



The Corporation of The Town of Cobourg
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
AGENDA

Monday, July 4, 2022, 4:00 p.m.
Hybrid Meeting (In-Person and Electronic)

Please be advised that the Special Council Cobourg Council will begin at 4:00 P.M.

The purpose of the Special Committee of Whole Meeting is to deal with two (2) items as directed by Council, as approved and directed at the June 27, 2022, Regular Council Meeting.

Notice - This Special Council Meeting will be held using a hybrid meeting model. Members of Council will have the choice to participate in-person in Council Chambers or to participate via Electronic Participation. All Members of Staff also have the option on participating via electronic attendance or in-person and delegations will be heard using the same hybrid method. Please note that in-person attendance in Council Chambers by members of the public is now permitted. The public may still view the Council meeting live via the Town of Cobourg live stream. If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback, please email clerk@cobourg.ca.

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. TRADITIONAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Town of Cobourg respectfully acknowledge that we are located in the traditional and treaty territory of the Michi Saagiig (Mississauga) and Chippewa Nations, collectively known as the Williams Treaties First Nations, which include: Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Alderville, Scugog Island, Rama, Beausoleil, and Georgina Island First Nations.

The Town of Cobourg respectfully acknowledge that the Williams Treaties First Nations have been stewards and caretakers of these lands and waters, and that today remain vigilant over their health and integrity for generations to come. We are all Treaty people.

3. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST
4. NOTIFICATION

Municipal Clerk

Notice of the Special Meeting of Council was provided in accordance with the Town of Cobourg Council Procedural By-law and was published in the local newspaper, posted on the Municipal Website www.cobourg.ca.

5. PRESENTATIONS

6. DELEGATIONS

- | | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 6.1. | Michael Brown, Cobourg Resident, to speak on experiences on Homelessness in the Community. | 3 |
| 6.2. | Keith Oliver, Cobourg Resident, to speak on the Homelessness and Sheltering in Cobourg. | 5 |
| 6.3. | Peter Howes, Cobourg Resident, regarding the Development of a Encampment Response Plan for the Town of Cobourg. | 7 |
| 6.4. | Missy McLean, Moms Stop the Harm, regarding Sheltering and Homelessness in the Community. | 10 |
| 6.5. | Rev. Neil Ellis, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, regarding Sheltering in the Town of Cobourg. | 12 |
| 6.6. | Brad Bridges, Cobourg Resident, regarding experiences in Homelessness in Cobourg. | 15 |
| 6.7. | Dr. Alyson King, Cobourg Resident, regarding Haplessness and Sheltering in Cobourg. | 19 |
| 6.8. | Meghan Sheffield, Cobourg Resident, regarding experiences and thoughts on sheltering on public lands. | 24 |
| 6.9. | Nicole Whitmore, regarding written statements of those unsheltered in the Town of Cobourg. | 26 |
| 6.10. | Shannon Basso, the Help Centre, regarding working being done to support Seniors facing Homelessness in our Community. | 30 |

7. REPORTS

- | | | |
|------|--|----|
| 7.1. | Memo from the Director of Legislative Services/Municipal Clerk, regarding the Homelessness and Sheltering and the Enforcement of Municipal By-laws in the Town of Cobourg. | 33 |
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Action Recommended

THAT Council receive the Staff Report for information purposes; and

FURTHER THAT Council choose one of the following options:

OPTION #1 (Status Quo)

THAT Council maintain the status quo and the enforcement of Municipal By-laws currently in place conducted by Municipal Law Enforcement Officers; and

FURTHER THAT Council endorse a revised Encampment Response

Plan by the By-law Department for coordination with the County of Northumberland Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) in order to establish a coordinated systemic multi-agency response to those sleeping rough in the Town of Cobourg to facilitate person-centered engagement opportunities and individualized connections to community-based supports, including dignified housing/shelter options.

OPTION #2 (Sheltering Permitted)

THAT Council allow for sleeping rough in unmaintained areas of Municipal Parks in the Town of Cobourg;

THAT Council authorize the preparation of a By-law to be presented at a Regular Council Meeting to suspend the enforcement of the Parks Use By-law regarding sleeping rough in Municipal Parks and the hours of operation for municipal parks; and

FURTHER THAT Council maintain the enforcement of the Nuisance By-law, and direct Staff to provide certain services such as dedicated By-law Enforcement staffing, security, showers, and dedicated programming, power, water, garbage disposal cooking abilities (outdoor BBQs, communal space), harm reduction supports and infrastructure, safety measures to limit violence and thefts, naloxone kits and storage for personal belongings (outdoor self-service lockers; and

FURTHER THAT Council endorse the revised Encampment Response Plan by the By-law Department for coordination with the County of Northumberland Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) in order to establish a coordinated systemic multi-agency response to those sleeping rough in the Town of Cobourg to facilitate person-centered engagement opportunities and individualized connections to community-based supports, including housing/shelter options.

- 7.2. Notice of Motion, Councillor Nicole Beatty, regarding the development of a Encampment Response Plan for the Town of Cobourg.

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Action Recommended

WHEREAS the number of people residing in the Town of Cobourg who are unhoused or experiencing homelessness is increasing;

AND WHEREAS 78 people are officially listed as being homeless, according to Northumberland County.

AND WHEREAS 24 is the maximum number of shelter spaces available in the area.

AND WHEREAS the Town of Cobourg By-law Enforcement Team is responding to a high volume of concerns regarding encampments.

AND WHEREAS the Town of Cobourg does not have an official by-law, policy or program in place to respond to shelter encampments.

AND WHEREAS according to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Canada has recognized that adequate housing is a fundamental human right for all.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council direct staff to develop an Encampment Response Plan with input, collaboration and outreach support from homeless-serving partners and community members to engage folks residing in encampments and help them transition to safer and more humane accommodations.

AND FURTHER THAT an encampment site is only to be cleared once everyone has been offered safe and appropriate indoor accommodation.

AND FURTHER THAT in the event of an encampment site being cleaned up everyone's personal belongings are stored for a period of two weeks and adequate written notice of support is provided.

AND FURTHER THAT Council call on Northumberland County Council, staff and its service providers to work with the Town of Cobourg to establish an immediate solution to increasing the supply of indoor accommodation and providing street outreach support through the implementation of an Encampment Response Plan.

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct senior staff and three members of Council to make a delegation to Northumberland County Council at their next scheduled Regular Council meeting on July 20th, 2022.

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to engage with Infrastructure Ontario and MPP David Piccini to repurpose, refurbish or rebuild a small portion of the former Brookside property to explore immediate housing options in response to the local housing crisis.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Special Council Meeting Regarding Homelessness and Sheltering

Cobourg, ON (June 28, 2022) – The Town of Cobourg is calling a Special Council Meeting for Monday, July 4, 2022, regarding Homelessness and Sheltering.

At the Monday, June 27, 2022, Regular Council Meeting, Cobourg Municipal Council received a delegation from a group of Cobourg residents regarding Homelessness and Sheltering in the Town of Cobourg. Following a comprehensive discussion, Council passed a resolution to hold a Special Council Meeting to review the following items:

- 1) A staff report on Homelessness and Sheltering and the Enforcement of Municipal Bylaws in the Town of Cobourg
- 2) A Motion regarding the development of an Encampment Response Plan for the Town of Cobourg

Delegation to Council:

Cobourg residents and local organizations who are interested in presenting a delegation to Council may do so by submitting a request to the Municipal Clerks office by Thursday, June 30, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. [Delegation Request Forms](#) can be found on the Municipal Website www.Cobourg.ca

Special Council Meeting:

The Special Council Meeting will be held on Monday, July 4, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, Victoria Hall, 55 King Street West. Those who are unable to attend in person, may watch the meeting online through [eScribe](#), the Town of Cobourg public meeting website.

-30-

Media Contacts

Kara Euale

Manager, Communications
Town of Cobourg
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Brent Larmer

Director, Legislative Services Division
Town of Cobourg
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About The Town of Cobourg

The Town of Cobourg is a lakeside community (population 20,500) located on the north shore of Lake Ontario halfway between Toronto and Kingston and has been recognized multiple times by MoneySense Magazine as "One of Canada's Best Places to Live" in populations under 25,000.

Founded in 1798, Cobourg is rich in heritage offering a vibrant downtown, sophisticated small-town atmosphere and renowned waterfront that serves as a popular getaway destination. As the largest town in Northumberland County, Cobourg is personified by historic Victoria Hall, hosts a 27.4 million community centre, an educated and skilled labour force, flourishing commercial sector and supportive municipal government. Cobourg has received the Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Sustainable Communities Award, accolades from the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance, and multiple heritage, environmental, and event awards.



The Corporation of the Town of Cobourg
Legislative Services Department
55 King Street West
Cobourg, ON K9A 2M2

Delegation Request Form

Please submit the completed Delegation Request Form to the Municipal Clerk in person or by mail to 55 King Street West, Cobourg, ON K9A 2M2, by e-mail to clerk@cobourg.ca, or by fax to (905) 372-7558.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Delegate(s):

Michael Brown

Group/Organization/Business Delegation Represents (if applicable):

2. MEETING SELECTION

I wish to appear before:

☐ Committee of the Whole ☐ Regular Council ☐ Advisory Committee or Local Board

If appearing before an Advisory Committee or Local Board please specify:

Press to Select a Committee of Board

Meeting Date Requested:

Monday July 4th @ 4:00 PM

3. DELEGATION REQUEST

General Nature/Purpose of the Delegation:

(Clearly state the nature of the business to be discussed & provide a general summary of the information to be presented)

Talking about my experience as a tax payer and a Homeless person living in the Town of Cobourg.
(Speech written)

Facts about my experience of been Homeless, my first hand witness to the campgrounds (encampments)

Thoughts on adequate locations of encampment, and previous locations.

Recommendation to Council/Committee/Board:

(Please indicate below what action you would like the Town to take with respect to the above-noted subject matter)

I would like them to consider the speech I wrote, and the fundamentals that need to be setup before setting up a legal encampment, and the risks this takes to our homeless community

Have you appeared before the Town of Cobourg's Council or its Committees or Boards in the past to discuss this issue?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Will you have an oral or written presentation? ☒ Oral ☐ Written

Do you have any equipment needs? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If selecting yes, please indicate the type of equipment needed for your presentation:

Please Select the Type of Equipment

Note: Delegates are required to provide one (1) copy of all background material/presentations prior to the deadline provided in the Delegation Rules and Guidelines below, or it will not be included in the Agenda.



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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Delegate(s):

KATH OLIVER

Group/Organization/Business Delegation Represents (if applicable):

2. MEETING SELECTION

I wish to appear before:

Special Council Meeting on Homelessness and Sheltering

☐

Committee of the Whole

☐

Regular Council

☐

Advisory Committee or Local Board

If appearing before an Advisory Committee or Local Board please specify:

Press to Select a Committee of Board

Meeting Date Requested:

July 4, 2022, 4:00 pm, in person Council Chambers

3. DELEGATION REQUEST

General Nature/Purpose of the Delegation:

(Clearly state the nature of the business to be discussed & provide a general summary of the information to be presented)

I would like to speak after all other delegates have completed their presentations. I have experience with various types of group activities that have successfully address the subjects under consideration.

