's health and prosperity. The overall health and prosperity of a community also impacts the ability to attract a healthy workforce and the retention of people to remain vibrant members of the community.

“Over the years, studies have shown that there is a strong link between income and health, and that societies with a great distance between the rich and the poor are not healthy societies. The small percentage of the population at the top of the income and wealth scale is healthier and lives longer than the larger percentage of the population at the bottom. And in societies where this gap is wider, the health of all its members suffers, not just that of those who are poorest. So unequal societies are also unhealthier societies”.

(Reference: Health Nexus and Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance, *Primer to Action: Social Determinants of Health*, Toronto 2008.)

Waterloo Region's *Vital Signs* Report (2009) documented that the gap between the 10th and 90th percentile of income earners increased by 4.2% between 2001 and 2006. This means that the richest 10% in Waterloo Region are making just over six times more than the lowest 10% of the population. It is also worth noting that a rising number of Waterloo Region's senior citizens are living in poverty compared to previous years. Furthermore, on any given night, there are roughly 172 people in Waterloo Region who sleep in homeless shelters.

On March 23, 2009, Waterloo Council made the following recommendation:

That Council request that the Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee review and comment on the '25 in 5' Poverty Reduction Strategy and report to Council with formal recommendations'.

In June, 2009, four members of SAHCAC attended the *Reducing Poverty in Ontario – A Place-Based Response*, conference in Waterloo meeting with Minister Deb Mathews and others on the proposed strategy. They reported to the SAHCAC that it is important for local municipalities to support poverty reduction in striving to be safe, healthy and viable communities. The cities of Cambridge and Kitchener have passed similar resolutions to support the strategy of Poverty Reduction in Ontario.

Street Involved People

The Waterloo Working Group formed in 2004 to make recommendations on issues affecting the quality of life of citizens, especially in the areas of street involved persons, panhandlers, graffiti and late night bar issues. Subsequent to receiving research money from the City of Waterloo in 2004, numerous discussions with appropriate community agencies and leaders were undertaken and formed the basis for an evaluation and recommendations of a commissioned report by Ginsler and Associates Inc. A full day workshop, called the "Inclusive City Summit", was also part of this information gathering process.

In 2007 the Waterloo Working Group was given funding in the amount of \$25,000.00 in partnership with the City of Kitchener, The Kitchener Downtown Business Association and The Working Centre to support a part-time street outreach worker. The Waterloo Business Improvement Area Association contributed \$2,500.00. A partnership with the BIA, The Working Centre and the City of Waterloo resulted in the establishment of an extension of the street outreach program on a part-time basis from Kitchener to Waterloo, managed by The Working Centre.

In 2008 \$8,000.00 was received through the External Agencies cash grants process and the BIA contribution of \$2,500.00 to continue the partnership and provide a part-time street outreach worker for the City of Waterloo.

In 2009 a successful application to the Local Integrated Health Network by many community partners resulted in the extension of programs for street involved people with a more consistent approach to addressing near homelessness issues in the cities of Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge. The street outreach position in Waterloo was extended to a full time position including a new drop-in centre 5 afternoons per week established at Emmanuel United Church in partnership with them. Other outreach initiatives were developed within the overall partnership at a Laurel Street residence in need of special services. The BIA increased their funding to \$5,000.00 to reflect the additional services provided in the City of Waterloo and their commitment to being a partner.

The Working Centre as the lead partner was asked to apply for a grant through the External Agencies cash grant process for the City of Waterloo's share of the on-going funding of street outreach. After receiving the funding through this process in 2008 they were not successful in their application through the external agencies cash grants in 2009 as the grants committee recommended that this project was not eligible for this type of funding. Council later approved funding from Council's contingency budget in the amount of \$8,000.00.

The Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee for the City of Waterloo acknowledges the work of the volunteer ad hoc committee, Waterloo Working Group, to develop the relationships and partnerships to provide these vital services in the City of Waterloo. SAHCAC also supports and applauds the partnerships among the many stakeholder groups across the region that ensure that street involved people as residents of the community have more access to services and supports to meet their needs. The Waterloo Working Group was asked to explore partnerships and sustainable programming which they have done. The City of Waterloo, seen as a partner in the provision of these outreach services, has not provided sustainable funding to date for its share.

