

Roehampton Residence
Community Liaison Committee Meeting #1
Meeting Summary
September 17th 2020, 5:30 – 7:00 pm
VIA WEBEX

Background

The Roehampton Hotel, located at 808 Mount Pleasant Road, has opened to shelter single adults and couples who are experiencing homelessness as part of the City of Toronto's three-tiered COVID-19 response. The City has leased the Roehampton Hotel for two years (with an option to extend for a third year) from the property owner.

Opening this site and others across the City allows individuals who are experiencing homelessness to stay safe while ensuring physical distancing in the shelter system.

People began moving into Roehampton Residence on July 3, 2020. This site has 109 furnished and self-contained units which can accommodate up to 174 people depending on family configuration (adult singles and couples). City of Toronto staff operate the site and provide case management, housing help to help residents find and maintain permanent housing, meals, and recreational programming. Harm reduction supports and health services are also provided on site. The site is staffed 24/7 with video security surveillance and uniformed 24/7 security guards on-site.

Community Liaison Committee Meeting Overview

On Thursday, September 17th, 2019 the City of Toronto hosted the first Community Liaison for the Roehampton Residence. Representatives from twenty organizations attended and participated in the meeting. Local Councillors, MPs, and MPPs and/or their representatives, the Toronto Police, City staff and the facilitation team also attended the meeting. The Participant List is attached to this summary as Appendix A.

The purpose of the first meeting was to kick off the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) by reviewing and confirming the Draft Terms of Reference, along with identifying concerns from the community and to discuss ideas and initiatives the CLC may assist with. The meeting agenda is attached to this summary as Appendix B.

Councillor Josh Matlow opened the meeting. The summary of his opening remarks is included as Appendix C.

Swerhun Inc. (the third-party facilitation team) has been retained by the City to assist with the engagement process for the Roehampton Residence, including helping to establish the CLC and facilitate the first meeting. Swerhun Inc. prepared this first meeting summary and shared it with participants for review before it was finalized. Please note that it is not intended to serve as a verbatim transcript; rather it captures key discussion points and meeting outcomes shared by participants.

Summary of Discussion

The following is a summary of information shared and questions, concerns, feedback, and suggestions provided by CLC members at the meeting. Responses (where provided) from City staff are noted in *italics*.

Part 1: Draft Terms of Reference

Yulia Pak reviewed the draft Terms of Reference with the CLC. The Draft Terms of Reference were attached and distributed with the application form. Key points from the review as well as questions asked are included below. Yulia asked CLC members to share any additional comments or questions about the draft Terms of Reference by **Monday, September 21st**.

The review of the draft Terms of Reference included the following key points:

- The CLC is an advisory body, not a decision making body. It's not responsible for how the City makes its decisions, however it provides an opportunity for decisions to be reflective of community experiences, challenges and advice.
- The role as a representative of a local organization is to bring forward ideas on behalf of the collective. Individual perspectives can be shared outside of this group through the various engagement platforms, including: Roehampton project email and feedback form.
- 20 seats for organizations have been reserved for CLC membership, and all are currently filled. For broader, diverse representation, the City encourages organizations to have representatives from equity-seeking groups. Each organization may have two seats total (with 1 seat per meeting): a primary representative, and a delegate if the primary representative is not available to attend meetings.
- All elected officials and their representatives are invited in their Ex Officio capacity, so they do not have to apply to be a member.
- Membership does not preclude or limit anyone from participating in other democratic processes.
- Should members of the CLC receive media inquiries, they should be directed to media@toronto.ca. Members may talk on behalf of their individual organization with the media, but not for the CLC at large.
- Membership is for a one-year term. Meetings will be held in the early evening, and will not be longer than two hours.
- Moving forward, draft meeting agendas will be shared with CLC members in advance.

