



Ward Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 23, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
West Thunder Community Centre

1. Westfort Ward Meeting 02-2023

Chair: Councillor Kristen Oliver

2. Resource Persons

Chief Darcy Fleury, Thunder Bay Police Service
Insp. Derek West, Thunder Bay Police Service
Mayor Ken Boshcoff, DSSAB Board Member
Councillor Albert Aiello, DSSAB Board Member
Councillor Kasey Etrene, DSSAB Board Member
Councillor Brian Hamilton, DSSAB Board Member
Councillor Greg Johnsen, DSSAB Board Member
Councillor Dominic Pasqualino, DSSAB Board Member
Norm Gale, City Manager
Leanne Lavoie, Council & Committee Clerk

3. Attendance

Approximately 75 individuals were in attendance.

4. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair, Councillor Kristen Oliver welcomed those in attendance, provided introductory comments, and introduced members of Administration and District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board members.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the Westfort Ward meeting held on March 8, 2023, for information.

6. Spence Court

City Manager Norm Gale outlined the roles and responsibilities of the City of Thunder Bay and explained that municipal taxes are designed to deal with property-related issues, while social issues, such as health, mental health, addiction, and housing are the responsibility of other levels of government. Norm Gale further noted that City Administration does not direct the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (DSSAB).

Mayor Ken Boshcoff provided information about DSSAB and the geographic area covered by the board. The Mayor further noted that the same social issues in Thunder Bay are widespread across Canada.

Councillor Brian Hamilton, DSSAB board member, provided further information about the social issues in Thunder Bay.

Chief Darcy Fleury, Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) provided an update on arrests made in the recent shooting incident at Spence Court, and noted the number of arrests made in 2022. Chief Fleury advised that TBPS has strategies in place to reduce crime, and spoke about conversations with various agencies regarding addiction, noting that they endeavor to get people the help they need to get on a better track.

The Chair, Councillor Kristen Oliver concurred that helping people find the supports they need is crucial and noted that a proposal for a crisis centre has been put together by various agencies and organizations in Thunder Bay.

Citizens in attendance voiced several concerns and discussion was held relative to the following:

- High number of overdoses in Thunder Bay
- Crisis workers should be in DSSAB buildings to check on tenants
- Needles are littered in back lanes and other parts of the neighbourhood
- Should be 'bring a needle/take a needle' at safe injection sites to reduce the number of needles discarded in neighbourhoods
- Dangerous people are released from custody too soon
- Monitoring should occur in DSSAB properties to prevent home takeovers
- Start teaching children about addiction early, in schools
- Should have sniffer dogs at airport to reduce drug trafficking
- Not enough affordable housing

- Proper supports must be in place for people who come out of incarceration

Insp. Derek West, TBPS shared information about the Integrated Mobile Police Assessment Crisis Team (IMPACT), specialized mental health workers who attend mental health crisis calls with police officers. Insp. Derek West also advised that TBPS received a provincial grant for Project Prevent, which provides funding for additional officers in high-risk neighbourhoods to build relationships, help residents prevent home takeovers, and deter community members from joining gangs.

A citizen asked how they can legally protect themselves. Chief Darcy Fleury urged citizens to call police and not place themselves in jeopardy. There was discussion relative to response times and triaging based on the nature of the emergencies.

There was discussion relative to the City of Thunder Bay's advocacy for provincial Guns and Gangs funding. There was also discussion relative to Thunder Bay being a hub for the region and that many people who live here and use services are not included in the population number, therefore Thunder Bay's population-based funding from other levels of government is not enough. The Chair noted that the City of Thunder Bay's Inter-Governmental Affairs Committee advocates for these and other funding every opportunity they get. The Chair encouraged those present to contact their MPs and MPPs in writing, as well.

Chief Darcy Fleury thanked those in attendance and noted that by sharing their experiences and concerns, TBPS can know what is happening and work on solutions.

7. Ward and City Issues

A citizen expressed disapproval of municipal funds being used for the new art gallery and proposed indoor turf facility. The Chair, Councillor Kristen Oliver advised that such projects contribute to quality of life in Thunder Bay and are needed to make the city attractive to retain professionals.

8. Adjournment

The Chair, Councillor Kristen Oliver thanked those in attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.