SAHCAC requests that Council ensure that this important safe and healthy community service is supported by on-going annual funding beginning in the year 2010.

Poverty Reduction Recommendation:

1. That Council commit to poverty reduction by:
 - a. Endorsing the Provincial report: "Breaking the Cycle: Ontario's Poverty reduction Strategy" and that the Mayor communicate this endorsement to the Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction;
 - b. Developing local solutions through partnerships and strengthening the capacity of the services and resources that already exist in the community;
 - c. Supporting the programs currently operating in Waterloo by The Working Centre to assist street involved people – the Street Outreach Program, Drop-in Centre, and Laurel Street Outreach - by dedicating on-going annual funding in the amount of \$8,000.00 commencing in 2010.

2. COMMUNITY GARDENS

The newly passed Regional Official Plan recognizes the need to support urban agriculture and community gardens (as noted in sections 3.F). It is however important to ensure the promised support to community gardens is implemented at the municipal level. To ensure this, SAHCAC endorses the

recommendations set by the Community Garden Council of Waterloo Region as shown in Appendix “A” and requests that the support provided by the City of Waterloo will include the following:

- a. Reallocating some of the municipal funds for urban parks to aid in the development and maintenance of community gardens
- b. Providing infrastructural supports such as water, compost, and top soil as needed. This could entail:
 - hiring a full or part-time staff person to provide supports to gardens (help with problem-solving, promotion, assist new garden start-ups, help gardeners with administration, etc.
 - mowing the grass around the gardens, providing waste pick-up to the gardens, covering the cost of water (when needed)
 - offering start-up grants for gardens (similar to the City of Kitchener’s \$1000 grant) through new grant specific system established and managed by Parks staff;
 - assisting with transporting compost and/or top soil to replenish garden soil from year to year
 - providing soil testing to gardens (if land history may have resulted in possible soil contamination)
- c. Mapping potential sites within the city to be prioritized and protected for community garden use
 - Community gardens work best where they are walkable, easy to access, and in areas of high density (or have limited yard space) and may have limited access to food in their neighbourhood. Gardens also require good quality (and uncontaminated) soil, sunlight, and access to water. Areas in the city that meet these characteristics should be preserved over the long-term for use for gardening.
- d. Planning new developments with community gardens in mind
- e. Establishing a community garden standard of at least one garden for every 2500 households
 - Community gardens should be planned for before communities are built. Too often gardens are thought of after a community is developed and land is already allocated to other uses or the land that is available is privately owned or not conducive to gardening. Food is a right and we feel, especially as Waterloo intensifies and land is at a premium, space needs to be preserved for gardening (even if no one in the community is ready yet to develop a garden at the present time).
- f. Offering incentives to individuals starting up gardens as well as developers, community centres, and faith groups who provide space for community gardens
 - In existing neighbourhoods land is already mostly spoken for. These areas also need gardens (or more gardens since almost all are full!), to allow for more gardens and to encourage the good will of existing land owners, some compensation for the use of this space could contribute to their decision to develop a garden. This could include but not be limited to access to the start-up grants mentioned above.
- g. Ensuring community gardens are allowed in all zoning types and that gardens are protected from confiscation in areas of high growth
 - We want to ensure all the areas where community gardens could benefit a neighbourhood they are allowed (esp. since land is at a premium). We also want to

ensure that as we intensify and land becomes even more valuable, lands that are provided for gardens are not lost. A lot of energy and caring for the land goes into these gardens and if they will be moved every few years because land is being sold or developed than we may be losing gardens as fast as we are starting new ones. Long-term land security also allows for the development of accessible gardens which require infrastructure to make them more inclusive to the broader community.

Community Garden Recommendations:

2. That Council establish a community gardens policy in alignment with the Regional Official Plan with appropriate resources assigned for implementation;

3. FEE ASSISTANCE

The Fee Assistance program needs to have an immediate increase in resources to begin to meet the recreational needs of low income residents in Waterloo. Access to recreation is one of the determinants of health necessary for a healthy lifestyle. The impact of recreation in the healthy development of children and healthy lifestyles of all people are well documented in evidence-based literature. Recreation is a critical tool in stress management, creating healthy communities where neighbours can benefit from recreation together and specifically giving children positive development opportunities that ultimately create safe and healthy communities for all.