No objections to the Draft Terms of Reference were noted. Participants asked the following questions:

In the future, will representatives of the Roehampton Residence be joining the CLC? Without them I feel as if we're talking about them and they're not able to be a part of the conversation. They are needed in the CLC in order to build community. *SSHA (Shelter, Support & Housing Administration) agrees that it is very important, and there has been a prior discussion about it. We are holding off for now, as we want to ensure that CLC members are able to speak freely about their concerns prior to shelter residents joining. There is a Roehampton residents' group with regular meetings. We are committed to sharing their perspective and exploring ways for residents of the shelter to participate in the CLC in a safe and comfortable way in the future.*

What are examples of promoting shelter events and activities? *Prior to COVID-19, CLCs would share the word with their organizations about events that are happening in the shelters, such as community BBQs. These events may continue when it is deemed safe to do so.*

The following suggestions were submitted after the meeting by Monday, September 21:

- Include guidelines / rules on how members of the CLC can share information from the CLC meetings with their members (i.e. sharing publicly available materials including the meeting agendas, summaries, etc. and **not** attributing any specific comments/ideas to any individual member or group of the Community Liaison Committee).
- Highlight how discussions from the CLC will be made publicly available (i.e. through the meeting summaries).

Part 2: General Shelter Updates & Comments

Nicole Williams, Manager of the Roehampton Residence, provided the following shelter-specific updates:

- The shelter had a staggered start, with the first residents coming from encampments for safety reasons. Now residents are coming to the shelter through the City's Central Intake system.
- The shelter is for single men, women and couples. It is not a specialized service for one type of person - it is for anyone who is experiencing homelessness, as per SSHA's mandate.
- The current population is close to 140 people and the average age is 55 years old. Depending on the makeup of singles and couples, the Roehampton can fit around 180 people.
- We have various services and supports available to residents, including: Inner City Health Associates are providing primary healthcare 9am-5pm, and drop-in services/case management are provided by Toronto North Support Services, including mental health and drug addiction counselling. These services can occur off-hours for evening service. Additional details about the supports and services available to residents at the shelter are available in the **Community Bulletin #2**. All Community Bulletins are publicly available on the project website: www.toronto.ca/physicaldistancingshelters
- An employment program was implemented in the last few weeks which has been very successful, on their first visit they assigned 15 people for employment options.
- The Community Safety Team has been coordinated to align with school schedules, as part of the School Safety Plan.
- Shelter residents are working with housing case managers, and dozens of people have entered transitional programs to better meet their needs.

Feedback and questions from CLC members

Transparency & Communication

There has been a lack of transparency from officials. An important starting place is to acknowledge the problems that are occurring and come up with more effective solutions to address crime. I support helping people, but much of the communication has glossed over the real issues so far. SSHA appreciates this, and they have been in contact with the TPS since the shelter opened. The TPS has seen an increase in calls all across the 53 Division, but due to the large service area and the way the data is collected, cannot attribute it to the shelter.

Use metrics to measure success as the shelter continues to operate. Metrics are important, and SSHA is tracking what the Community Safety Teams are finding during their sweeps.

What can we do to ensure prompt disclosure to our communities while ensuring information is appropriate and not taken out of context? Can we give a small summary of the meeting to our group's membership? Yes, and inform them about the CLC Meeting Minutes which will also be published within a week.

It is important that lessons learned with the Broadway and the Roehampton sites help form a blueprint of how to open emergency shelters in the future. The Roehampton is not an isolated incident, homelessness is Toronto-wide and growing.

Health & Safety

The TPS are our first responders, and they should be funded to effectively address crime in the neighbourhood in a non-violent way.

There should be vetting of shelter clients. *SSHA does not have a mandate to vet clients, the only requirement is that an individual be experiencing homelessness and require shelter. Case managers do work with residents of shelters on an ongoing basis from the time they enter the shelter to understand their situation and needs so that appropriate supports and services can be arranged for those who are seeking them.*

There should be committees created to focus on specific issues, such as COVID-19 health compliance, and addressing mental health.