Recommendation to Council/Committee/Board:

(Please indicate below what action you would like the Town to take with respect to the above-noted subject matter)

Not specific at this moment but may be forwarded to Council following this special meeting.

Have you appeared before the Town of Cobourg's Council or its Committees or Boards in the past to discuss this issue?

☐ Yes ☒ No

4. PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Will you have an oral or written presentation? ☒ Oral ☐ Written

Do you have any equipment needs? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If selecting yes, please indicate the type of equipment needed for your presentation:

Please Select the Type of Equipment

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Delegate(s):

PETER HOWES

Group/Organization/Business Delegation Represents (if applicable):

RESIDENT OF COBOURG

2. MEETING SELECTION

I wish to appear before:

☐ Committee of the Whole ☒ Regular Council ☐ Advisory Committee or Local Board

If appearing before an Advisory Committee or Local Board please specify:

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING RE HOMELESSNESS & SHELTERING

Meeting Date Requested:

MONDAY JULY 4, 2022

3. DELEGATION REQUEST

General Nature/Purpose of the Delegation:

(Clearly state the nature of the business to be discussed & provide a general summary of the information to be presented)

TO ADDRESS THE POINTS IN THE NOTICE
OF MOTION PROPOSED BY COUNCILLOR
NICOLE BEATTY FOR DEVELOPING AN
ENCAMPMENT RESPONSE PLAN FOR THE
TOWN OF COBOURG.

HOPEFULLY THIS WILL ASSIST COUNCIL
WITH ANY DECISIONS AND CONSENSUS/
ACTIONS IT WILL TAKE IN REGARDS

Recommendation to Council/Committee/Board:

(Please indicate below what action you would like the Town to take with respect to the above-noted subject matter)

TO THIS MATTER

Have you appeared before the Town of Cobourg's Council or its Committees or Boards in the past to discuss this issue?

☐ Yes ☒ No

4. PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Will you have an oral or written presentation? ☒ Oral ☐ Written

Do you have any equipment needs? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If selecting yes, please indicate the type of equipment needed for your presentation:

Note: Delegates are required to provide one (1) copy of all background material/presentations prior to the deadline provided in the Delegation Rules and Guidelines below, or it will not be included in the Agenda.

STATISTICS FROM WIKIPEDIA.

Howes
Donation

NORTHUMBRIA'S POPULATION 2021 - 316 000

COBURN'S POPULATION 2021 - 20,519

COBURN'S REPRESENTS CIRCA 1/15TH OF
NORTHUMBRIA'S POPULATION

THEFORE COBURN'S PROPORTION OF
NORTHUMBRIA'S ISSUE REPRESENTS
HOMELESS

5.2(6)

OR

IF EACH MUNICIPALITY IN NORTHUMBRIA
ASSUMES 1/7TH OF THE HOMELESS
ISSUE THEIR ISSUE REPRESENTS
HOMELESS.

11-1



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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Delegate(s):

Missy McLean

Group/Organization/Business Delegation Represents (if applicable):

Moms Stop the Harm

2. MEETING SELECTION

I wish to appear before:

☒ **Committee of the Whole** ☐ **Regular Council** ☐ **Advisory Committee or Local Board**

If appearing before an Advisory Committee or Local Board please specify:

Press to Select a Committee of Board

Meeting Date Requested:

Monday, July 4, 2022

3. DELEGATION REQUEST

General Nature/Purpose of the Delegation:

(Clearly state the nature of the business to be discussed & provide a general summary of the information to be presented)

I would like to share with Council some insight into the ways in which I have been supporting community members who are currently homeless in Cobourg and attempting to shelter themselves by camping. I will share some words directly from folks with lived experience of camping and being told to pack up and move on by by-law officers.

I will also share some insight into the ways in which allowing folks who are homeless to shelter safely is an act of harm reduction in the midst of the ongoing national toxic drug poisoning and overdose crisis.

Recommendation to Council/Committee/Board:

(Please indicate below what action you would like the Town to take with respect to the above-noted subject matter)

I would like to see Council approve and implement the requests made by the delegation of community members regarding sheltering in place that was made at the Regular Council Meeting on Monday, June 27. This includes amending any relevant by-laws to allow folks to shelter in place and providing at least two designated areas where folks may choose to camp that would also provide access to potable water, washrooms and waste management, and easier access to social service and community organizations who are supporting individuals who are homeless.

Have you appeared before the Town of Cobourg's Council or its Committees or Boards in the past to discuss this issue?

☒ Yes ☐ No

4. PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Will you have an oral or written presentation? ☒ Oral ☐ Written

Do you have any equipment needs? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If selecting yes, please indicate the type of equipment needed for your presentation:

Please Select the Type of Equipment

Note: Delegates are required to provide one (1) copy of all background material/presentations prior to the deadline provided in the Delegation Rules and Guidelines below, or it will not be included in the Agenda.



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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Delegate(s):

Rev. Neil Ellis

Group/Organization/Business Delegation Represents (if applicable):

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

2. MEETING SELECTION

I wish to appear before:

☐ Committee of the Whole ☒ Regular Council ☐ Advisory Committee or Local Board

If appearing before an Advisory Committee or Local Board please specify:

Press to Select a Committee of Board

Meeting Date Requested:

July 4, 2022

3. DELEGATION REQUEST

General Nature/Purpose of the Delegation:

(Clearly state the nature of the business to be discussed & provide a general summary of the information to be presented)

Speical Meeting of Council re: allowing individuals to shelter in place

That Cobourg engage in meaningful dialogue and take leadership on the issue of housing.

Recommendation to Council/Committee/Board:

(Please indicate below what action you would like the Town to take with respect to the above-noted subject matter)

Suspend enforcement of the bylaws which impact those who do not have permanent housing which prevent them from sheltering in place.

Develop concrete plans to address the issue through temporary or permanent measures through the use of public land.

Have you appeared before the Town of Cobourg's Council or its Committees or Boards in the past to discuss this issue?

☐ Yes ☒ No

4. PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Will you have an oral or written presentation? ☐ Oral ☒ Written

Do you have any equipment needs? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If selecting yes, please indicate the type of equipment needed for your presentation:

Please Select the Type of Equipment

Note: Delegates are required to provide one (1) copy of all background material/presentations prior to the deadline provided in the Delegation Rules and Guidelines below, or it will not be included in the Agenda.

To members of Council and fellow residents of Cobourg:

I am sorry that I am unable to attend this Special Meeting of Council to discuss the vital situation around individuals' rights to shelter. However, I am grateful that Council has heard the voice of the community. I hope that in partnership with other levels of government and with the support of the community of Cobourg decisive action might take place.

We are all aware of the housing crisis and difficulty finding suitable housing at a level that individuals can afford. We know that our shelter spaces are full and that there are no immediate permanent solutions. As residents of Cobourg, we have watched this situation continue to erode over the past few years. The question before us now is will we continue to allow individuals who call Cobourg home to live without appropriate shelter?

A moratorium on the enforcement of bylaws that impact individuals who, without alternate housing or accommodation, are sheltering in tents, cars, or otherwise is a good first step. How might we further assist these individuals and ensure their dignity is respected? Might space and services be made available on public lands to provide a safe space for those who wish to shelter there.

The challenge of appropriate shelter is not unique to Cobourg. Other municipalities, large and small, are also grappling with crisis. Might we look to what others are doing and also step forward to provide leadership. In doing so let's engage in meaningful dialogue with one another and ensure that those affected by the lack of housing have a voice as they will be directly impacted by any decisions made.

I look forward to the continued dialogue and meaningful action that will ensue.

Sincerely,

Rev. Neil Ellis
Minister
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Delegate(s):

Brad Bridges

Group/Organization/Business Delegation Represents (if applicable):

2. MEETING SELECTION

I wish to appear before:

☐ Committee of the Whole ☒ Regular Council ☐ Advisory Committee or Local Board

If appearing before an Advisory Committee or Local Board please specify:

Press to Select a Committee of Board

Meeting Date Requested:

July 4, 2022 Special Meeting

3. DELEGATION REQUEST

General Nature/Purpose of the Delegation:

(Clearly state the nature of the business to be discussed & provide a general summary of the information to be presented)

To share my experience as a homeless person in Cobourg for the past 11 months

Recommendation to Council/Committee/Board:

(Please indicate below what action you would like the Town to take with respect to the above-noted subject matter)

To stop bylaw enforcement against homeless people and let people with nowhere else to go to set up tents until we find a place to live

Have you appeared before the Town of Cobourg's Council or its Committees or Boards in the past to discuss this issue?

☐ Yes ☒ No

4. PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Will you have an oral or written presentation? ☐ Oral ☒ Written

Do you have any equipment needs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If selecting yes, please indicate the type of equipment needed for your presentation:

Please Select the Type of Equipment

Note: Delegates are required to provide one (1) copy of all background material/presentations prior to the deadline provided in the Delegation Rules and Guidelines below, or it will not be included in the Agenda.

Hi my name is Brad.

My fiancé and I have now been homeless for 11 months. It's been the hardest 11 months of my life. We have been through so many hardships that I have lost count. Before I was homeless, I had the privilege of having my two boys, Ashton and Landon every weekend. I loved every second of being with them.

Now because I'm homeless, I haven't seen them in 6 months. It might not be a long time for some, but for me it feels like an eternity. I am missing out on the most crucial part of their lives. I can't see them because I have no place or home to bring them, nor do I feel like the options I am given are safe enough for them.

I would bring them camping with me, but every time I set up a spot we are always pushed out by the bylaw enforcement agency and I can't move my children around every other day, and any other time it is just too cold.

Being homeless makes me feel so hopeless. My children have been bullied in school because of me and that is just not fair.

I work part time construction and my fiancée has monthly income and we can easily afford first and last month's rent, and rent for the rest of the months to follow, but nobody will rent to us. It's not because we are bad people or don't have references, but because I don't have any credit. I don't see why it matters that much as long as rent is being paid. I lived in my last home for 12 years and didn't miss one single rent payment.

I believe that citizens of this community should not turn their backs on us or give us the cold shoulder because we are still people. Some of the people that are less fortunate like me are some of the sweetest and kindest people I know. Just because they don't have a home or a car, they will still give the shirt off their backs and help in any way possible, I mean that's got to say something, and I'm telling you this now that one day when the world is falling apart, the more fortunate ones will need our help as we need yours now.

I know a lot of us don't have jobs, but trust me when I tell you that being homeless is one of the hardest jobs in the world.

It takes a toll on every aspect of your life. I really don't understand why most people give us such a hard time for camping, there is so much land that can be shared. Whatever happened to "love thy neighbor", or "peace, love and prosperity."

It's hard enough to live on the streets with nothing but being treated like nothing is even worse. I know that we are looked at differently because some are addicted to drugs or alcohol, but then again, so are people with homes and families. If you were to take a poll, I can almost guarantee you that seventy five percent of homeless people will tell you that they use drugs daily to help ease the pain and block out the rest of the world of being scrutinized. Quite frankly, I think it's disgusting the way most people would love us to just disappear, then they think they would have no more burdens. We're not the ones that give the burden, they do that to themselves because all they do is worry when they don't have to, because even though we are homeless and have nothing to show, you will see that 90 percent of the time we have a smile on our faces. It's a weird thing that the more fortunate are miserable and we are not, but make no mistake, we have our moments. I just wish there were more caring people in the world like the people sitting here in this room tonight, people who truly do care because if you didn't you wouldn't be here, and for that I thank you from the bottom of my heart. If there were more people like you, we probably wouldn't have to be here tonight. But there isn't so here we are.

