

Considerations For Cobourg and Northumberland County Legally Binding Agreement

The need for a Legally-binding agreement between the Town of Cobourg, Northumberland County and Transition House

- The Town of Cobourg **must** play a role in the future management of 310 Division Street. There has been an existing service provider agreement and annual review process between Northumberland County and Transition House for the last five years when management has been poor, the board and executive director has undergone significant turnover and the neighbouring residents and businesses have been left to deal with the significant negative consequences for 5-years. Anything less than an agreement including the Town of Cobourg, is agreeing to “business as usual” for Northumberland County and Transition House. Cobourg residents clearly want a legal agreement, this is the only way to ensure future accountability.
- The argument that this is a smaller building than the Whitby location, and therefore does not require an agreement, is not a valid one. 310 Division Street location has a much smaller buffer from neighbouring properties than Whitby. Whitby has significant green space on all sides and is set back from the road. 310 Division Street is in a very dense neighbourhood, is directly beside homes with young children and businesses, close to a school and is on one of two major roads to the Downtown core. This puts significant stress on the neighbouring community and needs to be taken seriously by all stakeholders.

Physical Design and Operational Strategies To Mitigate Impact For Adjacent Residents

- The agreement needs to lay out specific requirements for the physical outdoor space
- Smoking/social outdoor area at the back of the property that is completely fenced/blocked off from the front driveway area and can only be entered from inside the building. A gate system can be used for emergency/delivery needs. This is necessary for security and limiting individuals from blocking the driveway.
- Privacy fencing (6-8 ft) enclosing the front of the building using the footprint of the existing fencing. This limits the amount of attention from passing cars, individuals walking by including children walking to/from school, and allows for a place to park bikes, shopping carts, bags etc. to limit blockage of driveway and sidewalk. The entrance can be on the south side at the driveway, to allow for a continuous run of privacy fencing along the sidewalk.
- Flow in and out of building - allowing only one in/out allows for enhanced security. Gate system at back fenced area allows for emergency exit use as well.

Community Liaison Committee (CLC)

- How are CLC consistent concerns with 310 resolved in the event that TH and the County do not agree with the members?
- Role of CLC stated to “share and disseminate information, identify issues and concerns that impact area residents, identify and discuss solutions to those issues and concerns”
- Can CLC member also have seat as voting member of board?

Security Onsite

- 24/7 private security recommended permanently based on 5-year history of disorderly behaviour at 10 Chapel and St. Peter’s warming room.
- Security should be required to do exterior patrols around the facility every 30 minutes, they cannot sit in an office and simply react to issues but assume a proactive approach to patrolling.
- Security should be expected to mitigate TH and warming/cooling centre occupants’ disorderly behaviour on immediately adjacent properties with respect to the nuisance by-law (loitering, intimidation, leaving personal belongings, etc.) This would dramatically limit the majority of these issues for the immediately adjacent properties.

Neighbourhood Security

- Private mobile security company required to patrol surrounding neighbourhood (day and night) to mitigate disorderly behaviour for residents and businesses within 500 meters of TH (research has established increased disorderly behaviour occurs at increased rates 500 meters around low barrier emergency shelters).
- County funding for residents and businesses to install security cameras and lighting solutions (as directed by security professionals) within 500 meters to mitigate safety concerns - transition house is installing cameras, as are the police - why should businesses and residents have to assume this expense for themselves if the placement of a County operated facility warrants this level of security?

Garbage Removal From Neighbourhood

- Clearly stated protocol for residents and businesses to follow in the event of discovered garbage, drug paraphernalia, shopping carts, luggage, etc., with specific contact information (town or county) to resolve concerns in a timely manner.

310 Resident Capacity

- Agreement needs to clearly define this in terms of resident maximum capacity, rather than shelter beds.
- The warming/cooling room, emergency shelter, and future unoccupied space for potentially transitional housing should be defined.
- Neil Ellis has stated that the emergency shelter will have a maximum of 35 residents (in the available 35 beds), and a maximum of 20 occupants in the warming room.

Long-Term Use Of Additional Space Reported To Be For Transitional Housing

- Transitional Housing (short-term rental units for individuals ready for permanent housing) has been reported in the plans by the County related to 310 - is best practice to combine warming/cooling room, with shelter occupants, and transitional housing occupants in one facility, all whom share common entrances, elevators, smoking sections, etc.?
- Most transitional housing living arrangements have participation agreements and rules around being under the influence of drugs and alcohol onsite, does this physical arrangement set residents up for success?

Safe Injection Site

- Agreement needs to clearly state this will not be allowed 310 Division Street. We have had assurances from Northumberland County and Neil Ellis during community engagement sessions but this needs to be included in the agreement.

Wrap Around Services

- Clearly define if these services are optional or a condition of sheltering
- How frequently are wrap around services available to shelter occupants?

Best Practices

- County states that TH will follow "best practices" in all aspect for shelter operation. How often are best practices reviewed?
- Can sources be provided to CLC and town annually for these best practices?

Community and Police Consultation

- Have police, residents, and businesses been considered when getting these points together for county consideration? Police would be one that could incur significant costs and should be included.

Annual Review Process

- What is involved?
- Is this available to community and CLC?

VINK Shelter System Review (2023 Private Consulting for Northumberland County)

- Recommended number of staff required for proper shelter operation - will these be followed? Need for proper training and appropriate remuneration given population's needs.
- Recommended intensive supportive housing for high acuity individuals to reduce the need for warming room and capacity of shelter? Why is this major aspect of the housing report not being respected?
- Use of standardized outcome measures for intake, evaluation and re-evaluation of occupants.
- How many occupants were moved into next level of housing? If chronic homelessness stats have not changed despite measures, how will the data be used to facilitate change.

Pets

- What type of pets will be allowed?
- How will health of pets be ensured?
- What is the maximum capacity of pets in this facility? Do current by-laws exist?
- Where will pets go to the bathroom knowing that the current facility doesn't have any green space to accommodate this? Who will be responsible when pet owners don't responsibly pick up after their pets?
- What special cleaning measures will be used to consider pets?
- How will allergens to occupants and staff be handled?

Emergency Shelter Licence By-Law

- This would establish operating requirements and an approved operational plan - failure to comply may result in fines or penalties?
- Can the license by-law be reviewed annually
- Can repeated violation of the by-law result in the licence being revoked or alternative location/model be enforced?

Ejection Clause

- Define circumstances that would necessitate that this facility be relocated or reallocated to a different group in the community requiring housing in Northumberland.
- Considering a history of clear instability and poor performance at the Chapel location for 5-years, as well as, a prior TH board's desire to locate it out of the downtown core due to their experience that it wasn't a good fit for residents or community, this is fair. There needs to be a clear process to re-evaluate the low-barrier shelter location in the Downtown.

Nuisance By-Law

- How does this apply to TH occupants with violations? How do they pay fines, does TH pay?
- Do By-law infractions by TH occupants violate their "code of resident conduct"? If so, what are the consequences of multiple violations?

Costs Related To Homelessness In Town Document

- Doesn't seem representative of true costs - common to have multiple emergency services to 10 Chapel and Trinity United Church. Do these costs include fire, EMS, By-law? Is this an average over last few years? With the encampment the emergency calls to Chapel St. have obviously decreased.
- This does not include the costs that individual residents and businesses incur regularly, the impact on business and resident life or the fact that the majority of the time the police are not called but community members handle majority of very stressful situations on their own.