



CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE

Social Issues Committee
Strategic Planning Session – June 4, 2013.
City Hall – Lower Floor Boardroom

MINUTES

In attendance:

Linda Bussey	Councillor – Chairperson
Dan Wong	Councillor (alternate)
Mark Heyck	Mayor (ex-officio)
Lani Cooke	Member at Large
Leslie Campbell	Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce
Yacub Adam	Yellowknife Health and Social Services Board
Sabrina Broadhead	invitee

Administrative:

Shirley Kemeys Jones	GNWT, Department of Justice
Dennis Marchiori	City - Administration
Dana Heide	GNWT (facilitator)

There was an introduction of Social Issues by Linda Bussey, with a special thanks to Mr. Dana Heide for taking the time to facilitate the session with the Committee.

At this time, Dana stated that there was a good section of work that could move forward, he was part of this committee in an administrative capacity in the past (when the Committee first started). At end of day, we all need to be clear that we're working on a plan and we need to have the same idea/concept on how we move forward. This will all become part of City plan that will be worked on in the future.

There was a round of introductions of people at the table.

The facilitator (Dana) then started with a discussion and provided some clarification on various items that were found within the report, "Championing Well-Being in Yellowknife; City of Yellowknife Social Plan (Social Plan)." The Facilitator also walked through some information with a power-point presentation to the Committee.

THE ROLE OF CITY

The first slide within the *PowerPoint* listed the following bullets:

- Advocacy
- Coordinate/Facilitate/Champion
- Agent of Change
- "to enhance the welfare of the citizens of Yellowknife or anyone else that uses the services that Yellowknife has to offer"



Advocacy, the entire group will speak about an issue, in a unified voice, as it relates to the needs of our community residents. If the City can only be an advocate, then so be it. But it appears that the City is more like an advocate PLUS, as the City has partnered (in some way) with Bailey House/Betty House/Day Shelter.

Some people find 'advocacy' to be a broad term, and it can be looked at it in various ways. The City has stepped up on various areas when we went forward (as others did not). The Committee could move forward based upon benchmarks, so that we could possibly measure any success. If an advocate, the City needs to explain the issue as well as why they are advocating for this area, "we are doing this at this time because of these situations; whatever the issues are within our community."

You can speak for residents, but doesn't mean that we are going to act for other orders of government, as that is not the role of the City. The City should not get into program delivery (as there is no internal capacity beyond the current programs), but could look at themselves as a partner. The City can move forward with various orders of government and explain the parameters of that work.

There was an explanation provided of Bailey / Betty House and Day Shelter and how the funding was "flowed-through" the City. The question was asked if the City could go after future money? Is that possible? If you were to ask, 'Does the City go after funding, or would it be best to support a community NGO to apply for specific funding?' There is only one person that is partially-linked to this work (but the City does not fund this position), it would be best to have NGO work towards it; this would show the distinction of not having the City doing the work or program delivery (back to no mandate, but more being an active advocate).

The discussion then turned to how broad/narrow should we define advocacy? The partnering that we do is building, operations, moving forward? Is there a potential lack of coordination between various agencies or orders of government and do we need some structure on how the City does this work. At issue now is the extensive competition between NGO's for funding opportunities. The City could take a lead-role to bring various organizations to the table.

How could the City engage? The City could invite people to the table (with a structured plan), develop realistic goals and then provide some level of support for a NGO to do this work (with support from the City – this could be as simple as a letter of support towards the project, etc.). The facilitator then posed the question, "Can we look at our role with advocacy?" We do not go beyond or below what we set as our bar/standard. Can we invite various agencies or government organizations to the table? Together we can identify the issues and what solutions or options can be provided. We must also ask, "How do you manage that facilitation with the other groups at the table?" It has to be understood and communicated so that the Committee has a legitimate role within the process – a voice of our residents.

The following further questions were posed by various members:

- Does the City have the capacity to do the work as an advocate?
- What does the City need to manage as an advocate?
- What are the boundaries of that advocacy?
- What do you want to achieve as you are being that advocate.