This pushing people along has got to stop, we don't deserve to be treated this way. Like I said at the last community meeting, I might as well be in jail, because I will have access to a phone to talk to my boys, I'll have three solid meals a day, and I won't have to worry about where I'm going to lay my head at night. I shouldn't have to feel this way, it's just not right.

So before my time is up, I would just like to say thank you for everyone's support and all the wonderful things that you have done for us, it is so greatly appreciated. Hopefully, one day there will be a conclusion to all of this and we won't have to do this again. We are man kind, and we can be kind, man, so let's all help each other, because we all deserve to be comfortable. Godbless, thank you, and goodnight.

Brad Bridges



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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Delegate(s):

Dr. Alyson King

Group/Organization/Business Delegation Represents (if applicable):

none

2. MEETING SELECTION

I wish to appear before:

☐ Committee of the Whole ☒ Regular Council ☐ Advisory Committee or Local Board

If appearing before an Advisory Committee or Local Board please specify:

Press to Select a Committee of Board

Meeting Date Requested:

Monday July 4, 2022

3. DELEGATION REQUEST

General Nature/Purpose of the Delegation:

(Clearly state the nature of the business to be discussed & provide a general summary of the information to be presented)

Special Council Meeting on Homelessness and Sheltering

Housing is a human right. Viewing the right to shelter as a human right is not a new idea. Nor is the fact that "adequate housing is essential to the reduction of poverty and social exclusion." In 2008, the Ontario Human Rights Commission recognized that housing is an internationally protected human right. In June 2019, a little over 3 years ago, the National Housing Strategy Act received royal assent, bringing Canada in line with international standards. With inflation and the current economic situation, the fallout of the pandemic, and the province's very recent change to allowable rent increases, from 1.2% to 2.5%, the number of unsheltered people in Cobourg will continue to increase unless proactive measures are taken by the Town.

Recommendation to Council/Committee/Board:

(Please indicate below what action you would like the Town to take with respect to the above-noted subject matter)

I urge the Council to be proactive and thoughtful in developing a wholistic, inclusive, and cohesive plan to address homelessness that follows human rights norms and that provides support quickly and efficiently.

Have you appeared before the Town of Cobourg's Council or its Committees or Boards in the past to discuss this issue?

☐ Yes ☒ No

4. PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Will you have an oral or written presentation? ☒ Oral ☒ Written

Do you have any equipment needs? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If selecting yes, please indicate the type of equipment needed for your presentation:

Please Select the Type of Equipment

Note: Delegates are required to provide one (1) copy of all background material/presentations prior to the deadline provided in the Delegation Rules and Guidelines below, or it will not be included in the Agenda.

Delegation to Cobourg Town Council, Monday July 4, 2022

Special Council Meeting on Homelessness and Sheltering

By Alyson King

Housing is a human right. Viewing the right to shelter as a human right is not a new idea. Nor is the fact that “adequate housing is essential to the reduction of poverty and social exclusion.” In 2008, the Ontario Human Rights Commission recognized that housing is an internationally protected human right. In June 2019, a little over 3 years ago, the National Housing Strategy Act received royal assent, bringing Canada in line with international standards. With inflation and the current economic situation, the fallout of the pandemic, and the province’s very recent change to allowable rent increases, from 1.2% to 2.5%, the number of unsheltered people in Cobourg will continue to increase unless proactive measures are taken by the Town.

Under international human rights law, the right to housing does not mean that the government must provide everyone with housing. Rather, it ‘recognizes that all people have the “right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity” and that governments must implement reasonable policies and programs which will ensure that everyone has access to adequate housing by one means or another.’ The passing of Canada’s National Housing Strategy Act means that that this commitment to ensuring access to adequate housing must guide housing policy and programs, prioritizing those in the greatest need. One component of this is that governments must: “Refrain from actions that violate the right to housing, such as criminalizing those who are homeless or discriminating against particular groups.”

One interim strategy to dealing with the growing number of people who are homeless is to allow people to live outside in tents. Often, this will develop into encampments. Yet, simply letting people sleep or live wherever they want is not an adequate approach to homelessness. According to Leilani Farha, encampments can be seen as a violation of human rights. At the same time, banning encampment communities is not a solution because stable encampments can allow for a more efficient delivery of supports and services.

As an interim strategy, allowing encampments is viable, but it is only viable if people’s rights are protected. This means ensuring that folks have access to safe and clean drinking water, hygiene and sanitation facilities, resources to ensure fire safety, waste management systems, strategies to support personal safety and food safety, and resources to support harm reduction. Protocols available for working with unsheltered people (see [A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada](#)).

Personally, I continue to find it appalling that town and county governments have done so little to address the question of high levels of homelessness when there are vacant properties available in the town and county. For example, the ongoing vacancy of Brookside or other large buildings in the area. Or the plans to demolish the Golden Plough after the new building is completed.

In the written document I sent in, I've included a list of actions that other communities have used to address homelessness, some of which you may have already begun to implement. In conclusion, I urge the Council to be proactive and thoughtful in developing a wholistic, inclusive, and cohesive plan to address homelessness that follows human rights norms and that provides support quickly and efficiently. I ask you to look for fair and proactive measures to support those who are unsheltered, work to prevent others from becoming homeless or unsheltered, and to rethink the Town's approach to creating truly affordable housing. Thank you for listening.

Actions that the Town of Cobourg can take to support a significant reduction of homelessness in our community (based on the [policy scan by The Shift](#)):

- 1) **Create a human rights infrastructure by:**
 - a) Recognizing the human right to housing in local charters, declarations, or ordinances, as was done in the [Toronto Housing Charter](#) or [Victoria's Housing Strategy 2016-2025](#).
 - b) Implementing local accountability and enforcement mechanisms to secure the right to housing, such as a Housing Commissioner or Ombudsperson.
 - c) Collecting real-time, person-specific data capable of assessing progress towards realizing the right to housing locally, including in relation to homelessness and core housing need. [Medicine Hat, Alberta](#), is a strong example of success in this area.
- 2) **Take progressive and positive steps to address unacceptable housing conditions by:**
 - a) Adopting rights-based budgeting across city departments and divisions, seeking to use maximum available resources to address the housing of needs of those most marginalized. Existing mechanisms like [Equity Responsive Budgeting](#) in the City of Toronto can serve as models.
 - b) Training municipal staff to understand the human right to housing and meet their human rights obligations, including in departments like urban planning and parks and recreation.
- 3) **As required by international human rights law, ensure the meaningful participation of those experiencing housing need by:**
 - a) Developing municipal infrastructure that embeds the meaningful participation of people with lived expertise into all policy development relevant to housing and homelessness.
 - b) Adopting the [Lived Experience Advisory Council Principles](#) within local policy making processes related to housing and homelessness, seeking to ensure equitable decision-making power is allocated to people with lived expertise.
- 4) **Ending homelessness and the criminalization of homelessness by:**
 - a) Re-deploying city-owned land and buildings, and acquiring existing distressed properties, to create permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness on an urgent basis. The NHS's

[Rapid Housing Initiative](#) has supported many cities to do just this, including the [Tl̓ich̓ Region](#) of the Northwest Territories. Other cities have chosen to sell city-owned properties to non-profit housing providers, such as Winnipeg (MB), who [approved selling 15 properties for \\$1 each](#) in order to create new affordable housing units.

- b) Implementing local anti-discrimination campaigns focused on eliminating stigma and discrimination on the basis of housing status.
 - c) Adopting a human rights-based approach to encampments, using [A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada](#) to guide the development of a local strategy.
 - d) Ensure that local homelessness and Violence Against Women (VAW) housing and service providers have the training and supports they need to employ a rights-based approach to service delivery.
- 5) Look for ways to **improve equality for marginalized groups and prioritize those most in need** by:
- a) Setting local targets, timelines, outcomes, and indicators that redress systemic barriers to adequate housing experienced by those most in need.
 - b) Conducting Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), rights-based audits of local policies and programs relevant to securing the right to housing.
 - c) Engaging in interjurisdictional and cross-sectoral cooperation in order to transform public system policies that undermine the right to housing.
- 6) **Regulate the Private Sector and Address the Financialization of Housing** by:
- a) Embedding the right to housing in urban planning processes and practices.
 - b) Preserving the existing stock of affordable housing through community-based, non-market acquisition of distressed housing. A good example of this is the [Right of First Refusal](#) bylaw adopted by the City of Montreal in 2020, which gives the City the ability to exercise a right of first refusal (a pre-emptive right) to purchase properties for social housing.
 - c) Maximizing land use, zoning, and other bylaw opportunities to increase the availability of affordable housing and preserve existing affordable housing units. BC, for example, adopted a [Speculation and Vacancy Tax](#) that contributes to turning empty homes into affordable housing initiatives.
 - d) Regulating short-term rentals, such as Airbnb and VRBO, as is being done in Toronto with the adoption of a 4% [Municipal Accommodation Tax](#) on all registered short-term rentals.
- 7) Because eviction into homelessness is considered “a gross human rights violation” and forced evictions are prohibited under international law, Cobourg can **work to prevent evictions and prohibit forced evictions** by:
- a) Developing screening programs to identify individuals and families at risk of eviction, providing immediate interventions to stabilize housing. The City of Toronto’s [Eviction Prevention in the Community \(EPIC\)](#) is a great example of such a program, with [evaluation data](#) indicating 90% of EPIC clients were stabilized in their current housing during the first year of the program.
 - b) Investing in emergency financial supports for tenants at risk of eviction, such as rent banks or emergency cash relief programs.
 - c) Improving access to legal information, advice, and representation for persons at risk of eviction. Examples of organizations that provide strong eviction prevention and legal supports include the [Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation](#), [Pivot Legal Society](#), and [Justice for Children and Youth](#).



The Corporation of the Town of Cobourg
Legislative Services Department
55 King Street West
Cobourg, ON K9A 2M2

Delegation Request Form

Please submit the completed Delegation Request Form to the Municipal Clerk in person or by mail to 55 King Street West, Cobourg, ON K9A 2M2, by e-mail to clerk@cobourg.ca, or by fax to (905) 372-7558.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Delegate(s):

Meghan Sheffield

Group/Organization/Business Delegation Represents (if applicable):

2. MEETING SELECTION

I wish to appear before:

☐ Committee of the Whole ☒ Regular Council ☐ Advisory Committee or Local Board

If appearing before an Advisory Committee or Local Board please specify:

Press to Select a Committee of Board

Meeting Date Requested:

July 4, 2022, Special meeting

3. DELEGATION REQUEST

General Nature/Purpose of the Delegation:

(Clearly state the nature of the business to be discussed & provide a general summary of the information to be presented)

To share my experience and thoughts as a resident of Cobourg on the topic of unhoused residents of Cobourg seeking shelter on public lands (I expect my whole delegation to be no more than 5 minutes total)

Recommendation to Council/Committee/Board:

(Please indicate below what action you would like the Town to take with respect to the above-noted subject matter)

Based on what I've seen in my own neighbourhood, I wish for council to implement the proposal from last Monday's delegation, i.e. to stop enforcement of bylaws that persecute unhoused and unsheltered residents, and instead to support these residents according to the UN special report protocols.

