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March 4, 2021

CL 4-2021, February 25, 2021
PHSSC 2-2021, February 16, 2021
Minute Item No. 5.1, February 16, 2021

MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES OF ONTARIO (AMO)

SENT ELECTRONICALLY

Motion respecting Homelessness, Mental Health and Addiction in Niagara
Minute Item No. 5.1

Regional Council, at its meeting held on February 25, 2021, approved the following resolution from its Public Health and Social Services Committee:

WHEREAS Niagara Region prides itself as being a caring and compassionate community that continually strives to be a place where people want to live, work and play;
WHEREAS providing access to safe, adequate and affordable housing for everyone is fundamental to achieving that goal;
WHEREAS Niagara Region acknowledges that mental health, mental illness, addiction and homelessness, while important issues, are not homogenous, interchangeable or consistently interconnected, and doing so may over simplify exceptionally complex issues that require targeted policy solutions and intervention;
WHEREAS Niagara Region's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP), A Home For All, outlines the Region's vision, challenges, and the actions required to achieve its goals;
WHEREAS Niagara Region has embarked on an ambitious effort to end chronic homelessness through participation in the national Built for Zero campaign;
WHEREAS Regional Council formally adopted Mental Health and Wellbeing (2.2) and Addressing Affordable Housing Needs (2.3) as strategic priorities for the current term of our Council;
WHEREAS a recent KPMG report commissioned by Niagara Region indicated that Council invests more levy funding than its peers into homelessness, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to addressing the issue;
WHEREAS Niagara Region acknowledges that people living in shelters are part of the crisis and not the solution;
WHEREAS Niagara Region has two planned housing projects that would directly address those in Niagara who experience chronic homelessness;

WHEREAS the implementation plan for Council's strategic objectives states that staff will identify gaps within the mental health system to increase the functionality and collaboration within it;

WHEREAS the same implementation plan directed staff to partner with Ontario Health (formally the LHIN) to review the local landscape to identify opportunities, including new investment;

WHEREAS the treatment and supports for mental illness, addiction, and homelessness are predominantly funded and directed by the Province;

WHEREAS the success of the Region's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan is dependent on a commitment of sustained and increased funding (both operational and capital) from all levels of government to address the issues of housing insecurity and homelessness in Niagara; and

WHEREAS the needs of the community far outweigh Niagara Region's available resources and funding required to effectively address these issues, and the support of both the Provincial and Federal governments are needed to meet these needs.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. That Niagara Region Council officially **ACKNOWLEDGE** that a significant crisis exists in Niagara in regard to the prevalence of chronic homelessness and the lack of affordable housing that far surpasses the Region's ability to meet the vision dictated in its 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP);

2. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to send advocacy letters directly to the appropriate Federal and Provincial ministries outlining Niagara's current situation and requesting additional funding be provided to ensure Niagara can meet the vision outlined in its housing action plan;

3. That the Regional Chair **BE DIRECTED** to advocate to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development for the required operational funding for the planned supportive and bridge housing initiatives;

4. That Regional staff **BE DIRECTED**, in alignment with the planned review of Council's strategic priorities, to produce a report specifically highlighting the progress being made and critical gaps in regard to services related to mental health, addictions and wellbeing;

5. That Regional staff **BE DIRECTED** to continue providing Regional Council updates on the HHAP and Built for Zero initiatives;

6. That Regional staff **BE DIRECTED** to request an update from the Overdose Prevention and Education Network of Niagara (OPENN) regarding the current status of the actions being taken to address addiction related issues in Niagara; and

7. That a copy of this motion be sent to all members of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

Yours truly,

Ann-Marie Norio
Regional Clerk
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