Safety is critical. Trust must be built both ways. We need to figure out how to help the community feel safe enough to engage with the shelter. Whether perception is right or wrong it does not matter, it's that they perceive the neighbourhood and the shelter to be unsafe.

What is the status of the employee who was stabbed at Broadway? *A representative from Roehampton shelter said the initial update explained that the employee was recovering at home and explained that they would follow-up with the former Broadway team, where the incident occurred. After the meeting, the team provided an update to the CLC members confirming that the employee is recovering well and is in regular contact with the former Broadway City team.*

It is good that the CLC and Schools Committee have both been created, and that the Community Safety Teams are active. I remain concerned about the situation for school safety, as there have been some serious incidents with the two adjacent TDSB schools.

Shelter Programming & Services

In thinking how to better integrate the shelter into the community it is important to think about what shelter residents can do for the neighbourhood as well as what the community can do for the shelter residents. Consider using the next CLC meeting as a brainstorming session for different ideas and initiatives that can be explored through the CLC.

Is there long-term planning assistance in place for the shelter residents, such as connecting residents with banks for free accounts or improving financial literacy? *Counsellors help manage residents' income when they arrive, and some may receive assistance or employment opportunities. There is no system for financial education or connection with banks currently, however we do and can hold workshops with residents. Regarding organizational support, connections to financial literacy or other services are always welcome, and people willing to volunteer hugely benefit the community.*

Is there any information about how CLC members could best help / participate in helping shelter residents? *We will compile a list of previous CLCs to indicate how they've helped and contributed in the past. We are also open to your ideas.*

What type of healthcare services do clients have access to? Particularly for COVID-19, we want the whole community to feel safe. *Masks are always available for residents, and we've received many donated masks from the community. Compliance of mask wearing is very important while inside the shelter. However, if residents choose not to wear a mask out in public, much like any other citizen who makes a similar decision, it can't be enforced by shelter staff. This is a larger issue of education about awareness and compliance with COVID-19 restrictions. The shelter does have full-time healthcare services available to residents.*

There is a growing issue of drug use in the city. More information from residents would be helpful and allowing both administered injection (SIS) and government regulated drugs could help reduce drug dealing and contamination of substances being used.

Provide additional information about day-to-day life at the shelter. It would be helpful for the community to understand a typical day in the life for a shelter resident, including services and programs offered and any scheduled activities and/or requirements. This could help misspell any misconceptions.

Providing a list of events and initiatives to members of the CLC members that shelter residents would like to have happen would be helpful. Suggestions for future programming included:

- building a community garden,
- having a community kitchen,
- and developing a social enterprise to employ shelter residents and unemployed members of the neighbourhood.

We can follow-up with our residents to ask them if there is anything in specific, they need and/or would like to see happen in terms of programming.

Next Steps

The following next steps were discussed:

- CLC members to provide additional feedback on the Draft Terms of Reference by Monday, September 21, 2020
- Swerhun to share a draft meeting summary for participant review;
- SSHA staff to schedule the second CLC meeting and share meeting materials in advance including the proposed meeting agenda.
- SSHA staff to continue discussions with residents of Roehampton about how they could and would like to be involved in the CLC going forward.

Appendix A - List of Invited Organizations and Participants

The following organizations applied and were invited to participate in the Community Liaison Committee. All organizations that applied for membership on the CLC were accepted. Those who were able to attend are bolded below.