Have you appeared before the Town of Cobourg's Council or its Committees or Boards in the past to discuss this issue?

☒ Yes ☐ No

4. PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Will you have an oral or written presentation? ☒ Oral ☐ Written

Do you have any equipment needs? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If selecting yes, please indicate the type of equipment needed for your presentation:

Please Select the Type of Equipment

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Delegate(s):

Nicole Whitmore

Group/Organization/Business Delegation Represents (if applicable):

2. MEETING SELECTION

I wish to appear before:

☐ Committee of the Whole ☒ Regular Council ☐ Advisory Committee or Local Board

If appearing before an Advisory Committee or Local Board please specify:

Press to Select a Committee of Board

Meeting Date Requested:

July 4, 2022, Special meeting

3. DELEGATION REQUEST

General Nature/Purpose of the Delegation:

(Clearly state the nature of the business to be discussed & provide a general summary of the information to be presented)

Written statements from people who are currently unhoused in Cobourg

Recommendation to Council/Committee/Board:

(Please indicate below what action you would like the Town to take with respect to the above-noted subject matter)

Based on these statements, I support the move to allow and support unsheltered people in encampments in Cobourg as a temporary measure to meet the needs of the housing crisis

Have you appeared before the Town of Cobourg's Council or its Committees or Boards in the past to discuss this issue?

☐ Yes ☒ No

4. PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Will you have an oral or written presentation? ☒ Oral ☒ Written

Do you have any equipment needs? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If selecting yes, please indicate the type of equipment needed for your presentation:

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Virginia

I experienced 9 months of homelessness last year. packing everything you own up. Strapping it to your back while malnourished and exahused is the worst feeling I've experienced. Then you spend the day carrying all your worldly possessions walking all over trying to find a small space you can rest, only to have to do the same thing the next day. You start to feel like something less than human. It's awful. Since having found a room to rent we try to shelter, food, allow access to laundry and showers to as many members of our community in that situation as possible.

It's difficult. We lack resources, space, know how. These people are desperate, tired, dehydrated, depressed, subject to harassment, hard working, kind, loving residents of Cobourg that are often forgotten by their community. Please help.

Timmy, age 35

I hate being homeless, no shower, no TV but I love camping so I would love to be able to camp within town limits. Thanks.

_____, age 41

I've been homeless numerous times in my life. Since I was 13 years old. I couch surfed a lot, camped out in the woods.

Jill

I got a ticket for sleeping at the church.

Cary, 35

Due to an abusive relationship, me and my two children 2 and 5 at the time had to flee. With the women's shelter being at capacity and there being no rooms large enough to hold a family, we had to pay for a hotel which we could not afford.

Kayla Gibson, 27

Nowhere to pitch tents. Rentals are out of budget for a single government assistance. Shelters have limited space and are usually fully booked or not suitable unless you have previously been in a domestic violent relationship.

Chris, age 39

My girlfriend and I came to Cobourg with Transition house, once we ran our time out there (3 months) we lived in our car for a few nights. Then we set up a tent on the east end of town by the lake in the woods out of the way. Bylaw was called we had to move, then we found another spot on the north end of town. Was charged with trespassing. Moved once again, by law came so we moved again. This time we parked our car in a friend's driveway and by this time it was uninsured and unplatd so police came and towed our car/home and it cost \$750 to get it back weeks later as we couldn't afford it being towed then we moved in a with a friend into a 1

bedroom apartment. And knowing the struggles of not having a warm safe place to go, opened our doors to whoever needed a place a meal or a shower.

Jacob, 24

Ok I had no where to camp. It's not funny or right for anyone not letting camping. I think there should be camping for the homeless. Yes, young kids have no where to go. They need camping, a home, a roof and a tent to call home. If there's no camping rule, there needs one.

Tiffany Palfrey, Age 33

Being homeless. Me and my BF of 16 years became homeless 2 years ago after 10 years living in the same apartment. Our son was born and raised in the safety and security of a stable home. A single event occurred in our relationship that began a domino effect of downfalls. In 2019 our addiction got out of control and we fell behind in rents. So I attended the tribunal and agreed to pay an extra 530.00 per month to pay it back but we couldn't be a dollar short or a day late. With covid at it's peak, I was collecting CERB while my BF still worked. In February I was a few days late for rent and March was a few days late for the extra, \$530. Nothing was said about it so we continued with life and paying our rent and extra. We also went on methadone and were successful for about 6 months. My BF made the mistake of confiding in his sister about being on methadone. She told our parents and suddenly we started being treated differently, like we were addicts but they missed that part, we hid it well. The reason we were unaware that our late payment resulted in our eviction was because of covid. ONce that was lifted is when we were served the papers. We had 2 weeks to find a place. The biggest issue we encountered was the fact that there are no family shelters. Cornerstone has no men allowed. Transtion house doesn't take children. We had to drop our son off at his grandparents. A week later I found out I could no longer pick my son up unless Brandon or someone else supervised. Why? I don't know. I raised him for 10 years. And very well. In the 2 years we have been homeless, my boyfriend Brandon has been arrested twice. For the first time in his 35 years of life. I have been arrested 6 times. I haven't been arrested since I was 19. Homelessness increases crime. For 10 years we worked hard. We had a two bedroom apartment, a car, our son, our jobs, and all the electronics, toys, fourwheelers you could imagine. We lost it all. And where did our taxes go? Where did the \$11,000 a year go? Not to anything that's meant to help us when we fall.



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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Delegate(s):

Shannon Basso

Group/Organization/Business Delegation Represents (if applicable):

The Help Centre

2. MEETING SELECTION

I wish to appear before:

☒ Committee of the Whole ☐ Regular Council ☐ Advisory Committee or Local Board

If appearing before an Advisory Committee or Local Board please specify:

Press to Select a Committee of Board

Meeting Date Requested:

Monday, July 4, 2022

3. DELEGATION REQUEST

General Nature/Purpose of the Delegation:

(Clearly state the nature of the business to be discussed & provide a general summary of the information to be presented)

I would like to share information about and insight into the work being done at The Help Centre to support seniors facing homelessness in our community. In particular, I will share data about the number of seniors we are seeing in our office who are being pushed into homelessness, the causes behind their displacement and barriers they are facing to finding new housing. I can also speak to the harms they are experiencing as they attempt to shelter themselves as best they can in our community.

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENT | VICTORIA HALL, 55 KING ST W, COBOURG, ON K9A 2M2
T.905.372.4301 | F.905.584.4325 | www.cobourg.ca | clerk@cobourg.ca

Recommendation to Council/Committee/Board:

(Please indicate below what action you would like the Town to take with respect to the above-noted subject matter)

I would ask that Council receive the information I will share and take it into consideration as they deliberate on the best ways in which to address the issue of homelessness in Cobourg and how the Town can best support folks who are unsheltered at this time.

Have you appeared before the Town of Cobourg's Council or its Committees or Boards in the past to discuss this issue?

☐ Yes ☒ No

4. PRESENTATION MATERIAL

Will you have an oral or written presentation? ☒ Oral ☐ Written

Do you have any equipment needs? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If selecting yes, please indicate the type of equipment needed for your presentation:

Please Select the Type of Equipment

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Please note that information on the first two (2) pages of this form will be printed on a public Agenda.

5. **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Address (Street, Town/City and Postal Code):

Suite 301, The Fleming Building 1005 Elgin Street West, Cobourg ON K9A 5J4

Phone:

905-372-2646

E-Mail:

shannon@thehelpcentre.ca

6. **ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMODATION**

Do you require any accessibility accommodation? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, what accommodation(s) do you require?

I have read and understood the Delegation Rules and Guidelines attached to this Form and acknowledge that information contained on this Form, including any attachments, will become public documents and listed on the Town of Cobourg Meeting Agenda.

Shannon Basso

Print Full Name



Signature

2022/06/30

Date (YYYY/MM/DD)

Municipal Clerk or Designate

Personal information, as defined in the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, 2001, and in accordance with MFIPPA. Personal information collected in relation to materials submitted for an agenda will be used to acknowledge receipt, however, please be aware that your name is subject to disclosure by way of publication of the agenda. All meetings are open to the public except where permitted to be closed to the public under legislative authority. Questions regarding the collection, use and disclosure of personal information contained in this Form may be directed to Brent Larmer, Municipal Clerk/Manager of Legislative Services at (905) 372-4301 extension 4401, or at blarmer@cobourg.ca.

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STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



Report to:	Mayor and Council Members	Priority:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low
Submitted by:	Brent Larmer, Director, Legislative Services/ Municipal Clerk Legislative Services Division blarmer@cobourg.ca	Meeting Type:	Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting Date:	July 4, 2022		
Report No.:	Legislative Services-038-22		
Submit comments to Council			

Subject/Title: Homelessness and Sheltering and the Enforcement of
Municipal By-laws in the Town of Cobourg

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive the Staff Report for information purposes; and

FURTHER THAT Council choose one of the following options:

OPTION #1 (Status Quo)

THAT Council maintain the status quo and the enforcement of Municipal By-laws currently in place conducted by Municipal Law Enforcement Officers; and

FURTHER THAT Council endorse a revised Encampment Response Plan by the By-law Department for coordination with the County of Northumberland Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) in order to establish a coordinated systemic multi-agency response to those sleeping rough in the Town of Cobourg to facilitate person-centered engagement opportunities and individualized connections to community-based supports, including dignified housing/shelter options.

OPTION #2 (Sheltering Permitted)

THAT Council allow for sleeping rough in unmaintained areas of Municipal Parks in the Town of Cobourg;

THAT Council authorize the preparation of a By-law to be presented at a Regular Council Meeting to suspend the enforcement of the Parks Use By-law regarding sleeping rough in Municipal Parks and the hours of operation for municipal parks; and

FURTHER THAT Council maintain the enforcement of the Nuisance By-law, and direct Staff to provide certain services such as dedicated By-law Enforcement staffing, security, showers, and dedicated programming, power, water, garbage disposal cooking abilities (outdoor BBQs, communal space), harm reduction supports and infrastructure, safety measures to limit violence and thefts, naloxone kits and storage for personal belongings (outdoor self-service lockers; and

FURTHER THAT Council endorse the revised Encampment Response Plan by the By-law Department for coordination with the County of Northumberland Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) in order to establish a coordinated systemic multi-agency response to those sleeping rough in the Town of Cobourg to facilitate person-centered engagement opportunities and individualized connections to community-based supports, including housing/shelter options.

1. STRATEGIC PLAN

Pillar – PEOPLE

Direction: The Town of Cobourg supports and cares for the social and physical well-being of its citizens.

