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A special meeting of council at a special time. Here's what we're up to starting at 4 pm:



City Council Preview – What's on the Agenda for the July 16 Meeting?

To this ongoing debate in our community that started with some discussions around the council table almost one-year ago, an ending. Since February, Mayor Cam Guthrie has been working hard to establ...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2024/07/05/city-council-preview-whats-on-the-agenda-for-the-j...>

Mayor Guthrie calls the meeting to order.

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and General Nature Thereof? Nope.

First item, a last minute add-on: Zoning By-law Enforcement - 135 Ferguson Street. Guthrie says that there's been an issue with the ICC's outdoor tent, and staff have given then steps to make the outdoor tent conforming, but there is a timing issue.

This is similar to what happened with driveway enforcement, it's suspending specific bylaw provisions here. They need approval to do this in August when council *doesn't* meet.

Recommendation:

1. That the provisions identified in the Zoning Bylaw (2023)-20790 for an outdoor patio, including the temporary removal of parking, not be enforced for the Italian Canadian Club located on the south side of 135 Ferguson Street for a period ending no later than October 1, 2024.
2. That all applicable Noise By-laws, Building By-laws, Health Regulations and provincial legislation continue to apply to 135 Ferguson Street.
3. That the pause of zoning enforcement for 135 Ferguson Street be contingent upon the City receiving a minor variance application no later than August 13, 2024.

O'Rourke asks if something needs to be addressed in the bylaw, or is this a short-term change. Acting CAO Gayman says that this is about process and timing.

So nothing needs to be changed? Gayman says processes are in place for reason and they can work w/ applications.

Motions approved.

Main event: Follow up, Mayoral Direction B4 - Temporary Structured Encampment. This meeting was set up with staff were directed to work with Guelph Tiny Home Coalition.

Guthrie says he's spoken with Mike Marcolongo, and the parties of the first delegation, and would like Marcolongo to go first so that he can set the stage for the discussion. He is listed 7th in the agenda.

Marcolongo begins: He begins by recapping how the group came together in Jan 2024 and how the model expands the range of options. They've developed project charter, consulted with similar projects, incorporated, est. a board of directors, got 75 volunteers, in-kind commitments.

They've also teamed up with Royal City Mission to look at provision of services and constructed a prototype. They've secured support from frontline agencies, and Chamber of Commerce. They hope to continue this journey, however...

...they don't yet have a site, and some of the sites they've looking at weren't up to snuff. Not looking for temp site while search for more permanent site is ongoing. They've helped create vigorous conversation among supporters and critics.


MM: Tiny home is not a panacea to homelessness but it will offer unhoused people things that the present shelter system does not. (Guthrie allows Marcolongo 30 extra seconds).

THE ASK: An endorsement from council to declare the tiny home project as a viable solution to help eliminate homelessness.

Allt: What does that mean?

MM: It's a signal to the county that this has council's support and it's a viable part of the continuum.

Allt: "Not a panacea?"

MM: Homelessness is multifaceted, and numbers are . We need to try all models, and this is a pilot approach.

MM: It's a bandaid model, but bandaids do work and so is our shelter system. Actually, tiny homes is a cast b/c people get their own space and wraparound support.

Goller: Asks about 55% fundraising goal, when will City get request with numbers?

MM: There's a 5-pg brief that outline 4-phase approach, #2 is fundraising, #1 is find a location. Once that happens, they'll know what costs they'll need.

O'Rourke: Praises the project. Wonders if Chamber is helping to identify a land partner?

MM: We're collaborative with GCofC, working on that but no one's come forward yet. Working thru Chamber on fundraising though. Thanks council and staff for support.

O'Rourke: Will GTHC work with agencies to get to the scope of the issue?

MM: The County was asked to integrate project into continuum and to access By-Name List. Hopes to improve reliability of systems with more voices at the table.

O'Rourke: Numbers seem to vary btw county numbers on encampment and ppl living rough?

MM: We feel that the 17 number is about 2 or 3 times bigger, but a range is probably the best we're going to do in the short term.

O'Rourke: Not clear what the model is, temporary or permanent; pilot or part of continuum?

MM: Hopefully it is temp, but it still needs to be part of continuum b/c it can be integrated into the County's system and approaches.

Richardson: Asks for more info about the supports.

MM: This is 24/7 staffing, the operating budget is \$627k, engaged with service providers for supports. Securing the site? Until there's a location that's TBD.

Downer: Q about the permanent residents of A Better Tent City, will there be permanent residents here?

MM: Gravitated to ABTC project in style b/c that's a community led model. Would like to evolve to permanent supportive as they grow the community.

