

Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association Minutes

Date: Wednesday, November 8, 2023

Time: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m

Location: Virtual via Zoom

Attendees:

Guest Speakers from Toronto Public Health (TPH): Chris Langford (Supervisor, Lakeshore site), Katie Milan, Uppala Chandrasekera (Director), Sana Imran (Associate Director)

TPS 14 Division: Neighbourhood Community Officer, Matthew Hoy

Elected Officials: Bushra (for Councillor Ausma Malik), Chris Glover

BQNA: Joan, Lesley, Hannah, Jacqueline, Maureen, Brian Gottheil, Natasha

Regrets: Kevin Vuong, Bev Thorpe, Ingrid Van der Zande

7:15: Toronto Public Health Presentation & Questions

- 24 hour respite centre opening at 829 Adelaide St W (Adelaide and Bathurst) not a Supervised Injection Site.
- Slide deck will be provided by TPH, Presentation was recorded on zoom.

Questions Following Presentation

- Lesley's question: what is the reason for the increase in drug use in our neighbourhoods?
- TPH response: COVID impacted a lot of people, especially with people losing their jobs and homes amongst other social determinants of health. Saw an increase in people using drugs as a way to cope. Some instances people started out with prescription drugs (eg hydrocodone), and when MDs stop prescribing it, users turn to the street.
- Lesley's follow-up question: is there a solution or way to help treat users similar to the West Coast model (eg. Methadone clinics)
- TPH response: these types of programs are in place where specific locations can prescribe Opioid Agonist Therapy (OAT) (eg. Hydromorphone can be prescribed when users are ready to wean off opioids). Only 10 of these sites are in the city, and therefore we see an influx of users coming to these centres
- Hannah's comment: seen an increase in crack users publicly smoking their pipes
- TPH's response: Safe inhalation spaces are not common in Toronto (only one in Toronto at Casey House). When one site closes, people migrate
- Joan's comment: seen user in Music Garden with white gel wrapped in tin foil, unsure what the substance was and if anyone could shed light on how to assist here
- TPH response: Pharmacy at 545 Lakeshore can dispense OATs or other medications around their needs, however cannot dispense inhalation-related products
- Signs of overdosing: if someone is passed out, call 911 or 211
- Hannah's comment: Concern over needles left on the floor in parks and response time from 311 took about a week for pick-up

- TPH response: have been working with Waste Management team and Emergency Response team to expedite pick-up to within 24 hours
- TPS response: can call Homes First to perform needle pick-up. Also contact BIA (Joan to provide name to Hannah to follow up)
- TPH noted urgent sites were granted by Health Canada during the pandemic, and because it was not publicly accessible (private site for residents of the shelter), no need for public consultation. Only 3 private sites operate in the city, and 9 sites are publicly accessible sites. 1 public site is part of the hospital (Casey House)
- Lesley and Jacqueline's feedback: don't need public consultation for private clinics, but it would be helpful to inform the neighbourhood associations so we can inform and educate neighbourhood/residents
- Natasha: there used to be biohazardous wastebins in some places as part of the clean needle exchange programs. Challenges with that program aside and it's not a permanent solution to unsafe consumption in the community, is there a reason we don't put up waste bins in high consumption areas?
- TPH response: comes down to funding, TPH can help coordinate those boxes with a third-party agency, however source of funding would not be from TPH. The city does not have those biohazardous waste bins
- Natasha's follow-up question: Does the city have any stats regarding the volume of calls/requests for needle pick-ups? Could that cost translate to establishing hazardous waste program?
- TPH response: data is not collected

8:30 Elected representative updates (5 minutes per, Questions) Chris, Kevin, Bushra

Chris Glover update: launched inquiry into Ford government's sale of Ontario Place to Therma

- Parking garage for Therma spa discussion started back in 2021 before telling public, and Ford government refuses to release or disclose terms of lease for Ontario Place
- Link between selling of Ford's company in Chicago to developers with ties to Therma
- MPP introducing motion to amend and strengthen the Integrity Act to prevent these types of scandals from recurring
- Coffee with Chris – 15 minute conversation with Chris on November 24th at the Music Garden (8:30am – 10:15am). Sign-up on website
- Holiday party coming up in person on December 9 from 1pm – 3pm at the Bentway Studio (55 Fort York Blvd)
- Remembrance Day event at Fort York Cemetary

Bushra/Ausma's update:

- Emergency Preparedness Advisory Board

- Consult with neighbourhood to identify 5 community members and 1 from YQNA who can consult with the city to develop plan
- Bushra will provide number of hours of commitment required and language around requirements

Airport Update

- December 5th meeting with executive counsel
- Ports Toronto coming forward to ask city to extend lease of airport ahead of 2033 expiry date
- BQNA requesting city to thoroughly review request

Next meeting: December 13, 2023 in-person at Waterfront Neighborhood Centre

9:15: Adjournment