Organizations

Central Eglinton Community Centre
Church of the Transfiguration
Eglinton Park Residents' Association
Eglinton Place Condo Corp – 123 Eglinton Ave E (MTCC 1397)
Lawrence Park Community Church
Lytton Park Residents' Organization
Manor Road United Church
Midtown Community Alliance
Midtown Safety Group
Midtown's Tiny Tots
Midtowners
Mount Pleasant Village BIA
Newly Formed Group (yet to be named)
Norther Secondary School Parent Council
Republic Residents' Association
St. Monica Catholic School
South Eglinton Ratepayers' and Residents' Association
SPRINT Senior Care
The Living Room Church
TSCC 1433 Board of Directors
TSCC 1987 – 900 Mt Pleasant

Elected Officials and Staff:

MP Robert Oliphant, Don Valley West
MPP Jill Andrew, Toronto-St. Paul's
MPP Kathleen Wynne, Don Valley West
Office of Councillor Jaye Robinson, Ward 15 Don Valley West – Rachel Van Fraassen
Office of Councillor Josh Matlow, Ward 12 Toronto-St. Paul's – Josh Matlow; Carolina Vecchiarelli
Office of Councillor Mike Colle, Ward 8 Eglinton-Lawrence
Office of MP Carolyn Bennett, Toronto-St. Paul's – Shaun Cameron
TDSB Ward 11 – Trustee Rachel Chernos Lin; Wilmar Kortleever
TDSB Ward 8 – Trustee Shelley Laskin

Toronto Police Service 53 Division:

James Hogan, Community Response Unit Manager, Staff Sergeant

City of Toronto, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration (SSHA):

Nicole Williams, Manager, Roehampton Residence
Ertha Downey, Program Coordinator, Roehampton Residence
Jennifer McGowan, Supervisor, Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Facilitation Team:

Swerhun Inc – Yulia Pak; Matthew Wheatley; Alex Smiciklas

Appendix B – Meeting Agenda

Roehampton Residence

Community Liaison Committee Meeting #1

VIA WEBEX: 5:30 – 7:00 pm

<https://swerhuninc.my.webex.com/swerhuninc.my/j.php?MTID=m0b59d2162fed1a627aae115b43dfa735>

Call-in number: 647-484-1598; Access Code: 132 415 5942 #; Attendee ID Number: press #

Meeting Purpose

To kick off the Community Liaison Committee (CLC) by confirming the Terms of Reference, identify the initiatives CLC may assist with, and share general shelter related updates.

Proposed Meeting Agenda

- 5:20 pm Technology check**
If possible, please log-in 10 mins earlier for a technology check
- 5:30 Welcome & Opening Remarks**
- 5:35 Introductions, Purpose and Agenda Review**
Yulia Pak, Swerhun Inc.
All
- 5:45 Overview: CLC Mandate and Draft Terms of Reference**
Yulia Pak, Swerhun Inc.
- Facilitated Discussion: All
- Do you have any questions or suggested refinements to the Draft Terms of Reference?
- 6:15 General Shelter Update**
Nicole Williams, Roehampton Residence Manager
- Facilitated Discussion: All
- Community feedback regarding the shelter
 - What can the CLC and the shelter work on to ensure the shelter is a good neighbour and a valuable community asset?
- 6:50 Wrap-up & Next Steps**
Yulia Pak, Swerhun Inc.
All
- Next CLC meeting date – Wednesday, October 14th, 2020; 5:30 – 7:00 pm
 - Process next steps
- 7:00 pm Adjourn**

Contact:

If you have any additional feedback related to this CLC meeting, please submit it by **Monday, September 21**, to the shelter liaison officer or member of the facilitation team:

Ertha Downey

Ertha.Downey@toronto.ca

Yulia Pak, Swerhun Inc.

Appendix C – Summary of Opening Remarks

The following points capture key points provided by Councillor Josh Matlow

- Yonge-Eglinton has experienced ongoing challenges with condominium and LRT construction, and residents/businesses have been traumatized in different ways by COVID-19. When the City opened two shelters, it felt like another challenge that needed to be faced.
- The City is facing a housing and opioid crisis, and we need to work compassionately and collaboratively to raise the legitimate concerns. The CLC was one of the first things asked for at the City, in order for organizations to have direct access to information and be a part of the conversation.
- Shelters should have programs and resources before they're opened. While necessary, they are a stop gap solution, and we need permanent housing.