So it was determined that the Committee requires a broad definition; modern governments can take opportunities as they arise, they cannot be overly rigid. This will allow us to look at opportunities as they arise. This is what is required, the Committee needs to get something done in the short, medium and long term. It depends on the needs of the people that come together at that table.

It was determined that:



The City will purposefully advocate (what you need, legitimacy) by bringing interested parties to the table and will lead those parties towards finding solutions to the issues; being flexible, agile and where we need to be.

Other organizations (as well as the City) may need to dedicate the resources towards these aciton items.

THE PLAN

This slide listed the following:

- Articulate a vision and principles;
- Social Plan as a 'living document'; and
- Framework to guide social plan monitoring and evaluation

At this time, the facilitator took the group through an overview of the Social Plan that was developed back in 2009. It was noted that for every area, it is not a complete item, members can do anything you want – you are not limited by the items listed within the presentation.

The first item was to look at all programs with a 'social issues lens'. The City needs to articulate what they want for vision and principles. If it is our role is to work on this, then we need to provide our suggestion to Council. We have to ask ourselves, "Is it for just YK residents, or is it for all people who use services available in YK?" If our tax dollars are everywhere, does our money include just tax dollars, or is there money coming in from elsewhere? It was suggested that we have over 9,000 clinic visits from people from outside of YK.

Part of it is to provide some information on progress, how it is going, where it would go. We could have too many visions and principles and sometimes and we may get tied into various things and the Committee could lose sight of other issues that we should work on. We will comply with what the City has for various visions, etc. and ensure we stay within those mandates. If it is a think-tank, the Committee can provide information to council with a social lens (through research, information, etc).

ADVOCATE / INFLUENCE

The slide on this section included the following:

- Promote its role in social issues internally among municipal leaders and employees, and externally to other levels of government, voluntary organizations, businesses, and citizens.
- Develop, apply, and monitor 'social lens 'to decision-making processes.
- Follow the successful models developed through the Community Energy Plan and the Homelessness Coalition when implementing the City of Yellowknife Social Plan.
- An integrated response to social responsibility in all municipal government departments and divisions.
- Coordinate with other levels of government, business, and voluntary agencies

These bullets are more along the lines of the roles that the City could play. The facilitator reminded the group that being a leader does not mean that you are only a leader, but you can be a co-leader; you need to consider these items as moving forward.

It was determined that the first bullet on this slide is good moving forward. As a political leader, you may have considered issues and thought you could help; bike lanes, some like it as a need, and you want to advocate – it is a duel role. Does this group start going to income support and tell them the issues with the various programs? You can't change the program, however, you can assist people to get to the right area. Anytime you have elected entities, they belong to those people who elected them – so do not shut doors to those that come in to



complain about certain issues. Does the City have the capacity to deal with all social issues? The group did not feel that the capacity is within the City to deal with all social issues. It was suggested that the Committee cannot open the flood-gates and try to deal with every issue that we can think about. Sometimes, the issue is not an actual issue, but the need to help navigate someone within the various programs or systems within GNWT departments.

Social lens bullet, is simple for the City to consider, the Committee felt, generally, that this is already being doing in park planning and other services. Council could do that 'ad-hocly', not always a firm discussion around it. As an example, "When you rip up my road for water and sewer work, those kids that play hockey on the street will have to move away."

Bullets number three and four were removed for various reasons. Not every model should be followed, and various City departments have a core work function and it would be best if they work on that core function versus looking at other areas outside of that scope of work.

The Committee felt that the bullet towards coordinating with other levels of government bullet is really good, and as the City may already do that proactively, it should be kept going forward.

COLLABORATE

This slide included the following:

- Facilitate collaborative community efforts to:
 - create day-time drop-in facilities for persons on the street;
 - undertake concrete action on mental health issues;
 - move forward on youth issues; and
 - engender civic pride among diverse populations in the city.
- Champion the establishment of, and actively participate interagency social council - to collaborate on integrated responses to social issues
- Articulate and communicate the role of a Yellowknife interagency social council as a clearinghouse for social information and solutions.

After some discussion, it was decided to remove the first bullet and sub-bullets as these items are beyond the mandate of this Committee. It was also agreed that the second and third bullets should be removed – as the Committee could get representation from various NGO's and government bodies.