Downer: Q about the handling of people with addictions.

MM: Drug addiction happens everywhere, but are we stigmatising this b/c it's on a city site. In ABTC people use in their units, but not in the public areas. Depending on privilege, ppl can use privately or publicly.

Busuttill: Is this about putting people somewhere as the wheels of gov turn?

MM: Yes, and it's about giving them support to find a job, get healthcare, or whatever assistance they need.

Klassen: What about people living rough this winter?

MM: You're seeing a community that wants to help out, people saying we can do better, the hope is that today will help them gain momentum.

Caron: Again, is this temp or perm.?

MM: Can't predict if the housing crisis will get better or worse, that's tough, trying to address societal issues beyond our control. Hoping it will be temp., but there's different ways to look at project.

MM: Models evolve. We no longer have workhouses or poor farms. Maybe in 5 years this model is no longer relevant, but we need to take that journey.

O'Rourke: Will GTHC cover operating costs? b/c the City don't do that with community benefit agreement.

MM: Will have to work that out, there may be funding coming for the capital, but they're just asking council to say that this is something worth pursuing.

Next: Kristen Kerr, Helen Fishburn and Mark Walton as one team. They're representing healthcare partners and here to speak to the need and urge the City for support. There's a lot of complex need, but they need options b4 winter.

Fishburn: We need more options, and this is not a "one size fits all" community. More options than ever before, and this project fits well with what's been done, especially for people with diverse needs. Reduces risk, costs, and centralises things.

Kerr: More folks in one location is helpful, more structure and options allows for more connections to support. This model offers full system of assistance, more options and more choices. County is making good strides, but we need this too.

Walton: We are here symbolically as part of health system and housing is health. Securing funding for Shelldale was helped by being a united front.

Allt: What are the benefits of tiny homes to Stonehenge peeps?

Kerr: There's no 1size fits all for people who use substances, ppl who've experienced homelessness for long time have trouble transitioning to structured living, so this gives ppl transitional option.

Kerr: Able to secure someone an apartment, and there's a tough transition from going to the community at Stonehenge to living on his own. He lived in a tent inside his apartment in order to make a transition. Not just a matter of getting people housed and they're fine.

Downer asks about supports.

Kerr: There's a difference between 24/7 support and wraparound care; the former is there when people need it, and the latter is more proactive.

Fishburn: These are literally the people we're currently supporting, just more centralised.

Fishburn says that they will work this out and Walton says that they all struggle with the definitions, but they're committed to providing clarity. It's an evolving language and the tiny homes project will help work that out.

O'Rourke: New temp supportive housing coming online in fall, why is that not enough?

Fishburn: There's not enough. We've made progress in getting more options, but there's still ppl this winter that will have none. Also, no crystal ball, so we don't know what's coming.

Fishburn adds that on these issues, we never went back to normal post-pandemic. Tiny homes are better than hotel rooms, or space under bridges.

O'Rourke: What's sense of planning for budget and community resources?

Walton: That's valid. What we've seen is that this is a viable model in other communities, so can it be adapted here and how can we best use it? Easier to start w/ something vs a blank sheet of paper.

Next, Jeff Willmer. He's with A Better Tent City in Kitchener, 42 homes with 50 residents. Been running for 4 years. Some have moved on to supportive housing, but others been there since the beginning.

ABTC came about b/c shelters don't work for everybody for a variety of reasons. It's been effective at building community, offering ppl stability and also community. They're learning how to be good neighbours. Didn't have good connect to Region in the beginning.

Wilmer says that the Region came around after two years when the system proved itself successful, and that led to the Erb Street project. More options are need, there are complex needs and a range can help those being literally left in the cold.

Wilmer says it's forceable that zoning questions are going to force confrontations, so if you find a site that works, considering this a site under public use makes a lot of sense.

Downer asks how ABTC fits in the region's continuum.

Wilmer: Doesn't really get into "Definitions", but the people at ABTC due use their shelter support so the ONgov believes they're a legitimate housing option.

Next, Kevin Coghill from Royal City Mission. He notes that they have an agreement in principle with the GTHC and adds that people are no longer homeless when they have a sense of home. Ppl will be asked to take part in upkeep as part of their residency & to build community.

Allt: Clarity on controlled entry?

Coghill: People visiting will be asked to sign in and out will be the first step.

Chris Williams is next. He's a contractor, and his brother has experienced homelessness half his life. His brother is a resident at ABTC, which has made him easier to find and given him stability. He notes that it's also a safe place to visit for his family.