In exploring issues of safe and healthy communities, access to affordable recreation is a very significant factor. As part of the poverty reduction focus of the SAHCAC, we support the City of Waterloo's direction on the Fee Assistance Program (FAP) as set out in the Fee Assistance Report R & L 09-35. While recreation opportunities are available in Waterloo they may not be accessible for many without support from the FAP. SAHCAC supports the intent of this report and believes it will be advantageous for the residents of Waterloo that there be parity with City of Cambridge and City of Kitchener Fee Assistance services in processes, policies and resources available.

The City of Waterloo should evaluate the effectiveness of the revised Fee Assistance process by conducting an impartial impact evaluation, as outlined in the report, in one year from the date of implementation. Given the vulnerability of fee assistance users and their reliance on the fee assistance program to try to keep their children in consistent recreational activity, their evaluation responses may be biased. The evaluation therefore needs to address this bias by being an independent evaluation of the fee assistance process and making a determination on: is the eligibility of the service achieving inclusivity; does every eligible resident have access to the service; are language and cultural issues being addressed in the provision of this service; does the administration process access and provide optimum respect to users and does the program have parity with local municipalities in the process, policies and resources.

The increasing need for financial assistance seems to have resulted in a large amount of assistance being available for a small number of users. This situation indicates a need for increased financial resources in the Fee Assistance Fund to accommodate more users. The question that arises is are ineligible families coming forward to apply for financial assistance when they are still required to pay a large portion of the fees themselves or are they simply not registering their family members in the activity? Levels of poverty eligibility and low-income employment are jeopardizing the ability of some to come forward and register through the Fee Assistance Program, in other words the working poor are unable to access recreation programs in Waterloo.

Fee Assistance Recommendations:

3. That Council approve the following recommendations to compliment and support the Recreational Fee Assistance Report R&L 09-35:
 - a. Increase the Fee Assistance Fund to provide financial parity with other local municipalities in order to reflect the need for assistance in the City of Waterloo
 - b. Evaluate the effectiveness of the revised Fee Assistance process by conducting an impartial impact evaluation, as outlined in the report, within one year from the date of implementation. Thereafter, an impact evaluation would need to be conducted every two years. The evaluations are to address the following:
 - i. Eligibility requirements including inclusivity;
 - ii. Ensuring that every eligible resident has access to the service;
 - iii. Language and cultural issues are addressed in the provision of this service;
 - iv. The administration process provides optimal access and respect to users;
 - v. Parity with the City of Cambridge and City of Kitchener particularly in the areas of processes, policies and resources

4. COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOLS AFTER HOURS

When looking at neighbourhood capacity building, one of the concerns is that the City of Waterloo does not have an integrated neighbourhood and community centre structure. In years past, needed space for community programming was carried out in local schools through a reciprocal use agreement with the local school boards allowing the boards to use city facilities during school hours and the city/community to use school property after school and in the evenings. Since neighbourhoods tend to have established neighbourhood clusters, this worked well for the City of Waterloo. In 2000, the City of Waterloo received notice from both public and separate school Boards that they could no longer participate in the reciprocal use agreement due to budget pressures from provincial cutbacks. The Boards saw an opportunity to meet the budget pressures by generating revenue from community use of schools. Council agreed to continue the Board's use of the city facilities as status quo, however changes in community use occurred leaving less than opportune access to the school facilities for the community. There was a huge shift in inefficiencies in the community accessing information regarding available school space to confirm program plans in advance of the program starting when the Boards took over the booking of the space as well. Having affordable, available and accessible space for neighbourhoods to develop and grow is crucial to a safe and healthy community. SAHCAC identifies the current process for access to neighbourhood programming space as a significant barrier to neighbourhood capacity building.

Community Use of Schools After Hours Recommendation:

4. That Council pursue a reciprocal use agreement with the local school boards for use of school facilities for evening and weekend community based programming.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

In 2010 The Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee will welcome new committee members and continue to evaluate the focus areas of Poverty Reduction, Livable Cities and Neighbourhood Capacity Building making appropriate recommendations to Council. Participation in the City of Waterloo Official Plan consultation process will figure prominently in the upcoming year.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Terms of Reference for this Committee call for a \$2,500.00 budget for meeting expenses, attendance at seminars and conferences, administrative requirements. To date funding has not been assigned to the Committee.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS:

None

LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Our Living Environment, Healthy and Safe Community, Economic Vitality, Commitment to Excellence, Partnerships and Collaboration.

