



Ward Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 20, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Kinsmen Youth Centre

609 James Street N.

1. Northwood Ward Meeting 02-2023

Chair: Councillor Dominic Pasqualino

2. Resource Persons

Cynthia Olsen, Acting Director - Strategic Initiatives & Engagement

Chief Darcy Fleury, Thunder Bay Police Service

Deputy Chief Ryan Hughes, Thunder Bay Police Service

Inspector Derek West, Thunder Bay Police Service

Flo-Ann Track, Council & Committee Clerk

3. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The Chair to provide introductory comments.

The Chair called the meeting to order, welcomed Administration and those in attendance and provided introductory remarks.

4. Attendance

Approximately 48 individuals were in attendance.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the 01-2023 Northwood Ward meeting held on April 12, 2023, for information.

6. Homeless Encampments

Cynthia Olsen, Acting Director - Strategic Initiatives & Engagement, Chief Darcy Fleury, Deputy Chief Ryan Hughes and Inspector Derek West - Thunder Bay Police Services provided an overview relative to the above noted and responded to questions.

Discussion was held relative to the above noted. Some of the items discussed were as follows:

- Human rights-based approach to respond to encampments.
 - Since the onset of COVID 19, more people were noticed to be sheltering outdoors.
 - Contributing factors:
 - capacity at shelters was reduced to mitigate the spread of COVID 19.
 - service providers had limited capacity.
 - limited availability of affordable and/or supportive housing.
 - lack of resources in place to meet unique needs of individuals.
- Response to Unsheltered Homelessness Task Force (Task Force) was formed and is comprised of:
 - City representatives: Parks & Open Spaces, Thunder Bay Fire & Rescue, Municipal Licensing & Enforcement, and Community Strategies;
 - Community Partner representatives: Elevate NWO (Lead Community Partner), Thunder Bay District Health Unit, Thunder Bay Police, NorWest Community Health Centres, and the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB).
 - Temporary Funding, secured by Community partners for targeted interventions, provided short-term shelter, initially a few hotel rooms;
 - when funding ran out Community Partners were able to secure some harm reduction-based housing through TBDSSAB.
 - Although 2022 was quite successful, nearly three times as many people are sheltering outdoors.

- emergency shelter systems have been consistently at or near capacity.
- limited availability if any affordable, transitional, or supportive housing.
- some individual needs are unable to be matched with appropriate supports.
- some individuals having received supports pay it forward through volunteering and assisting with outreach programs.
- The Task Force continues to meet regularly.
 - Latest update: 115 people without appropriate housing options.
 - in mid-July several Community Partners, including Elevate NWO hosted pop-up events.
 - completed 127 Birth Certificate applications.
 - 198 housing applications.
 - 91 VI SPDATs - a tool used to assess vulnerability and risk related to being houseless.
 - offered 133 health services.
 - results from another pop-up event held at the end of August resulted in.
 - 69 housing applications.
 - 46 Birth Certificate applications.
 - a total of 13 people have been housed, as part of the 2023 intervention.
- Community Partners continue to visit sites, providing food, assessing needs, addressing health and safety matters, and connecting individuals with available supports and/or services.
- Thunder Bay Police services continues to support community outreach efforts, assisting with placements, building relationships, responding to community concerns, addressing and checking for public health and safety issues, harm reduction, and monitoring for criminal activity.

A resident asked why the City hasn't built another shelter?

Cynthia Olsen advised that the City of Thunder Bay has no mandate to provide housing. Social housing is under provincial jurisdiction and managed by TBDSSAB.

A resident asked why the police are not moving the tent city's out of neighbourhoods?

Cynthia Olsen advised that the Task Force is taking a Human Rights approach, learning from what other municipalities are doing well and advised of a recent ruling in the case of the Municipality of Waterloo's application for an injunction to evict individuals that were encamped on Region-owned property due to those individuals being in breach of a by-law prohibiting such actions. The injunction was denied on the basis that the By-law violated the homeless residents' Charter right to life, liberty, and security, Section 7 of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Residents asked if Pallet Housing and the former Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital have been considered?

Cynthia Olsen and Inspector Derek West provided that many options are being explored. Housing may be available, but may not match individual needs, matching resources takes time.

Residents asked why the homeless are not being held to the same standards as the taxpayers, noting if a homeowner was to pitch a tent on a city easement, at the very least, they would be asked to remove it or be fined.

Chief Darcy Fleury advised residents to contact 911 should they require assistance or have safety concerns.

7. Ward & City Issues

7.1 Rats

A resident asked what is being done about rats in the community?

The following information was provided:

Rat Control and Information can be found on the City of Thunder Bay's website, [Rat Information - City of Thunder Bay](#)

Or contact:

- Thunder Bay District Health Unit's Public Health Inspector 1-888-294-6630

- City of Thunder Bay's Infrastructure, Development & Operations
Dispatch 1-807-625-2195

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.