Desired Outcomes: People are able to find attainable housing. There is a broad variety of housing types available for ownership and rental, Cobourg residents are healthy and happy

2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The topic of this report, regarding Homelessness and Sheltering and the Enforcement of Municipal By-laws in the Town of Cobourg has not proceeded through any formal public engagement process due to timing constraints. This report was requested by Council during the Council meeting on Monday June 27th for a Special Council meeting to be held on Monday July 4th. The Special Council meeting agenda was published on Tuesday June 28th and a formal public notice was sent out by the Communications Department and distributed through Social Media Platforms. This report was published on June 30, 2022 to allow for the maximum amount of days to be publicly available in advance of the Special Council meeting. Due to the timing of the scheduling of the Special Council Meeting, Staff were unable to get notice in the local Northumberland News.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Staff Report is to provide a detailed report to Council as a response to the resident Delegation received at the Monday June 27, 2022 Regular Council Meeting regarding Homelessness and Sheltering and the Enforcement of Municipal By-laws in the Town of Cobourg.

4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

5. BACKGROUND

Homelessness is a complex social issue which needs to be addressed at all levels of government, federally, provincially, and municipally through both upper tier and lower tier municipal governments. Addressing the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness is a complex social issue and requires a collective, coordinated and intentional community response. The implementation of this framework requires cooperation and action by multiple levels of government and community service providers.

The Town of Cobourg is a lower-tier municipality in a two-tier municipal government system and the County of Northumberland is the upper tier government providing upper tier services to our residents as listed and defined in the *Municipal Act, 2001* as amended and as referenced from time to time in other various pieces of legislation. *The Housing Services Act, 2011*, provides the authority for Northumberland County, in its role as the upper tier municipality to be the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for the entire county which consists of seven (7) member municipalities including the Town of Cobourg.

As part of the background information, it is important to define for council and the members of the public the term 'Sleeping Rough' which has been used in the community and referenced at the most recent delegation on Monday June 27, 2022. **Sleeping rough can refer to anyone who is living on the streets, sleeping in parks, or squatting in derelict buildings for temporary shelter.** People, sleeping rough, are some of the most vulnerable in society. It can be dangerous and is often traumatizing.

Those persons experiencing homelessness in any community and specifically within the Town of Cobourg have varied needs. Due to highly complex personal needs, some people require supportive housing with 24/7 care. Others need opportunities where they can access assistance when needed, and some simply need a home they can afford on their income. While sleeping rough is a current reality in our community, it is not part of an adequate response to homelessness. Current encampments are a consequence of a lack of coordinated and sustainable housing options for those who are unhoused and those who are vulnerable to becoming homeless. When people sleep rough because they have no other options it means that society has not yet developed or provided the wrap-around services needed for individuals to be and to remain to be housed successfully.

While a housing deficit exists, the municipality is faced with the issue of an increased number of people sleeping rough in public and private spaces. There are also those residents of our community who cannot move into any housing options, for a variety of reasons. People have been sleeping rough in the municipality for the past few years at different times of the year in very limited numbers, however, in the recent year and since COVID, By-law has seen an

increase in the number of people erecting tents in municipal parks from three (3) to five (5) a year to now twelve (12) since January and four (4) just this month. Currently, these options are not compliant with various municipal bylaws. As such, for the person experiencing homelessness who is unable to find an indoor shelter or housing option, they are faced with the situation that there is no place in which they are allowed to live. That said, not having any constraints on where people can shelter outdoors is not a workable option as it creates conditions for significant potential conflict between using the space for sheltering and other uses that have been identified and designated over time through bylaws or land use regulations, specifically parks which are not attended for short or longer habitation. However, with the increasing reality of insufficient indoor sheltering and housing spaces available and no permitted outdoor sheltering spaces it is difficult to tell people they must move on when there is no place they are allowed to be.

As part of the drafting of this report and as provided by the recent delegation on June 27, 2022, Municipal Staff reviewed the eight (8) principles from the United Nations Protocol for Homeless Encampments and described current practices. On April 30, 2020, Leilani Farha (UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing) and Kaitlin Schwan (Lead Researcher for UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing) released the Special Rapporteur report on A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada: A Human Rights Approach.

UN Special Rapporteurs are independent experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council to examine, monitor, advise and publicly report on human rights issues globally, as well as act as a bridge between rightsholders, governments and other relevant stakeholders. This Protocol outlines eight (8) Principles meant to guide governments and other stakeholders in adopting a rights-based response to homelessness encampments. It is important to note that the recommendations and principles of the UN Protocol are not legally-binding and the Town or any municipality is not required to follow or formally report on their implementation. It is also important to note that it appears that the UN Protocol is focused on larger scale encampments, not those that the Town of Cobourg is currently experiencing.

As part of the background for this report, it will be helpful for residents and the Community to understand the work that is being completed at the upper tier government level by the County of Northumberland on Homelessness and Sheltering within the County.

Northumberland County:

As noted in the Northumberland County Housing and Homeless Plan, the County, as Service Manager, is primarily responsible for the provision of subsidized housing and the administration of funding from senior levels of government. The County is also responsible for administering homelessness programs. In addition, the County establishes the policy and regulatory framework which guides the development of housing throughout Northumberland. Through Staff research located on County online resources, the following information has been gathered to provide background information on activities, resources and current programs

that are in place to support homelessness in the County which encompasses the Town of Cobourg.

- The Northumberland Housing and Homelessness Plan (the Plan) sets the renewed direction for the next ten (10) years for the work of Northumberland County and its housing partners to ensure all Northumberland residents have safe, appropriate and affordable housing choices and that a functional end to homelessness is achieved. Most recently, in June 2022, this month the County provided their annual report to County Council which can be accessed [here](#).
- Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) is a case conferencing group that shares knowledge and resources to support people experiencing homelessness in Northumberland County. Individuals provide signed consent to have their name put on the By Name List, which allows the HCRT Team to discuss information directly related to the individuals' housing situation and goals.

The organizations that participate on HCRT are:

- [Canadian Mental Health Association](#)
 - [Cobourg Police Service](#)
 - [FourCAST](#)
 - [Green Wood Coalition](#)
 - [Northumberland County Community and Social Services](#)
 - [Northumberland Hills Hospital – Community Mental Health Services](#)
 - [Rebound Child and Youth Services](#)
 - [The Help Centre](#)
 - [The Salvation Army](#)
 - [Transition House](#)
-
- The Homelessness Leadership Group (HLG) was created to improve on planning for homelessness in Northumberland County. Leaders from homelessness support organizations come together to create a coordinated approach. One of the priorities this group is working on includes the enhancement of the Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) to help improve the effectiveness of the County's Coordinated Access System. By supporting frontline workers, leaders will be able to share best practices across their respective organizations.

The organizations that participate on the Homelessness Leadership Group are:

- [Cornerstone Family Violence Prevention Centre](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge](#)
- [FourCAST](#)

- [Greenwood Coalition](#)
 - [Northumberland County Community and Social Services](#)
 - [Northumberland Hills Hospital – Community Mental Health Services](#)
- Northumberland County Report on 2021 enumeration marks the third time local agencies have collaborated on a point-in-time count to bring greater visibility to the state of homelessness in Northumberland. The 2021 Report can be found at this link – [2021 Enumeration Report](#).
 - Built For Zero Canada (BFZ-C) is a national program helping communities end chronic and veteran homelessness. This program is a first step to eliminating all homelessness in Canada. It uses a structured data driven approach focused on improving local homelessness systems, through the use of proven practices that drives the continuous improvement of policies and programs.

Northumberland County has been collecting data and reporting this monthly to Built for Zero Canada for the last two years. The County is currently working with improvement advisors to figure out how to best create a quality By Name List of people experiencing homelessness in Northumberland County and a quality coordinated access system. The goal is to help improve our local system response to addressing the needs of people who are experiencing housing instability and homelessness in our community.

A By-Name List (BNL) is a real time list of all people who are experiencing homelessness in Northumberland County. This list is consent driven, which means that individuals and families may choose to not provide consent to be included on this list. Services and support can still be offered and accepted by people who do not provide consent to be on the list.

This list helps the community partners of the Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) identify those individuals experiencing homelessness, collaboratively determine their needs and connect them to services, supports, and available housing. Every two weeks community partners meet to update details on this list and to see how better connections to resources can be made for each person on the list.

- Northumberland County Community and Social Services is the Service Manager and works with community partners to manage and develop the BNL. Northumberland County only uses basic information from the BNL, taking out any names and identifying information and sends reports on monthly data to Built For Zero Canada as a part of our community's commitment to ending chronic homelessness. Some of this monthly data includes the number of people in a month who:

- Are actively experiencing chronic homelessness (homeless for 180 days or more in the last 12 months)
 - Have found housing
 - Are taken off the list because they are either no longer working with agencies in the community, or have asked to have their name taken off of the list
- **Social Services Relief Funding** – The Town of Cobourg has received general oral information on this fundings program, but are still waiting for information from theCounty on how it is supporting our residents.
 - **Community Outreach Program** – The Town of Cobourg has received general oral information on this fundings program but are still waiting for information from the County on how it is supporting our residents.

Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

Under the Province's Safer Ontario Act, 2018 municipalities are required to develop a Community Safety & Well-being Plan using the provincial government's Community Safety and Well-Being Framework. Northumberland County took on the leadership role to develop the Community Safety Plan for the entire County which includes the Town of Cobourg.

The aim of the Community Safety and Well-Being plan is to ensure all residents in the community feel safe, has a sense of belonging and can meet their needs for education, healthcare, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression.

Community Safety and Well-Being plans support safe and healthy communities through a community-based approach to address root causes of complex social issues. Planning seeks to achieve a proactive, balanced and collaborative approach to community safety and well-being across four key areas: social development, prevention, risk intervention, and incident response.

As part of the final Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, the County identified several priorities, the first priority was Priority A: Homelessness and Affordable Housing. This priority has put into place four (4) goals:

1. Align leadership from the Collaborative with current Housing and Homelessness Plan goals
2. Ensure more support is available to meet the needs of precariously housed people; develop and implement prevention approaches to enable people to retain housing.
3. Increase opportunities for housing and support service agencies to collaborate

4. Support and advocacy for increased housing and shelter options for people across the county.

Each Goal has an objective, activities and guidelines, and measurers of success. This plan and the contents can be accessed here – [Community Safety and Well-Being Plan](#).

Emergency Sheltering in the County of Northumberland and Town of Cobourg:

Transition House

Transition House Emergency Shelter has been providing safe and supportive shelter for Northumberland County's most compromised citizens since 1999. Transition House provides safe, dignified and supportive temporary housing, life skills and transitional support services to men and women over the age of 18 from Cobourg, Port Hope, Grafton, Colborne, Campbellford, Brighton, Hamilton Township, and Alderville. It should be noted that Transition House is the only Homeless Shelter in Northumberland County.

Transition House currently has 22 shelter beds (18 in the house and 6 in motel) and they have just been funded for an additional 10 beds in motel, that has been obtained through the Reaching Home (federal grant), which allowed the purchase more rooms to help support the community.

Transition House is also contracted by the County to provide Family Diversion supports which also have 2 rooms attached. So, there are 2 additional rooms there that are specific to families in need of shelter.