Williams calls the tiny homes model effective and wants to give the chance to others, which is why he's volunteering with GTHC. Food, water, safety and shelter are a human right and people should be given that support.

Klassen asks Williams if his brother's stay at ABTC is permanent. Williams says he can see his brother moving out one day, but he notes that it's been a stabilising influence on him.

Next is Tamara Williams, who is Chris' mom. She says she was unsure about sharing her today, but her discomfort is nothing compared to the struggles of people like her son. She notes the safety of ABTC, and its sense of community.

Morgan Dandie is next. She rhetorically asks if Guelph is ready for a structured encampment, and notes that she became homeless on June 1. She became a "couch surfer" and is now paying 60% of income to house herself. She believes the continuum is broken. It's all shelter.


She notes that this is her fourth meeting on this issue, and her fourth address this year. Wants it noted that homelessness is not just people with complex needs. Quotes Guthrie: If this is not the correct solution, what is?

Ingrid Ohls from the Guelph Tiny Homes Coalition is next. She has lived experience being unhoused and using substances, and now she's working on this issue as a frontline worker. We need more options; we're a privileged community and we can do better.

She notes that no one in this room wants people to suffer and die in the cold, and while we all have different ideas about how to fix that, we need to listen to the people with lived experience and give them what they need. This is a viable solution being embraced across country.

Klassen: Why are traditional models not working?

Ohls: It's about options, right now there's two and one of those is just coming online now. COVID accelerated 20 yrs of issues & we're trying to dig ourselves out of Grand Canyon.

Last, but not least, Danny Liu. He notes that he was doing his rounds this morning in the downpour; people are out in the elements 24/7/365, always in survival mode. He supports this project, and has built relationships w/ those in need. Mortality rates from drug poison .

He's says without a safe place to live nothing else can be solved. Something like the Tiny Home project will give people time to heal before they rebuild and will be flexible to meeting

people as they struggle with a variety of issues.

Caton asks Liu about delivery medicine to encampments. He says the new model would give people safety and stabilisation; chance of burns or frost bite increases, these are hard to get to places. And hey, have we thought about the boredom?

Guthrie asks how many people he thinks are living in encampments. Liu says at least 2-3 times the 17 that the County says they've counted, but it's also always changing. People housing in hotels in the winter have moved 5x between end of April and now.

That's a wrap for delegates.

Guthrie says they're going to take a dinner break of 30 minutes. There will be a closed session immediately after the break, so there could be an extra 30 minutes in closed.



Mayor Guthrie calls the meeting back to order.

Council will now move into closed session to discuss "Potential Municipally Owned Sites for Temporary Structured Encampment."

This is under Section 239 (2) (a) and (k) of the Municipal Act relating to the security of the property of the municipality or local board and a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction, et al.

Council is now in....



45 minutes later, council is still in camera.

Council is coming out of closed session. Please stand by.

Back to order. Guthrie says council received information, and no direction was given.

Allt/Goller move this slate of recommendations. These are different from the recommendations in the agenda:

Follow up, Mayoral Direction B4 - Temporary Structured Encampment - 2024- 307

Councillor Allt



1. That Guelph City Council endorse in principle the need for a tiny home shelter model within the City of Guelph and respectfully ask the County of Wellington as the Consolidated Social Services Manager to consider how this model may fit within the housing continuum moving forward.
2. That City staff, in alignment with the report titled Mayoral Direction B3 – Strategic Real Estate Partnerships on Underutilized City-Owned Assets, be directed to continue working to identify the potential for City owned lands to be used for the development of temporary or permanent housing, or to review other non-owned city lands that come forward for consideration, and report back as required by Q1 2025 as part of the planned City-wide land inventory evaluation, while taking under consideration the upcoming County of Wellington Homelessness Winter Response Plan, the opening of the Delhi Street Supportive Housing units and additional shelter and transitional housing units contained within the Gordon Street Stepping Stone renovations.
3. That staff be directed to forward a copy of this report to the Joint Social Services and Land Ambulance Committee for information.
4. That City Council respectfully request that the Joint Social Services and Land Ambulance Committee refer the estimated costs, including any Federal and Provincial funding, that will be required to temporarily house any individuals from the by name list not accommodated through other shelter locations as part of the winter 2024/25 homelessness response to City Council for consideration at the September 24, 2024 Guelph City Council meeting.
5. That Guelph City Council respectfully request immediate funding allocation and criteria for the Federal Government funds to address encampments and homelessness in our community through the federal budget.

- 1) Embrace tiny home model, ask county to do same.
- 2) Look for land as part of land inventory
- 3) Send copy to Social Services Committee
- 4) Get costs about winter plans for the unhoused
- 5) Get info from County on potential funding from other Govs.