The final bullet needs be re-worked so that it may be considered more of a forum for sharing information on social-based issues. It was determined that the Committee needs to communicate to and with other orders of government; need a huge communications piece to get awareness and cover items being worked towards.

Replace clearing-house bullet with: communications bullet and bringing people to the table bullet, to be worded later.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

The facilitator had the Committee look at the slide that contained the following:

- Bring citizens together to engage in conversations on social issues
- Actively engage citizens in regular events, programs, and services that promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion of all citizens
- Work with community agencies to address gaps in volunteer support services



- Monitor citizen awareness of social issues and their satisfaction

There was some discussion on bullet number one. There was some thoughts that the term “solicit” needs to be in there. This will allow us to bring residents together to talk about some of the issues. It was also suggested that the City could conduct work that ‘fosters’ citizen engagement.

The second statement would work best as an action statement, the City needs to continue to do things and promote diversity and social inclusion (some services and programs already being done).

It was agreed to remove bullet number 3, difficult to get done outside of the scope of this Committee.

It was decided to re-word the final bullet to the following; *Actively seek citizen/businesses feedback from issues that relate to social aspect.* It was suggest that this work could come from the GNWT stats-bureau?

SPECIFIC ISSUES

The facilitator had a slide with the issues that were listed in the Social Plan in 2009; these are not listed as they can be found within the Social Plan. On these issues, none of these were specific, they are not things that some people can relate towards today. If you identify specific issues, they are always going to be dated. But if you identify higher level objectives, then you could look at various issues within those higher objectives. It was asked about a strength based outcome, such as, “How do you make housing a strength based outcome?” You may do this by stating that we (all orders of government) will ensure that all residents have access to adequate housing. In your actions, after you’ve done some engagement, you may have a list like this, but how do you work towards that?

Perhaps we could re-word these as “Broad Themes” in a positive manner. Not specific issues but bigger picture goals/objectives. With your actions, you start to identify what you will work on within a specific area. There is a danger in using neutral terms, they can become useless in looking at the accountability or work towards those neutral terms. Problems are problems, you may dress them up, but they will still be a problem. The group agreed with this statement.

How you frame the question will guide the response you will get. How you define the issue will then guide the response you will get (30 people in the mall versus having 30 people that can get the services they may require). Re-framing the statement is not where the Committee will leave it. It may be nice to have broad themes, but we need one or two from workable items from this list. What items do we need to pursue and have; like walking trails, programs or services provided (shitterie was a term provided).

It was agree that Committee members present should try and use all positive statements; reflect the programs you have and ensure you have some participation. Do we want to just advocate on three themes? We need a full basket of items that we need to address those 3 issues/themes.

It was asked, “Do we want to advocate for only 3 specific items?” The facilitator stated that he did not think that the City has the internal capacity to do everything. The Committee needs to derermine what items we can work towards, achieve and succeed – can’t always do, “pie in the sky items” as suggested by the facilitator and other members present.

One does not preclude the other; we need to pick things from a basket, we need to look at them in various priorities (high, medium, low) as determined by the Committee members around the table.



FIRST ISSUES:

Some examples provided at the meeting were:

1. Many young people want a skateboard park where it could be safe and in a place that is visible;
2. Day shelter is working for the downtown – needs some more programming within the shelter, could the GNWT provide a social worker, run other services from the shelter, have the City hire people to do work.

Community wellness engagement plans have labeled specific areas received in other communities. Clusters in the federal government world (as they provide funding) are;

- a. healthy children and youth;
- b. mental health and addictions; and
- c. health living & disease presentation

Are there other things that we may actually be doing, but they may not be working well and we could revise them to make them better – do not just think of the negative items, also consider positives.

ACTION ITEMS – E-MAIL ISSUES TO DMARCHIORI@YELLOWKNIFE.CA with your thoughts prior to June 13th so they may be compiled for review.

Any issues provided will be reviewed and considered with parameters, such as:

- Priorities;
- Responsibility;
- Resources;
- Actions;
- Outcomes; and
- Measures