Transition House has reported that they don't have a waiting list for the shelter but are seeing a potential with families and that a waiting list may be something in the not to distant future. The family diversion program seems to have great need and will most likely end up with a waiting list before too long. Transition House has noted that they are having challenges meeting needs with Family Diversion. That being said, much of the new need seems to be coming from Durham (as with shelter) as they exceed their resources.

It should be noted that at the Transition House Emergency Shelter (Transition House), the goal is to ensure a safe, respectful discharge or restriction from services, either voluntarily or involuntarily. This encompasses both a trauma informed lens and a Housing First focus while providing clients with opportunities for a restorative process that allows the organization to also ensure its legislated obligations to health and safety for staff.

What is Discharge?

It is the intention that clients are able to participate in developing a discharge plan with staff that will lead to long term housing. There are times where this is not possible and unplanned/involuntary discharges occur.

Voluntary – A discharge is a voluntary process when services follow the natural cycle including referral and transition to permanent housing.

The client either:

- Achieves service goals and is ready to discontinue service(s), or
- no longer wants to stay at the Shelter and receive service(s).

Involuntary - Discharge is when a Service Restriction is implemented for various reasons during a client's stay that are related to non-compliance with the Client Service Agreement.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Refusal to adhere to the policies and procedures of the shelter (e.g. not completing chores, missing curfew, non-engagement in housing plan);
- Client needs that exceed the resources and expertise of the shelter;
- The use or possession of drugs, alcohol or weapons in the house;
- Selling or distributing drugs on Transition House property;
- Theft of Transition House property or staff property;
- Aggressive and/or violent behaviours;
- Bullying, racism, harassment and/or sexual harassment

There are Three levels of Service Restrictions:

- One (1) Month
- Three (3) Months
- Permanent.

A community consultation was conducted during the development of the Service Restriction policy with the NHH, the County and CPS, people with lived experience and other organizations.

Capacity at Transition House has been described as sometimes being less than 100% capacity in the shelter because there is one room for females and only males arrive, as an example. In those cases, the house will have to turn people away. When placed in a motel, there may be a ban from the motel. In these cases, no one can be served. It's quite rare that someone has a service restriction for a long period of time unless there is ongoing violence and escalated behaviors which would reduce staff's ability to control the environment.

6. ANALYSIS

As directed by Municipal Council, the analysis of this report will include information on the current process and the Town's response to responding to camping and encampments within the Town of Cobourg. Secondly this report will include

information on the delegation that was presented to Cobourg Council on the request to permit encampments on publicly owned lands specifically parks in the community with comments from persons and partners through a few days of engagement that staff were able to conduct.

To date from January to June 2022, the Town of Cobourg has dealt with twelve (12) unauthorized camping in municipal park complaints within various areas of the community, mostly within the downtown area.

By-law Enforcement Encampment Current Response Process:

The response protocol/procedure from By-law Enforcement has been reactive to complaints for encampments in Municipal Parks, and all activity and response to encampments in the Town of Cobourg have been complaint driven.

Municipal Staff realize that there are encampments and some tents that are located around Town and have been over the years erected in different areas. Staff are not actively looking for these encampments on a daily or regular basis due to amount of work and staffing. These locations are brought forward through complaints and are investigated as they come into the enforcement office.

The below procedures are the current practices that are conducted and executed when dealing with one or few tents/structures that have appeared in parks and public places that is not a designated or permitted camping location:

- Upon receiving a complaint, Officers attend the site. At this point in time the Officers will provide initial identification and communication with the individuals.
 - Visit the Site
 - Determine the current situation and review the environment including health and safety.
 - Identify the occupants and inquire as to their current situation and what services they may need.
- Officers engage with occupants if present and verify if encampment is on either Town property or private property.
- If encampment is on Town property, and persons are present they are served with a “Notice to Vacate”. Officers educate and provide information on available resources. If persons are not present the “Notice to Vacate” is prominently posted at the site.
- After this initial review and discussion, regular enforcement activity is conducted pursuant to the Town’s Parks By-law, Nuisance By-law, and Trespass to Property Act;
- A period of time suitable to the circumstance is provided to vacate the site (this may depend on complexity of encampment, number of persons, weather conditions etc.,) however a period of 24 – 48 hrs., is commonly provided. If there is serious Health and Safety or criminal

activity circumstances my warrant lesser time or immediate removal. Depending on the response, additional enforcement, such as police services may be required depending on the situation.

- After the time period has elapsed, a reinspection is conducted to determine the status of compliance. Additional time may be given if necessary subject to the discretion of the Officer.
- If compliance is not achieved in the required time period, then a clearing of the site is scheduled with staff resources and equipment suitable to remove the items from Town property which are declared waste and disposed of accordingly. This work is coordinated by the By-law Enforcement Department with assistance from the Public Works and Parks Departments in order to ensure that the space can be safely accessed and utilized by the Public.
- If encampment is on Private Property, the property owner is advised and staff offer assistance if owner would prefer we act as Agent of Property. If property owner grants permission for encampment to remain, a review of lawful use in accordance with the Zoning By-law is conducted and appropriate enforcement measures taken if warranted. Property Clean-up will be the responsibility of the private landowner. The Town may provide support to not-for-profit property owners.

By-laws Currently Prohibiting Camping in Parks:

Enforcement is conducted pursuant to the Town's Parks By-law, Nuisance By-law, and Trespass to Property Act;

- Sec 17.1 Parks By-law; No person shall dwell, camp, or lodge in any park, excluding the Victoria Parks Campground.
- **"Camp"** shall mean to erect a structure, hut, or tent for the purpose of providing shelter, or to use a structure, hut, tent for human habitation for any period of time;
- **"Park"** shall mean land and Municipal owned water lots and all portions thereof owned by or made available by lease, agreement, or otherwise to the municipality, that is or hereafter may be established, dedicated, set apart or made available for use as public open space.
- **"Nuisance"** shall mean an activity that causes an unsafe environment, affects the well-being of persons or the enjoyment of a public places.
- Applicable Nuisance activities include; urination/defecation, fighting, disorderly conduct, loitering, damage public property, activities prohibited by signs etc.,
- Section 2 (1) of the Trespass to Property Act provides;

Every person who is not acting under a right or authority conferred by law and who,

- a) without the express permission of the occupier, the proof of which rests on the defendant,
 - I. enters on premises when entry is prohibited under this Act, or

- II. engages in an activity on premises when the activity is prohibited under this Act; or
- b) does not leave the premises immediately after he or she is directed to do so by the occupier of the premises or a person authorized by the occupier, is guilty of an offence.

By-law Enforcement Improvements on Encampment Response Recommendations:

As a result of learnings from the delegation and through the last few days of research and meetings with partners, and other levels of governments, staff is recommending that an established Northumberland County partnered coordinated systemic multi-agency response to encampments be introduced through HCRT to help to address potential health and safety risks, as well as facilitating person-centered engagement opportunities and individualized connections to community-based supports, including housing/shelter options for individuals that are found in municipal parks and public lands.

Staff believes that when an initial complaint is received by the By-law Department, the Town of Cobourg could engage the support from the Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) from the County of Northumberland to support a collaborative response to those who are sheltering in the Town of Cobourg. This response could be a team of coordinated individuals and agencies that could be ingrained in the initial visit to the encampment location called the Encampment Response Team. When a complaint is lodged, the Encampment response team will conduct an assessment of the health and social needs of individual with consent, and their name be added to the By-Name List (BNL) if it isn't already which will allow for the understanding of their needs and connect them to services, supports, and available housing and also to connect with other community partner agencies who can provide a wide variety of supports.

An additional change and improvement that can be made to the Encampment Response Protocol/Procedure is an update on the removal of property from a vacated encampment and the storing of personal items, as necessary, to be placed at a centrally located municipal facility for retrieval. When Municipal Staff moves out an encampment, Staff shall place property that is left behind in an area for a longer period then the timeline for vacating the area to allow for persons to retrieve their items when it is comfortable for them to do so, and they have found a place to keep their possessions. A timeline would have to be determined, but a one-week period may seem like an appropriate time period to begin with.

A last update and improvement that can be made to the Encampment Protocol/Response is to provide a hard timeline for removal and required vacating of encampments that are located on Municipal Lands, rather than discretion determined by the Municipal Law Enforcement Officer. This timeline could be 48 hours which would be two (2) days which should be reasonable amount of time to allow for interaction with services and trying to find alternative accommodations. If

there are extreme health and safety measures discovered or that the encampment is interfering with a municipal program or activity directly, there may be reason to move up the timeline, and this should be left with the Officers decision in collaboration with Management and Senior Management determination.

As part of the second discussion of this report, Staff have provided commentary to Council on several considerations related to the potential introduction of allowing sanctioned encampments within the Cobourg community.

Considerations:

Insurance and Liability

Camping in Town of Cobourg municipal parks is currently prohibited under the Parks Use By-law No.012-2016. A central basis for this prohibition is that camping poses health and safety hazards, including fire concerns and risks to personal security, and the Town is unable to fulfill its duty to keep people reasonably safe from those harms during overnight hours (11pm to 6pm every night) when there is no staff, public traffic or security measures at the park and when the risk of harm is inherently higher.

It is important for Council to understand that as the property owner, the municipality would have certain responsibilities on how members of the public use municipal owned lands in an unsupervised manner.

Under the Occupiers' Liability Act (the "OLA"), the municipality owes a duty to take such care as in all the circumstances is reasonable to see that persons entering on municipal property, and the possessions brought onto municipal property by those persons, are reasonably safe.

It should be noted that when Council is considering an authorized encampment on municipal property, the Town owes a duty of care to the campers under the OLA to ensure they are reasonably safe while on municipal property.

When considering the above, Council may want to consider some type of monitoring to the shelter locations that would support the implementation of rights and responsibilities, and locations may need to be provided with portable toilets, potable water garbage containers, frequent maintenance and cleaning and daily by-law monitoring and enforcement during a 24/7 hour period. Another item that should be considered is lighting during the night hours. Illumination in these areas would help Officers and security in their monitoring efforts to make sure that there is safe environment for all.

In addition to the Occupiers Liability Act, Staff have had a preliminary conversation with the Town of Cobourg insurance provider who made a few comments for Council to consider.

1. Council would need to amend the Parks By-law to allow the camping in the parks and/or removing the no camping provisions of the By-law and suspend the hours of closing if overnight accommodation is permitted. If Municipal Council were to allow camping in municipal parks knowing that it is in contravention of a municipal by-law, the coverage could be denied if there were to be a claim in the park.
2. If Council amends or suspends camping and overnight provision of the Parks by-law, then Council needs to consider the limitation on the number of occupants that will be living rough and not creating that open invitation of persons and no way to know how many tents a location may end up with from persons that may come from many different parts of Ontario communities looking for a place to encamp.
3. The final comment that was made was the potential harm to Municipal Law Enforcement Officers who may not have the appropriate training when trying to remove campers from the parks. It would be important for the Officer and Staff to receive crisis intervention training to increase their knowledge and understanding of individuals with mental health and addiction challenges. These new skills learned will be valuable when interacting with encampment individuals to be able to build relationships and achieve better outcomes.