Downer proposes an amendment to replace wording to say "pilot structure encampment" instead of tiny homes.

Follow up, Mayoral Direction B4 - Temporary Structured Encampment - 2024- 307



Amendment Council Downer

1. That Guelph City Council endorse in principle **pilot structured encampment** shelter model within the City of Guelph and respectfully ask the County of Wellington as the Consolidated Social Services Manager to consider how this model may fit within the housing continuum moving forward.
2. That City staff, in alignment with the report titled Mayoral Direction B3 – Strategic Real Estate Partnerships on Underutilized City-Owned Assets, be directed to continue working to identify the potential for City owned lands to be used for the development of temporary or permanent housing, or to review other non-owned city lands that come forward for consideration, and report back as required by Q1 2025 as part of the planned City-wide land inventory evaluation, while taking under consideration the upcoming County of Wellington Homelessness Winter Response Plan, the opening of the Delhi Street Supportive Housing units and additional shelter and transitional housing units contained within the Gordon Street Stepping Stone renovations.
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She says that doesn't think that there needs to be a mention of the housing continuum, since ABTC seems to get by without that distinction, council just has to say that they support the model.

Amendment for the wording change is approved.

No further questions for staff. Guthrie asks if anyone wants to separate out the motions.

Downer says it doesn't matter about the continuum, the County will probably come back and say it doesn't anyway. Also, the motion does make it conditional with "may".

Billings notes that there's an "anticipated increase" in costs for housing in 2024/25, is that not for a winter response? Guthrie says that there's already been extra costs incurred, and there maybe more for this winter. Guelph's already given \$3 mn more.

Billings asks about the extra costs, what are they? DCAO Clack-Bush says they will get the Q2 update from the County shortly, and that will be a part of Sept CoW meeting agenda.

O'Rourke asks about how council can get better info about size of the problem? Clack-Bush says it's hard to get an accurate number, and they rely on what's being reported from bylaw, police, et al. They do they're best to keep track to co-ordinate with County and agencies.

Clack-Bush says that they're aware of 24 encampments, but they don't know how many because people are always moving. We know there's a problem, but this is an ongoing effort to have accurate info.

O'Rourke asks if the individual workers are empower to add names to the by-name list.

Clack-Bush notes that the point in time count will help, that's mandated by the Feds and highly co-ordinated. Best way to get connected is thru a "door agency" like Stepping Stone.

Guthrie thanks the GTHC and other stakeholders for rallying, and he appreciates any org that realises when they might have to pause to get it done right the first time. On sites, he says staff have done excellent job, but for encourage private sector to step up.

Guthrie says he hoped to move something forward, but wants to do it the right way. Wants to see County's inter response program and is eager to see what they've got in store. Also, OBMC passed a motion in regards to fed funding, how much we getting so we can do planning?!

Motions approved unanimously.

Follow up, Mayoral Direction B4 - Temporary Structured Encampment - 2024- 307



Amendment Council Downer

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2. That City staff, in alignment with the report titled Mayoral Direction B3 – Strategic Real Estate Partnerships on Underutilized City-Owned Assets, be directed to continue working to identify the potential for City owned lands to be used for the development of temporary or permanent housing, or to review other non-owned city lands that come forward for consideration, and report back as required by Q1 2025 as part of the planned City-wide land inventory evaluation, while taking under consideration the upcoming County of Wellington Homelessness Winter Response Plan, the opening of the Delhi Street Supportive Housing units and additional shelter and transitional housing units contained within the Gordon Street Stepping Stone renovations.
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Additional motion from Downer: Having the Community Planning table look at prioritising people in encampments for health and housing support. O'Rourke seconds.

Follow up, Mayoral Direction B4 - Temporary Structured Encampment - 2024- 307



Councillor Downer

1. That Guelph City Council request, through Wellington County, that the Housing and Health Community Planning Table investigate the prioritization of providing individuals living in encampments with health and housing supports as part as part of their work plan.

Allt asks if they're prioritising people in encampments, are they de-prioritizing others? Downer says this is just referring an investigation, and is part of other work the table is doing.

Motion approved unanimously.

Bylaws of the week approved.

6. By-laws

Recommendation:

1. That by-law (2024) - 20961 be approved, subject to Section 284.11 (4) of the Municipal Act.

*6.1 By-Law Number (2024) - 20961

A by-law to confirm the proceedings of a meeting of Guelph City Council held July 16, 2024.



That's it for this meeting. Be back here next Tuesday for council's mid-season finale....



@threadreaderapp unroll please!

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