Report Submitted by:



D'Arcy Farlow, Chair, SAHCAC

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Community Members

D'Arcy Farlow, Chair
Laurie Strome, Co-Vice Chair
Catherine Fife, Co-Vice Chair
Eunice Abudu
Patrick Germann
Sadia Arif Gassim (resigned)
3 vacancies

Waterloo City Council

Karen Scian

UpTown BIA

Glen Polson

Waterloo Regional Police Service

S. Sgt. Mark Bullock

Waterloo Public Library

Lynda Gale

Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council

Tracy Jasmins

City of Waterloo Staff

Kaye Crawford, PS, Staff Liaison
Irene O'Toole, R & L, staff liaison (retired)
Henny Bruce, Administrative Assistant

Waterloo Region Public Health

No appointment

Appendix “A”



August 25, 2009

City of Waterloo, Development Services
100 Regina Street South
Waterloo, ON
N2J 4A8

To Janice Mitchell & Adam Lauder:

The Community Garden Council of Waterloo Region recognizes and commends City Planners for including community gardens in the Plan It! discussion papers.

Community gardens provide many benefits to the Region of Waterloo (The Region) as you may already understand from their inclusion in your discussion papers. Rising costs of food, a growing demand for local produce, and with an increasing pressure on rural lands, community gardens are an attractive alternative source of food for urban residents. Combined with these trends, community gardens also create more than just a place to grow food. They can provide low cost green space and recreational activities for residents, improve air quality, increase biodiversity, and allow for groundwater recharge. They also help build community by creating safer, more positive community spaces for individuals to meet, gather, and connect with each other and with nature.

Although there are an abundance of gardens in the Region of Waterloo, it is also one of the fastest growing areas in Ontario. Plans for increased densification combined with the current limited access to land in the downtown core, infrastructure, land security, as well as issues of Not in My Backyard all pose challenges to community gardens.

The newly passed Regional Official Plan makes strides in recognizing the need for support of urban agriculture and community gardens (as noted in sections 3.F). It is however important to ensure the promised support to community gardens is what is best for existing and future garden developments. To ensure this, we hope that the support that area municipalities provide, as mandated by this section, includes the following:

- h. redirect some of the municipal funds for urban parks to aid in the development and maintenance of community gardens
- i. provide infrastructure supports such as water, compost, and top soil as needed
 - map out potential sites within the city and prioritize and protect them for community garden use
 - plan new developments with community gardens in mind
 - set a community garden standard of at least one garden for every 2500 households
 - offer incentives to individuals starting up gardens as well as developers, community centres, and faith groups who provide space for community gardens
 - ensuring community gardens are allowed in all zoning types and that gardens are protected from confiscation in areas of high growth

To achieve these goals we recommend policy statements in Waterloo's Official Plan that indicate the City will:

``promote green roofs, community gardens and tree planting in new and existing developments``

``support the development of temporary farmers` markets or stands, urban agriculture projects and community vegetable gardens``

``provide *uncontaminated* land, rooftops, water access, compost, and infrastructural supports for community gardens and urban agriculture projects``

``protect urban agriculture and community garden developments from confiscation in high-density developments``

“provide start-up and maintenance funds and staff support to community gardens”

We would also suggest having a definition of community gardens in the glossary of terms that reads:

``Community Gardens – a shared space in a neighbourhood where residents can have a place to grow their own vegetables, fruit, herbs, and flowers``

These more specific policy recommendations offer promising support for community gardens. We hope you consider our expertise regarding the needs of community gardens to ensure this support results in some of the above policy recommendations. This will be an integral part of the success of community gardens in the City of Waterloo.

On behalf of the Community Garden Council and the names listed below we hope these considerations are a part of the exciting plans for the City over the next 20 years!

We look forward to your follow-up on this issue.

Sincerely,

Candace Wormsbecker
On Behalf of the Community Garden Council of Waterloo Region