Health and Safety Concerns

Due to the vulnerability and transience of those needing shelter, health and safety concerns are present for both residents and Municipal staff, verbal and sometimes physical aggressions have been noted at various sites that have been moved along. Municipal Law Enforcement Officers are not trained in outreach or mental health engagement techniques and therefore cannot offer support to address health and safety for encampment residents. This fact extends to include staff themselves, who navigate a challenging array of health and safety concerns when carrying out their duties. A professional skillset is required for staff to facilitate the mitigation of challenging behaviours, circumstances, and establishment of positive rapport. Staff will need to be trained in non-violent crisis intervention, work only in pairs and remain in constant communication with each other. As well as any other measures that would be determined as necessary to support staff to perform their duties and maintain a safe and supportive work environment.

Sheltering Considerations

If Council is considering Recommendation #2 and allowing Shelters in municipal parks or public lands, there should be consideration of the following when choosing appropriate locations:

Locations should not be:

- within 50 metres of a school, daycare, or adult care facility;
- on active sports fields, dugouts, or bleachers;

- within horticultural displays or gardens;
- within cemeteries;
- near environmentally or culturally sensitive areas;
- blocking a path or right of access;
- on bridges, docks, or piers;
- near playgrounds, pools, or splash pads;
- near skateboard parks or sports courts;
- near picnic shelters, gazebos;
- near recreation facilities;
- in any other maintained area; or
- in highly inaccessible spaces for individuals, services, and support providers.

When evaluating a proposed location, the following should be considered as commented through many partners and commentators discussions:

- proximity or availability of public washrooms, park washrooms, or another toilet option;
- proximity to a potable water source for drinking and handwashing;
- proximity to public transit;
- proximity to services and supports residents need;
- site safety;
- site privacy;
- site maintenance services (including vehicular access and garbage removal);
- potential of damage to the site;
- risk of conflict with other users of space and the resident; and

CONSULTATION:

1. Lived Experience and Delegation input on Sheltering in Cobourg:

More information on sheltering in Cobourg provided by delegates from the June 27, 2022 Regular Council Meeting: (The following was provided by Meghan Sheffield:

Let us be clear: the appropriate response to homelessness is secure, safe, affordable, long-term housing. Everything else will be only a temporary fix. Some temporary fixes are preferable to others, however, and removing people from their chosen home should never be an acceptable solution. With a ten year wait for public housing in Northumberland, we must not let the perfect be the enemy of the good response.

People who have lived experience with being unsheltered and unhoused hold a lot of wisdom -- turning to these experienced voices for direction, rather than having housed people try to imagine unfamiliar possibilities, will save time and resources for all involved. Local outreach organization Green Wood

Coalition has offered that the Town can turn to them for support in making appropriate connections and consultation with people with lived experience.

People are in need of shelter. Since 2020, an overnight winter warming room has been made available in Cobourg by Northumberland County, because it is understood that there are some members of our community who would otherwise be unsheltered without that option. When the Warming Room closes at the end of the season, the people who have been making use of it are still here. They must continue to survive, and must continue to be able to rest, where they can.

The people seeking shelter here are from Cobourg. They have lived here for many years, some for all their lives, some for many generations. Our unsheltered neighbours have not arrived from “somewhere else.”

No one is interested in setting up a tent in Victoria Park or other busy park spaces. Instead, people prefer to find shelter in discrete locations of relative safety and privacy. For example: a recent eviction took place in the unused, Town-owned property at the Tannery district, where a by-law officer admitted to walking by five times before they could locate the tent. The Rotary park behind the YMCA has been suggested, as have the lands at Brookside.

Evictions are not always happening according to the official procedure. We are hearing from people who were moved 5 times in 8 days, and at times given 15 minutes to pack up and clear out, and had their belongings disposed of immediately --- all of this is in direction contravention of the policy of giving 24-48 hours warning, support resources, and access to belongings as reported by the Clerk at Monday’s meeting. It is not fair to hand-wring over getting any new, more humane bylaws “just so” when the ones that are already in effect are not being applied accordingly.

In these evictions, people lose important belongings: clothing, medication, personal identification, and significant personal memorabilia. In the last two weeks, a Cobourg resident lost the manuscript for a memoir they had been working on, as it was disposed of by bylaw enforcement officers. Previously we have heard from people who lost toys belonging to their children, items for housing they were expecting to access in the near future, and documents required for moving forward with employment and housing rentals.

Having a place to keep one’s belongings provides autonomy and independence, and also allows people to be able to attend appointments and job interviews without carrying around all of their personal effects.

When people are moved along and have their shelter destroyed by bylaw enforcement, they become more isolated from their own social community and from more formal support resources including outreach, MHEART and County social workers, who then must put in additional labour simply to find the individual.

Indigenous people are among those who have had to seek shelter outdoors in Cobourg. As treaty people, we encourage the Town of Cobourg to engage with the treaties and their signatories to better understand how those documents address the rights of individuals to seek shelter and find rest upon these lands. Cobourg is situated on Indigenous lands, and is therefore subject to the rights promised under UNDRIP, which means that Indigenous Peoples' right to land and self-determination is in effect.

We believe that in the absence of suitable shelter or housing, every person has the right to a safe and consistent place to sleep. A place where they can safely store their possessions and maintain connections to their community, where they have vital support networks and services. The Town of Cobourg can facilitate these rights by repealing and updating its bylaws to meet the current reality in a housing shortage. Ideas on how to do that:

- **because the issue is urgent, implement a pilot project** while more information is gathered, as Kingston is currently doing, allowing encampment on public land while it hammers out details such as which municipal By-Laws need to be waived by Council to allow the non-conforming use of parkland for this purpose. https://getinvolved.cityofkingston.ca/encampment-response?tool=news_feed
- make bylaws applicable according to whether an individual has an alternate permanent address or not (so public land is not available to camp for people who do have other options)

Cobourg residents with housing are aware of the dramatic changes in the local property market and are witnessing the harms their neighbours are experiencing. Citizens of this town are talking about what they are seeing and experiencing and mobilizing accordingly.

2. Neighbours and Community Members at Large:

To date, the Town of Cobourg has not completed any formal engagement of this report and discussion regarding homelessness and sheltering in the Town of Cobourg with Cobourg Residents. Municipal Staff believe that a formal community engagement should take place with all residents in order to share ideas, opinions and ask questions on initial thoughts on these concepts and options and how to make these spaces safe and supportive for those who will utilize it and the neighbours that surround it.

3. Cobourg Fire Department:

Municipal Staff engaged the Cobourg Fire Department to receive comments on any Cobourg Fire Department concerns related to sheltering within the Town of Cobourg and permitting camping on Municipal Property. The Fire Chief engaged with Provincial counterparts across Ontario and specifically the City of Toronto Fire Chief and the following was noted:

- Increased deaths due to careless smoking, heating up illicit drugs with propane heaters, using propane heaters for warmth in an unsafe manner, and carbon monoxide from the propane heaters being used in a confined space
- Increased fires in encampments because of the unsafe use of heating equipment
- Open air fires and the hazards brought on by the potential items that will be burnt. This creates Health and Safety concerns for homeowners in the area
- Depletion of services due to the increased responses required for the encampments, this could jeopardize someone else because of our delayed response to a vehicle collision, fire, or medical call
- Unsafe conditions for fire department staff, Police will have to escort fire department and EMS staff during medical or fire calls
- The potential for increased exposures that would jeopardize fire department staff (HIV, hepatitis etc.) and acts of violence;
- Countless violations under the Ontario fire code and fire protection and prevention act that requires our fire prevention officer to respond under “the immediate threat to life”

In addition, the Fire Chief has noted the following related to specific operations of the Cobourg Fire Department:

- Cobourg Fire only has one temporary fire prevention officer at this time, and the Officer will be overwhelmed with the calls for service at these encampments, not to mention the regular duties he is obligated to attend under the Ontario fire code
- There will be a significant cost to this undertaking because of the increased call volume and we will be required to call in career and part-time staff to ensure the safety of the citizens and tourists of Cobourg are safe.

4. Cobourg Police

The Cobourg Police Service (CPS) should not be a primary response to many of the issues surrounding homelessness. CPS should be focused on the prevention and resolution of crime. Responses to issues surrounding homelessness should whenever possible be led by Service Provider, the Town of Cobourg Municipal Law Enforcement Team, and the other support agencies that would be involved in supporting the encampments. The Cobourg Police Service actively works in coordination with Transitions House, Cornerstone, HCRT, Community Safety and Well Being Team, situational tables and other hubs. MHeart and HARP regularly provide on the ground, real time assistance, to many service agencies and the clients they serve.

Cobourg Police would have similar comments to the Fire Services and would provide a level of service that would be necessary to uphold the law as it would occur in any setting and environment.

The creation of designated encampments(s) will require a concerted police response effort. This is a real concern as experienced by communities across Ontario that have experience with encampments. This could be an unbudgeted staffing expense which the range of cost could be between \$102,000 and \$150,000 monthly. This is a figure is drawn from experience of another community who managed a similar encampment in 2021.

The enhanced and specific police presence incurred in part for the following reasons:

- Increased community concerns for safety,
- Increased calls for service including extortion, theft and violence,
- Increased potential for people to take advantage of vulnerable people including human trafficking and
- The desire to provide a safe community for all neighbourhoods in Cobourg.

Not funding this expense in addition to the current deployment of officers will create service delivery concerns for the entire community. What this means is that the possible additional workload will have to be managed by the current staffing model. The impact of this may be delayed response to calls for service throughout the community.

The enhanced police presence is very tentative even to commit to currently. During the summer months, our Town is busier than any other year requiring more police activity. This coincides with a time period where staff vacancies are higher than the rest of the year.

The Cobourg Police Service continues to serve the community in both proactive and reactive manners. We support all community agencies aimed at enhancing community safety and well-being. And we recognize that we are not the leaders in certain issues and want to support those agencies in resolving issues of greatest concern for them.

5. Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit:

Town Staff reached out to the Health Unit but has not yet received a response on the matter. Municipal Staff is expecting that a review will be completed by the Health Unit in relation to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the Town will be provided requirements and recommendations when a decision is made.

6. Northumberland County

The following was received by the County of Northumberland during the consultation process. Staff met with the Community Services Manager and received information on existing programs, and Staff asked about collaboration

with programs for response to sheltering when there is a first contact with the Town:

Northumberland County Community and Social Services is the homelessness system manager for Northumberland County. This work includes developing and improving a system and framework to coordinate and manage homelessness services across Northumberland (reflecting the 10-year Housing and Homelessness plan).

Currently, the County invests in programs and services through Homelessness Prevention Program funding allocated each year by the MMAH and County investment. Through contracted service agreements, community-based agencies provide key homelessness and housing related supports and services. This includes investments in sheltering services for families, couples, and singles from Emergency shelter, motel overflow programs, warming rooms and more recently development of a transitional housing and supportive housing model. Additionally, investments to multiple homeless serving community-based organizations are made to connect those seeking services with housing related supports, and health and harm reduction resources and access to food supports.

Through work with the Canadian Alliance to end homelessness and the Homelessness Leadership Table, the County has developed a quality by name list and as part of best practice established a centralized coordinated access point through Transition House's emergency shelter in Cobourg. Individuals or families may have accessed the homelessness system from any point; however, the person would be redirected to Transition House for emergency sheltering, and further assessment of need along with diversion supports and discussion.

