

Present:

Chair, Councillor Villeneuve
J. Calbick
D. Chattha
L. Coyle
S. Dooley
D. Lawrance
L. Rhead
K. Thiara
D. Toor

Absent:

M. Shaw

Staff Present:

A. Murphy, Senior Social Planner
M. McCargar, Planning Technician
H. Dmytriw, Legislative Services

Also Present:

Anita Huberman, Surrey Board of Trade
Gerard Bremault, CEO, The Centre for Child
Development
Deqa Mohamad, Assist. Manager, Surrey S.D.
Welcome Centre
Meredith Verma, Surrey S.D. Welcome Centre
Jaime Courtade, Newton Adult Learning Centre
Melanie Conn, Common Thread Cooperative
Ekow Batula Ali, Somali Refugee
Maymuna Abdi Hashi, Somali Refugee
Safia Mohammed Ismail, Yemen Refugee
Gillian Hames, Langara College student
Bronwyn Scott, Langara College student

Round Table introductions were made.

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

It was

Moved by S. Dooley
Seconded by D. Lawrance
That the Social Planning Advisory Committee

Minutes of January 9, 2013, be approved.

Carried

B. DELEGATION

1. Anita Huberman, CEO Surrey Board of Trade (SBOT) provided a presentation regarding the **Board of Trade's Response to Poverty in Surrey**.

In December 2012, the Surrey Board of Trade adopted a Poverty Reduction Policy. The Policy recognizes that economic growth partnered with poverty reduction would make our communities healthier. The SBOT's Policy calls on the Federal and Provincial governments to develop and implement national and provincial poverty reduction strategies. The SBOT has also adopted a Policy on Business and Families that calls for the Federal and Provincial levels of government to develop strategies that addresses the needs of children and families.

- *What can Surrey businesses do to address issues individually or collectively?*
 - Educate themselves and their employees about homelessness and poverty in Surrey.

- Send a letter to local, provincial and federal decision makers to support affordable housing projects south of the Fraser River.
- Ask governments to fund programs for at-risk youth as a means of preventing homelessness.
- Encourage a review of public policy.

Gerard Bremault, CEO of The Centre for Child Development, Director of the Surrey Board of Trade and Chair of the SBOT Social Policy Committee was introduced. He noted that Surrey is in a unique position with a Board of Trade that includes members from the social service sector as well as business. The SBOT's Policy Paper on Poverty aligns with Surrey's Poverty Reduction Plan and emphasizes that there are economic benefits to reducing poverty and homelessness. The SBOT is eager to advance the issues raised in the Policy Paper and working collaboratively with the City.

Councillor Villeneuve thanked Anita Huberman for her support in raising awareness of social issues in the business community.

2. Deqa Mohamed and Meredith Verma, Surrey School District Welcome Centre, and Melanie Conn, Common Thread Cooperative, were in attendance to provide a presentation on the **experiences of Somali women settling in Surrey**.

Deqa Mohamed came with three refugee women from the literacy class at the Welcome Centre. Deqa provided translation so that the women could tell their stories.

Ekow Batula spoke about her life as a hotel worker in Somalia before the civil war, and then in a refugee camp for 18 years. She came to Canada in June 2010 with her three children. She expressed her appreciation of Canada. Ekow spoke about the challenges of settling with no knowledge of the English language. Ekow wishes to learn English so that she can be employed and also meet the language requirements for citizenship.

Maymuna Abdi Hashi spoke about her work making pots in Somalia. Maymuna was in a refugee camp for 13 years, and came to Canada in 2008 with her six children. She would like work in Canada.

Safia Mohammed Ismail was in a refugee camp in Yemen for 20 years. She has four children. Safia spoke about the refugee transportation loan and challenges that refugees face in repaying these loans. She and her children were really happy to be in Canada, but she worried about needing to repay her loan. She used her Child Tax Benefit to repay most of her loan.

Jaime Courtade, Newton Welcome Centre, spoke to his role as a teacher in the adult learning program. There was a unique group of refugees at the Welcome Centre who did not have the basic knowledge to enter into the Level 1 English class. Settlement and Multicultural workers have designed an adult learning program to meet the needs of refugees who lack basic literacy in their own languages. The program is designed to work with images to build oral language skills and demonstrate how to write the English alphabet.

Councillor Villeneuve commended the delegates for their courage to come and speak to the Committee. She noted that the Social Planning Advisory Committee has worked very hard to get the government to eliminate the requirement to repay the transportation loan and will continue to advocate.

Devinder Chattha mentioned that English language programs for people at a pre-literacy level are also available at Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS) and other settlement agencies. There needs to be better coordination between the school district and these community-based programs.

