
Present:

Councillor Stutt, Chair
Councillor Kooner, Vice Chair
P. McEvoy
P. Richards
S. Dooley

Absent:

R. Rai

Staff Present:

A. Ordeman, Director, Police Support Services,
Social Infrastructure & Community Investments (SICI)
A. Murphy, Housing & Social Development Manager, SICI
B. Edwards, Assistant Commissioner, Surrey RCMP
C. Ingleson, Sergeant, RCMP
J. Cairney, Deputy Chief, Surrey Fire Service
G. Yeung, Legislative Services Coordinator
J. Sung, Legislative Services Coordinator

Guests:

A. Krilow, Livability and Social Equity Committee
C. Izsak, Livability and Social Equity Committee
M. Mubanda, Livability and Social Equity Committee
S. McIntosh, Chair, Surrey Vulnerable Women and Girls
Working Group
B. Moriarty, SVWG Executive Committee, Surrey Vulnerable
Women and Girls Working Group
S. Grey, Director of Sexual Assault Services, Surrey Women's
Centre
S. Rahman, Executive Director, Surrey Women's Centre
S. McIntosh, Chief Operating Officer, Atira Women's
Resource Society
D. Rosa, Chief Executive Officer, Atira Women's Resource
Society

A. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. Adoption of the Agenda

It was Moved by S. Dooley
Seconded by P. Kooner
That the agenda of the Public Safety Committee
meeting of May 22, 2024, be adopted.

Carried

2. Adoption of the Minutes – April 24, 2024

It was Moved by S. Dooley
Seconded by T. McEvoy
That minutes of the Public Safety Committee
meeting of April 24, 2024, be adopted.

Carried

B. COMMITTEE-TO-COMMITTEE WITH LIVABILITY AND SOCIAL EQUITY COMMITTEE**1. Surrey Vulnerable Women and Girls Working Group (SVWG)**

S. McIntosh, Chair, and B. Moriarty, SVWG Executive Committee, Surrey Vulnerable Women and Girls Working Group

The following information was highlighted:

- The role of the SVWG working group is to support women and girls in Surrey collaboratively with community partners by understanding their needs and experiences, addressing barriers, and finding funding for community-based research, workshops, and essential resources.
- Women have provided feedback to SVWG suggesting more areas to be lit up at night, specialized counselling, and emergency phone services. The “In Their Own Words Research” further recommends increasing housing options for women, women with children, and youth, providing a one-stop support hub for women, offering more income support, job opportunities, and continued anti-stigma training.
- In response to the demand for night-time support services, SVWG members are implementing initiatives such as Surrey Women’s Centre Outreach Van, 24-hour drop-in, and Bad Date Reporting. There is a shortage in shelter beds and supportive housing for women and women with children. Purpose-built service, housing hubs for women experiencing homelessness, and transitional housing for youth are also in demand. Continued funding is required to implement and carry on these projects.
- The Rosewood Housing Project is a 55,000 square feet building with 60 shelter beds and a medical centre that only allows women to lease, ensuring they can stay in the event of any conflict. The 1.1.2. Housing Project provides transitional housing for youth.

2. Overview of Surrey Women's Centre (SWC) Services and Present Day Challenges

S. Grey, Director of Sexual Assault Services, and S. Rahman, Executive Director, Surrey Women's Centre

The following information was highlighted:

- Clients are connected to the support they need regardless of the program they choose, as SWC programs are interconnected. The drop-in program provides essential supplies, referrals, services and offers a welcoming and dignified space where clients feel safe.

- The Victim Services Team connected with 1,258 survivors last fiscal year to provide essential support including police reporting help and comprehensive safety plan creation. They work in collaboration with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and social workers to provide care for high-risk clients.
- Surrey Mobile Assault Response Team (SMART) and the Fraser Health Authority's Forensic Nursing Service work in partnership to provide wrap around care to victims of violence. SWC offers Stopping the Violence Counselling where gender-based violence victims receive long-term one-on-one support.
- The SMART Outreach Van is a cost-effective crisis intervention service providing after hours care and has been effective in diffusing criminal activity. This program faces the risk of shutting down if there is insufficient funding as it currently relies heavily on project-based funding.
- Funding has been approved for a sexual assault centre which will serve as a one-stop shop offering wrap around care for survivors of sexual violence.
- The current location of SWC has served the community for 32 years. While it is an accessible and central location to other services, it is in significant disrepair causing financial burden to the organization. In searching for a new location, the organization is facing challenges including limited budget, short-term lease agreements, demolition clauses, hesitant landlords, and visibility to clients.
- SWC is prioritizing the following initiatives: securing core stable funding for the SMART Outreach Van and securing a home for SWC including the new sexual assault centre expected to open by November 2025.

3. Mission, Mandate, and Programs of Atira Women's Resource Society in Surrey

S. McIntosh, Chief Operating Officer, and D. Rosa, Chief Executive Officer, Atira Women's Resource Society

The following information was highlighted:

- Atira Women's Society was established in 1987 to help women and children escape violence. Since then, their programs have expanded to include outreach services, specialized housing, and health programs targeted to the identified needs of women.
- Shimai Transition House is a low-barrier transitional housing program designed for women who do not have access to higher-barrier social services to reduce substance use. The positive relationships that they have had with neighbours, police services, and mental health outreach teams have helped to ensure the safety of women in the community.

- Shimai Drop-In is the only 24-hour, no-barrier harm reduction site for women in Surrey, offering women access to harm reduction supplies, referrals to community and outreach partners, and connections to health care. It also acts as a women-only emergency weather response shelter.
- Over the last two years, community redevelopment brings risk and uncertainty to the future of Shimai. The proposal is to create low-barrier transitional housing that can accommodate the higher community demand, a dedicated space for EWR shelter, a drop-in space, and outreach offices.

In response to questions from the Committee, the delegation provided the following information:

- Barriers to services is anything that inhibits the use of services including the client's ability to use openly, pets, guests, and hours of operation.
- While one of Atira's values is harm reduction, women's housing is not contingent on substance use. Their goal is to provide support, education, and advocacy in issues regarding drug use, sex, and parenting.
- Even though the need for housing is high, women come to Shimai for other reasons such as, food, laundry, and safety.
- Women are welcomed to have a bed space for up to 6 months, however, they are also supported through different types of housing. Relationship building with clients allows them to come back and find stability. It is important to consider the impact on stability when these facilities face the challenges of having to move.
- While agencies provide women and children with assistance and resources, the bottleneck is not being able to find affordable housing. While the provincial and municipal government are supporting these facilities, the challenge is in the lack of availability, high prices, short-term leases, and demolition clauses.

The Committee noted the following comments:

- Space and housing are critical issues in providing facilities for women. The stigma and discrimination around supportive and recovery homes deter potential landlords from leasing.
- Collaboration of ideas, resources and goals amongst the provincial government, municipal government and agencies is imperative in providing stability and continued support for women.

C. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Public Safety Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, June 26, 2024.

D. ADJOURNMENT

It was

Moved by T. McEvoy

Seconded by P. Richards

That the Public Safety Committee meeting

be adjourned.

Carried

The Public Safety Committee adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli
City Clerk and
Director Legislative Services

Councillor Stutt, Chairperson