As part of the 2022 Business plan for Community and Social Services, a Request for Proposals was issued on June 20th seeking a review of the homelessness system framework in Northumberland. Together, we have been working to build a County-wide response model of infrastructure and services to support those experiencing – or at risk – of homelessness. The goal of this review will be to develop recommendations for advancing these efforts based on a holistic view of the homelessness system.

The review will include an assessment of present state, along with best practice and sector trends, so that we can develop data-based plans for effectively meeting the needs of the whole County over the long-term. We will be looking at:

- funding models
- partnership opportunities
- core emergency shelter service level standards, and
- strategies supporting impactful program delivery and coordinated access

The department of Community and Social Services also delivers comprehensive and provincially mandated services across Northumberland County that support those in crisis and living on low incomes. For those who seek our services, a plan of care and goals are set identifying actions to promote life stabilization and improved health outcomes.

Community and Social services provide financial, health, food, and housing options for those that are eligible. Through our Early Years team fee subsidy for licensed childcare and family programming through EarlyON Child and Family Centres.

Recommendations:

Staff are providing Council with two (2) options to consider related to the topic of sheltering and permitting 'Living Rough' on municipally owned property.

The first option for Council to consider is to remain with the status quo, and the enforcement of Municipal By-laws currently in place continues to be conducted by Municipal Law Enforcement Officers, and that Staff improve the way that the Encampment Protocol/Procedure is conducted. Staff is recommending that there be more direct collaboration with the County of Northumberland and current practice be better leveraged and be directly involved in the resources and programs that are in place to directly reach persons in encampments to understand needs and challenges to help persons get the support services and accommodations that they need to get back on track. This approach will be conducted and enforcement compliance will not take effect until 48 hours (or Less) until an assessment and preliminary interaction has occurred in which voluntary compliance is the preferred response.

Staff are recommending that this option be chosen by Council and is moved forward as a first approach in addressing homelessness in the community. Staff will keep track and maintain confidential record keeping and stats on removal of encampments through non-enforcement measures, but removed through a collaborative direct diversion approach to get individuals out of municipal parks who are living rough on municipally owned property. Regular updates could be provided to Council in order to provide information and continuing reporting on the encampment situation within the Town of Cobourg.

Council should also be aware that not all individuals who are choosing to shelter in parks and municipally owned property will want to engage with staff and a response team to receive the opportunity to receive available shelter space and receive specific services for their needs. These persons will need to be part of the consistent approach in the Encampment Procedure/Protocol and we shall continue to support these persons on getting back into the shelter system and receiving the services that they need, but not allowing longer encampment in the Towns parks.

The second option is for Council to suspend the enforcement of the Parks Use By-law regarding the camping in Municipal Parks and the hours of operation (park curfew) for municipal parks, maintain the enforcement of the Nuisance By-law, and direct Staff to provide certain services' such as dedicated By-law Enforcement staffing, security, showers, and dedicated programming, Power, Water, Garbage disposal Cooking abilities (outdoor BBQs, communal space), Harm reduction supports and infrastructure, safety measures to limit violence and thefts, naloxone kits and Storage for personal belongings (lockers or monitored sea container); and also to enact the more direct collaboration with the County of Northumberland and current practice to better leverage and be directly involved in the resources and programs that are in place to reach persons in encampments to understand needs and challenges to help persons get the support services and accommodations that they need to access a place to shelter.

Staff is not recommending this option as there are several resources and funding that will need to be provided and approved by Council as a result of requirements to maintain a safe environment and to maintain the Town's legal requirements, to those that would be staying within the encampment and as well as surrounding neighbouring residents utilizing municipal lands and parks for their intended use. Staff have provided an approximate estimate of costs that would need to be used to fund these sanctioned locations which would be funding an interim short-sighted option rather than funding the solution which is to put funding towards more affordable housing options and other shelter initiatives in the Town of Cobourg that can be added to our current funding for affordable housing initiatives.

Additional Comments:

Through the direction and leadership of Cobourg Council Staff have worked throughout the four (4) year term to support affordable housing initiatives within the Town of Cobourg and support Cobourg residents in attaining and opportunity to affordable home ownership. The Town is the only lower-tier municipality to approve an Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan. The CIP provides a comprehensive tool kit of financial incentive programs specifically designed to help stimulate the provision of affordable and rental housing in the community in accordance with the County of Northumberland and Town of Cobourg Affordable Housing Strategies.

Municipal Council could look at other programs and supports to assist with the Housing crisis in the community. This may involve looking at underused or vacant municipally owned building to house the vulnerable population, or looking at other communities on opportunities for other innovative shelter ideas that would have the services that individuals need to receive supports that they need and to transition them to a more permanent housing solution.

Council should also work with the County of Northumberland and other lower-tier and Ontario Municipal Governments to advocate the federal and provincial

governments to receive additional funding in mental health and addiction funding and also funding to support transitional supportive housing in Ontario.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

Financial and Budget implications will be determined based on Council's direction and decision on encampments and suspension of certain municipal by-law provisions. The Town of Cobourg is not the designated Service Manager and does not receive any funding directly for Community and Social Services and not responsible for directly administering homelessness programs.

If Council were to provide certain arrangements or considerations for sheltering in the Town of Cobourg, these costs would be unbudgeted, and Staff would need to gather information and cost associated with any encampment response.

Estimated Expenditures based on Option #2 (July to November- 5 months for one location)	
By-law Staff - Salaries, benefits, training e.t.c	\$64,000
Security (2 Officers nighttime)	\$15,000
Washrooms (three washrooms with cleaning)	\$25,000
Sanitation (hand washing and sinks)	\$10,000
Waste Collection (Disposal Bin, collection service)	\$20,000
Estimated Total for Expenditures	\$134,500
Total Funding	\$0.00
Total Budgeted	\$0.00

Additional costs that the Town has not received or determined estimates on could include:

- Food
- Showers
- Power Supply
- Storage facilities for Personal Items (lockers pods)
- Additional staff resources required other than By-law, such as Police, Fire, or other staff as required

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Staff have tried to provide all information to Municipal Council on the topic of Sheltering and Homelessness with the Enforcement of Municipal By-laws. Staff are making the recommendation that Council provide direction with the status quo, but to improve the response to shelters on public lands with a more deliberate response to shelters and timelines and to work with the County of Northumberland as the Service Manager for coordination through the Northumberland Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) in order to establish a coordinated systemic multi-agency response to those sleeping rough in the Town of Cobourg to facilitate person-centered engagement opportunities and individualized connections to community-based supports, including dignified housing/shelter options.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Homelessness and Sheltering and the Enforcement of Municipal By-laws in the Town of Cobourg
Attachments:	CPS Letter
Final Approval Date:	June 30, 2022

This report and all its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Tracey Vaughan, Chief Administrative Officer - Jun 30, 2022 - 5:50 PM



Cobourg Police Service

Paul VandeGraaf
Chief of Police

107 King Street West
Cobourg, Ontario
K9A 2M4

(905) 372-6821 Administration
(905) 372-8325 Fax

June 30, 2022

Re: Potential Encampments

Mayor and Members of Council,

The Cobourg Police Service (CPS) should not be a primary response to many of the issues surrounding homelessness. CPS should be focused on the prevention and resolution of crime. Responses to issues surrounding homelessness should whenever possible be led by a service provider, Northumberland County, the Town of Cobourg Municipal Law Enforcement Team, and the other support agencies that would be involved in supporting the encampments. The Cobourg Police Service actively works in coordination with Transition House, Cornerstone, HCRT, Community Safety and Well Being Team, situational tables and other hubs. MHeart and HARP regularly provide on the ground, real time assistance, to many service agencies and the clients they serve.

The creation of designated encampments(s) will require a concerted police response. This is a real concern as experienced by communities across Ontario that have experience with encampments. This could be an unbudgeted staffing expense that could range from \$102,000 to \$140,000. This is a figure drawn from experience of another community who managed a similar encampment in 2021.

The enhanced and specific police presence incurred in part for the following reasons:

- Increased community concerns for safety,
- Increased calls for service including extortion, theft and violence,
- Increased potential for people to take advantage of vulnerable people including human trafficking and
- The desire to provide a safe community for all neighbourhoods in Cobourg.

Not funding this expense in addition to the current deployment of officers may create service delivery concerns for the entire community. This could mean that the potential additional workload will have to be managed by the current staffing model. The impact of this may be delayed response to calls for service throughout the community. During the summer months, our Town is busier than any other time year

requiring more police activity. This coincides with a time where staff vacancies are higher than the rest of the year.

The Cobourg Police Service continues to collaborate with the community in a variety of ways. We support all community agencies aimed at enhancing community safety and well-being. We recognize that police should not lead in certain matters, but support our partner agencies that are in a position to have maximum impact toward solutions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Pepper', with a stylized, overlapping loop at the beginning.

Board Chair, Dean Pepper

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. VandeGraaf', with a large, flowing 'P' and several loops.

Chief of Police, Paul VandeGraaf



Municipal Council
Town of Cobourg
55 King Street West
Cobourg, ON K9A 2M2

Notice of Motion Form

Printed Name: COUNCILLOR NICOLE BEATTY

Hereby files a Notice of Motion to be included in the next available Agenda for the meeting of Council.

Subject: Notice of Motion to Develop an Encampment Response Plan for the Town of Cobourg

Which Notice of Motion reads as follows:

WHEREAS the number of people residing in the Town of Cobourg who are unhoused or experiencing homelessness is increasing

AND WHEREAS 78 people are officially listed as being homeless, according to Northumberland County

AND WHEREAS 24 is the maximum number of shelter spaces available in the area

AND WHEREAS the Town of Cobourg By-law Enforcement Team is responding to a high volume of concerns regarding encampments

AND WHEREAS the Town of Cobourg does not have an official by-law, policy or program in place to respond to shelter encampments

AND WHEREAS according to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Canada has recognized that adequate housing is a fundamental human right for all

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council direct staff to develop an Encampment Response Plan with input, collaboration and outreach support from homeless-serving partners and community members to engage folks residing in encampments and help them transition to safer and more humane accommodations

AND FURTHER THAT an encampment site is only to be cleared once everyone has been offered safe and appropriate indoor accommodation

AND FURTHER THAT in the event of an encampment site being cleaned up everyone's personal belongings are stored for a period of two weeks and adequate written notice of support is provided

AND FURTHER THAT Council call on Northumberland County Council, staff and its service providers to work with the Town of Cobourg to establish an immediate solution to increasing

the supply of indoor accommodation and providing street outreach support through the implementation of an Encampment Response Plan.

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct senior staff and three members of Council to make a delegation to Northumberland County Council at their next scheduled Regular Council meeting on July 20th, 2022.

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to engage with Infrastructure Ontario and MPP David Piccini to repurpose, refurbish or rebuild a small portion of the former Brookside property to explore immediate housing options in response to the local housing crisis.



Council Member Signature

June 23, 2022

Date

CLERK'S USE ONLY

Date and Time Received on: June 24, 2022 at 12:25 P.M.

For the Regular Council Meeting **Meeting on** June 27, 2022