
Fatima House Community Liaison Committee

Meeting #3 Summary

January 12, 2021, 6:30pm to 8:00pm on WebEx



Overview

On January 12, 2021, the third meeting of the Community Liaison Committee for Fatima House (1059 College Street) was hosted on Zoom with 12 CLC members attending along with City staff and representatives of the shelter operator, Fred Victor.

Jane Farrow and Leah Birnbaum of the Dept of Words & Deeds facilitated the information session and prepared this summary.

Project website: www.toronto.ca/ShelterExpansionSites; click on "Fatima House"
Shelter operator: www.fredvictor.org/what-we-do/housing/shelters/

Project Team:

Fred Victor, shelter operator:

- Keith Hambly, CEO
- Denise Knee, Senior Manager, Fatima House
- Katy Scherer, Senior Manager Community Engagement

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

- Leslie O'Reilly, Housing Consultant, Homelessness Initiatives & Prevention Services
- Lynne McKee, Agency Review Officer, Homelessness Initiatives & Prevention Services

Councillor Bailão's office:

- Emily Summers, Constituency Assistant

Dept of Words & Deeds, Community Engagement Facilitation

- Jane Farrow
- Leah Birnbaum

CLC Members:

Annabelle Bernard, Community Engagement Associate, Sistering

Cintia De Aguiar, real estate broker at College and Dufferin

Misha Feldmann, Member at Large

Erella Gagnon, moderator, Friends of Dufferin Grove listserv

Peter Gorman, Warden at St. Anne's Anglican Church

Khadija Ismail, Counsellor, Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Woman against Rape

Cameron McKeich, Member at Large

Meg Marshall, Coordinator, BIA College Promenade (regrets)

Melanie Smith, representative of Fatima's Neighbours residents' group

Ex-officio members in attendance:

Julie Dzerowicz, Member of Parliament for Davenport
Ashley De Silva representing MPP for Davenport Marit Stiles
Ana Bailão, Deputy Mayor and City Councillor for Davenport

Agenda:

CLC #3 Meeting Objective: To get updates on community concerns and support, to coordinate action items and follow up activities, and to outline communications materials and approaches in support of move-in activities.

1. Member introductions/updates (all)
2. Update on community support, donations, welcome baskets (Katy, Denise)
3. Review of CLC Meeting #2 Summary (Jane)
4. Community Discussions Update (all)
5. Committee of Adjustment briefing (Leah, Denise, Katy)
6. Timeline update: Move in date and what to expect when residents arrive (Katy, Denise)
7. Community Relations Agreement briefing
8. Other business

The next CLC Meeting is Tuesday February 9, 2021, 6:30pm to 8:00pm

Key Discussion Items

- The group was pleased to be joined by three ex-officio members representing the neighbourhood at the federal, provincial and municipal levels.
- Welcome baskets were gratefully received and every new resident at Fatima House will have a collection of goods and messages to welcome them when they move in.
- Move-in date is likely to be at the end of January or early February.
- A summary FAQ document/flyer will be produced to answer the key questions that community members have about Fatima House.
- The Committee of Adjustment hearing is scheduled for January 20th at 2pm (update: variances were approved).

Detailed Discussion**1. Member introductions/updates**

All members introduced themselves including two new Members at Large. The group received welcome remarks from MP Julie Dzerowicz who stated that she welcomes the service to the neighbourhood – which is also her home – and acknowledged the need for more similar services including affordable permanent and supportive housing.

We then heard welcome remarks from Ashley De Silva, a representative of Marit Stiles, MPP. Her team supports Fatima House and was happy to help coordinate donations for some welcome baskets.

Deputy Mayor Ana Bailão then thanked everyone for their efforts to date and for their support as the City and the shelter operator have been working to get the shelter opened.

2. Update on community support, donations, welcome baskets

Fred Victor staff reported that they have received enough donations so that everyone who is moving in will get a basket of goods for themselves to help them feel welcome. They are pausing further donations at this time and will be accepting donations again as-needed after staff and residents have moved in and gotten settled. Offers or inquiries about volunteering or donating can be sent to Katy Scherer at kscherer@fredvictor.org.

There have been a lot of offers to volunteer and these are very welcome. For the time being, volunteering is not possible under COVID restrictions. Once the residents have moved in and are settled, volunteer opportunities will be determined through house meetings between residents and staff. These needs will change over time as women move out and new residents move in to the shelter. Fred Victor screens and accepts volunteers on an as-needed basis and all volunteers complete a Vulnerable Sector Screening during the onboarding process.

3. Review of CLC Meeting #2 Summary

A summary of the last meeting has been circulated to members for review and will be posted on the project website once it is finalized.

4. Community Discussions Update

Q&A:

Q: Has the daycare at the corner of Gladstone and College been contacted about the opening of the shelter?