Melanie Conn introduced herself and said that she is willing to lend her expertise to assist in any way she can to support refugee women in Surrey. Melanie Conn has extensive experience in setting up social enterprises and cooperatives. Melanie suggested that the City of Surrey and the School District might consider partnering with the National Women's Foundation to start up a small pilot project.

Councillor Villeneuve thanked the delegation and commented that social planning is interested in further exploring a partnership with the School District to support refugee women.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

1. Welcoming Communities Program (WCP) in Surrey (Brought forward from January 9, 2013 agenda.)

The City of Surrey is the sponsoring organization for the Welcoming Communities Program in Surrey. The funding from the WCP is to be used between January 1, 2013 and March 31, 2014.

A Surrey Welcoming Communities Committee has been established that has representation from over 20 diverse community organizations.

Consultants were hired to facilitate the development of an Action Plan by the February 15, 2013 deadline. The Action Plan was submitted to the Province and the Committee will hear back by March 15, 2013. Once approved, the Action Plan will be circulated.

D. NEW BUSINESS

Agenda order was altered.

2. 2013 SPAC "Fun Schedule"

- SPAC Work Plan Discussion Notes – The Committee reviewed the notes from the January 13, 2013 discussion and began to identify priorities (delegations/projects) for 2013. Poverty, homelessness, children/youth, and Aboriginal issues were identified.
- Doors Open – June 22, 2013 – Jessica Danyk to provide a presentation prior to event.

- Community Summit – Saturday, April 6, 2013, at SFU - Debbie Lawrance sits on Planning Committee for this event.
- Alliance of Service Clubs - Linda Coyle to take the lead. Linda has started getting the lists of service clubs in Surrey and the contacts. Dale Toor volunteered to assist.

Jeff Calbick departed meeting at 6:25 pm

3. SPAC Subcommittees:

- **Doors Open** - June 22, 2013

Karanvir Thiara sits on the subcommittee and provided an update. The Subcommittee met and reviewed the statistics from last year and began discussing the 2013 event. Approximately 2,800 visited 32 venues in 2012. This year the Committee is looking at involving up to 40 venues.

This year the Newton Community Festival will also be held in collaboration with the Doors Open event on June 22, 2013.

The Subcommittee is aiming to get an earlier start on the marketing campaign this year. Karanvir Thiara is also talking to SFU and putting the event on the first page of the SFU website and into the newspapers, and working to get the SFU faculty and the student society more involved.

- **SPAC Branding/Promotions**

Debbie Lawrance, Chair of the Subcommittee provided an overview of the process to be undertaken to raise the profile of the SPAC and change the name. Devinder Chattha and Karanvir Thiara volunteered to assist. The subcommittee will report back at the next meeting.

Stephen Dooley departed meeting at 6:51 pm

1. Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan

Councillor Villeneuve provided the Committee with a presentation on the Surrey Poverty Reduction Plan.

The Plan is a community initiative with a variety of partners including Vibrant Surrey and the City of Surrey.

The Plan is focussed in four policy areas; being

- i. transportation,
- ii. housing,
- iii. income, and
- iv. support.

A total of 71,000 people are living in poverty in Surrey.

- *Why eradicate poverty in Surrey?* Poverty creates a burden on society; it depresses productivity and social progress and is costly to taxpayers.
- *Who can take action?* All levels of government and community leaders, social supports.
- The recommendations include: specific actions to address poverty, who is responsible for the actions and leadership that is expected from stakeholders and stakeholder groups.
- *What's Next?* Build awareness, gather community support, focus on results and update the data in the Fact Sheets to reflect the 2011 census.

A community forum will be held fall of 2013.

Councillor Villeneuve requested committee members for the next meeting to write down the programs they know of that are working to address poverty. Sheets were provided to the members for jotting down their ideas.

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

F. CORRESPONDENCE

G. INFORMATION ITEMS

H. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Committee Member Updates

- *Walking the Community Engagement Talk* –
March 14, 2013, 6:00-8:00 pm and March 15, 2013, 9:00 am -3:00 pm.
Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Keynote speaker: Bernie Pauly, Centre for Science and Addictions of BC.
- Third Age Learning at Kwantlen (TALK) - Brochures provided on table.
TALK provides creative, stimulating and educational activities for students in their fifties and older. See more at:
http://www.kwantlen.ca/talk/Thank_you_from_TALK_.html#sthash.lr78Hbmk.dpuf
- SFU has submitted an action plan to the Province. Karanvir Thiara will report on it at the next meeting.

I. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by D. Lawrence

Seconded by L. Coyle

That the Social Planning Advisory Committee

meeting do now adjourn.

Carried

The Social Planning Advisory Committee adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Jane Sullivan, City Clerk

Chairperson, Councillor J. Villeneuve
Social Planning Advisory Committee