

Rooming House Working Group Meeting Notes
January 10, 2011, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Metro Hall Room 304

Present:

Rosemary Foulds	Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, Chair
Paul Denison	Toronto Christian Resource Centre, Community Co-Chair
Janet Fairfield	East York East Toronto Family Resources
Lisa Freeman	University of Toronto
Joe Magalhaes	Municipal Licensing and Standards
Leslie McDonald	Habitat Services
Bill Munro	High Park Villa and Edgewood Villa
Chris Persaud	Habitat Services
Stella Pinnock	Landlord
Bart Poesiat	Parkdale Community Legal Services
Arnie Rose	Affordable Housing Office
Glenn Sheridan	Landlord's Self-Help Centre
Tracey Smith	Shelter Support and Housing Administration
Michael Boyle	Tenant

Regrets:

Roxanne Clarke	WoodGreen Community Services
Phil Nazar	Toronto Christian Resource Centre
Harvey Stein	WoodGreen Community Services

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Members were welcomed to the meeting and there was a round of introductions.

2. Minutes of Meeting of September 13, 2010 and November 8, 2010

The minutes of both meetings were approved as circulated.

3. Arnie Rose

Members paid tribute to Arnie Rose (Manager of the City's Housing Improvement Programs), who will be retiring before the next Rooming House Working Group meeting. The Chair also passed on messages to Arnie from Carmel Hili, Harvey Stein, Phil Nazar and Roxanne Clarke, who were unable to attend.

4. Announcements

a. Welcome Home Guide

Copies of “Welcome Home a Guide for Services to Tenants” have been printed. Members were invited to request additional copies. The Guide is also available on line

http://www.toronto.ca/housing/pdf/welcome_home_guide09.pdf

b. Vacancy at Abbeyfield Homes

There are three vacancies in a 10 room home for seniors and people with disabilities. It is located on Lakeside Road near Kingston Road in Scarborough. Rent supplement is available.

<http://abbeyfieldtorontohouse.weebly.com/>

c. Rooming House Zoning Update

The City’s comprehensive zoning by-law was approved by Council in 2010. Rooming house zoning, which was in place before the by-law was approved, was carried forward. Rooming Houses continue to be illegal in former Scarborough, former North York and former East York.

The Rupert Coalition has appealed the rooming house zoning in the comprehensive zoning by-law to the Ontario Municipal Board: it is one of 694 appeals.

The Rupert Coalition is also seeking tenants in rooming houses who are interested in participating in a hearing before the Human Rights Commission about the City of Toronto's zoning by-law. Tenants in licensed and unregulated rooming houses are encouraged to consider joining this important case. For more information, contact Bart Poesiat at poesiatb@lao.on.ca or 416-531-2411 x 250.

d. Rooming House Video

Regini David and Lisa Freeman are producing an information video about living in a rooming house, with a focus on the inner suburbs. They are thinking about including interviews with City officials. City staff is requested to consider being interviewed for the project.

e. Rooming House Working Group Meetings in 2011

Rosemary Foulds will replace Tracey Smith as the Chair of the Rooming House Working Group (Tracey has a new position in the Homelessness Partnership Initiatives Unit).

Staff has reviewed options for continuing the Rooming House Working Group in 2011. The focus of Rooming House Working Group meetings in 2011 will be the development to the Rooming House Support Project.

Meetings will be held in March, May, July, September and November. The meeting schedule will be posted on the City's web site at <http://www.toronto.ca/housing/rhwg.htm>.

Messages of interest to the Rooming House working Group will be sent by email between meetings. Members are encouraged to submit items of interest to the Chair at rfoulds@toronto.ca.

5. Rooming House Support Project

Rosemary has been interviewing key informants (Harvey Stein at WoodGreen and Elis Ziegler at East York East Toronto Family Resources) about the rooming house support project. The interviews are based on questions which emerged at the November Rooming House working group meeting. More interviews are scheduled (Pablo Escobar at WoodGreen, Arnie Rose at the Affordable Housing Office and Phil Nazar and Paul Denison at the Toronto Christian Resource Centre). Comment will also be solicited from agencies that support tenants in rooming houses.

The people who have been interviewed to date support the general direction of the project and see it as complementary to existing services.

More work is needed to develop a strong project description and funding proposal.

Rosemary will continue with the interviews and project development and will report back to the Rooming House working Group for further discussion in March.

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

7. Next Meeting: March 14, 2011, 2 p.m., room 302, Metro Hall