Answer from Dept of Words & Deeds: Yes. We have reached out to them and have invited them to join the Community Liaison Committee and have offered to share information about the shelter.

Q: There was some interest from a representative of the Cadbury factory. What is the next step?

Answer from Dept of Words & Deeds: We have reached out to a representative from the Cadbury factory and were told they didn't have time to join the committee but if there is renewed interest please pass it along to Jane or Fred Victor staff to coordinate a response.

Q: Someone who is living in the encampment at Dufferin Grove Park asked (via a CLC member) whether there would be space at Fatima House for her when it opens.

Answer from Fred Victor: We can't guarantee there will be a bed as we are moving 25 women to the new site from our existing site on Lombard Ave. If the person is seeking a shelter bed please ask them to call the Central Intake Line at 416-338-4766. They can also talk to staff at Fatima House when it opens and we will do our best to help.

Q: Can we expect that there will be people using the shelter who engage in sex work?

Answer from Fred Victor: At our existing shelter this is not an issue and we don't expect that to change when we move to the new location.

Comment from Community Engagement Associate at Sistering: Survival sex work is a complex issue. We are here to serve all kinds of people, some of whom may engage in survival sex work. That's what shelters are here for – whether people are comfortable with that or not. The priority is to reach people who need and deserve safe places and care.

Q: Do the new COVID protocols and orders from the Province change anything for the shelter?

Answer from Fred Victor: No, nothing really changes for us. We already take all the COVID precautions within the shelter and comply with the rules from the provincial orders. We do hope that we are one step closer to getting vaccines for our staff and hopefully soon for residents as well. This is an issue for the whole housing and homelessness sector. We have been pushing for the vaccine roll-out to be accelerated for people living in congregate settings.

Discussion and comments from CLC members:

Support from local businesses: A CLC member noted that she has spoken to businesses in the area and found at least three restaurants that are willing deliver food to shelter residents once it opens. There is potential for this to become part of a regular arrangement.

Action item: CLC member to keep in touch with Katy and Denise about food donation options from local restaurants and work out arrangements after the shelter opens.

Request for FAQ Summary: Several members noted that they have been approached with questions about the shelter and would like to have a succinct information sheet to share. CLC members are encouraged to collect email addresses of people who have questions so they can be added to the distribution list for sharing information about the shelter.

Action item: Dept of Words & Deeds to work with Fred Victor staff to produce a scaled-down version of the FAQs and CLC Meeting Summaries and create a short information flyer about Fatima House that CLC members can share as needed.

Offer to collaborate with the CLC for the modular housing on Harrison: A CLC member received an inquiry about sharing community information resources with the CLC for the new modular housing on Harrison Avenue. Given that a lot of donations have been solicited for Fatima House, CLC members also thought that perhaps some resources could be shared with people moving into the modular housing. Councillor Bailão noted that offers to collaborate would be very welcome and her office is available to help bring the two CLCs together for introductions. Residents should be moving into the new Harrison units within a couple of weeks.

Action item: CLC member representing Fatima's Neighbours to coordinate with Ana Bailão's office and connect with the Harrison CLC.

5. Committee of Adjustment briefing

The Committee of Adjustment hearing for 1059 College Street has been set for January 20th at 2pm. Three variances are needed to allow for the full use of the third floor. CLC members asked whether it would help to have letters of support sent to the City or to attend the meeting. Fred Victor staff responded that letters of support would be very welcome and thanked the CLC members for the offer. CLC members were directed to the Public Hearing Notice which gives details for how to participate in a Committee of Adjustment hearing and make their views known.

6. Timeline update/Move in date

Fred Victor staff updated the group on the moving-in plans. There are a few items related to accessibility that are still being finished inside the building. Once the occupancy permit is granted, they will start moving in furniture. Residents may start moving in toward the end of January or early February.

Once residents are living at Fatima House, there will be staff onsite 24/7. Fred Victor is committed to ensuring that if people from the community have concerns once the residents move in that they will work to address them. For most issues, people can be referred to Denise Knee at dknee@fredvictor.org.

CLC members also play a role in answering questions from the community about the shelter and Fred Victor staff will support them in this role.

7. Community Relations Agreement briefing

Following up on a topic from the last meeting, Denise offered the group a briefing on the Community Relations Agreement that residents are asked to sign when they move in. The document is part of the orientation to the service and is based on mutual respect – for the resident and for the community they are joining. It outlines general expectations for conduct. The existing Agreement is geared toward the neighbourhood of the existing shelter which is surrounded by condo buildings. The Agreement may be altered to suit the new neighbourhood conditions. It is a living document and decision-making around what is included in it takes place between Fred Victor staff and the residents of the program.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.