Consolidated Community Services Standing Committee Meeting Agenda

Date: Wednesday, December 4, 2024
Time: 9:00 o'clock a.m.

Location: Council Chambers, 1st Floor, Windsor City Hall

All members will have the option of participating in person in Council Chambers or electronically and will be counted towards quorum in accordance with Procedure By-law 98-2011 as amended, which allows for electronic meetings. The minutes will reflect this accordingly. Any delegations have the option to participate in person or electronically.

MEMBERS:

Ward 2 - Councillor Fabio Costante

Ward 3 - Councillor Renaldo Agostino

Ward 4 - Councillor Mark McKenzie

Ward 5 - Councillor Ed Sleiman (Chairperson)

Ward 6 - Councillor Jo-Anne Gignac

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item #	Item Description
1.	**CALL TO ORDER**

READING OF LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We [I] would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, which includes the Ojibwa, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi. The City of Windsor honours all First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and their valuable past and present contributions to this land.

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES *(previously distributed)*

3.1. Adoption of the Community Services Standing Committee minutes of its meeting held October 2, 2024 **(SCM 303/2024)**

4. REQUEST FOR DEFERRALS, REFERRALS OR WITHDRAWALS

5. COMMUNICATIONS

6. PRESENTATIONS AND DELEGATIONS

8.4. Response to Council Directive CR31/2024; Report regarding 2023 and 2024 attendance numbers and staffing possibilities at the Duff-Baby Mansion at 221 Mill Street - Ward 2 **(S 162/2024)**

a) Don Wilson, President, Les Amis Duff Baby (in person)

7. COMMITTEE MATTERS *(previously distributed)*

7.1. Minutes of the Committee of Management for Huron Lodge of its meeting held September 12, 2024 **(SCM 288/2024)**

7.2. Minutes of the Meetings of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors, Willistead Manor Inc., Held September 12, 2024 **(SCM 324/2024)**

7.3. Minutes of the Meetings of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors, Willistead Manor Inc., held October 16, 2024 **(SCM 325/2024)**

7.4. Report No. 120 of the Board of Directors Willistead Manor Inc. **(SCM 326/2024)**

8. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS *(previously distributed)*

8.1. Facility Accessibility Design Standard Adoption - City Wide **(S 130/2024)**

8.2. Response to CQ 39-2024 – Funds Available for Waterfront Parkland Property – Riverside Sites (Shores Park & Former Abars Site) – Ward 6 **(C 137/2024)**
Clerk's Note: P&C Memo ***previously distributed*** to committee members only.

8.3. Response to CQ12-2024 –Community Recognition Awards – City Wide **(S 169/2024)**

8.5. Strategy to Promote Alternatives to Payday Loans - City Wide **(C 143/2024)**

8.6. Status on IPV Funding Availability - City Wide **(C 144/2024)**
Clerk's Note: Shelley Gilbert, Interim Executive Director, Legal Aid of Windsor is submitting the ***attached*** letter dated November 29, 2024, as a written submission

8.7. Training at Local Emergency Shelters – City Wide **(S 164/2024)**

8.8. Social Housing – End of Mortgage (EOM) and Negotiation of Service Agreements with Housing Providers – City Wide **(S 166/2024)**

9. QUESTION PERIOD

10. ADJOURNMENT

November 29, 2024

RE: Notice of Standing Committee Meeting - Item 8.6 – Status on IPV Funding Availability - City Wide

Legal Assistance of Windsor

Legal Assistance of Windsor has provided services to survivors of intimate partner violence throughout our fifty years in operation. These services included, with a team of committed community service providers, the creation of Hiatus House in July of 1976 – only the fifth shelter of its kind in Canada.

L.A.W.'s core services include providing legal representation, advocacy and support to some of our most vulnerable members of the community in the areas of housing, social benefits and immigration law, as well as providing services through the Indigenous Justice Program. Previously, L.A.W. provided representation to survivors of gender based violence at the Criminal Injuries Compensation board. A leader in the field, L.A.W. has pioneered work supporting survivors of human trafficking and exploitation and is home to the Windsor-Essex Counter Exploitation Network (WECEN). Over the past five decades, staff made up of lawyers, social workers and child and youth workers, have weathered changes in funding supports for all survivors of GBV, profoundly impacting survivors' ability to achieve safety.

In 2022, Legal Assistance of Windsor was awarded a four year grant from Department of Justice Canada to implement programming that would increase access to justice for survivors of gender based violence. The Supporting Survivors of Gender Based Violence Program provides joint legal and social work services for survivors of intimate partner violence and sexual assault, without cost to the client. Survivors meet with the inter-disciplinary team to receive:

- Ongoing legal information and advice with respect to any of the legal systems that they may be interacting with
- Survivor-informed risk assessments and safety planning,
- Supportive counselling as they navigate the intersecting legal and social service systems.

The team is part of a larger collaborative of eight other community legal clinics across the province working together to enhance each community's capacity to support survivors while engaging in system advocacy.

Since the launch of this program in November of 2022, the team of two has provided service to over three hundred and twenty individual survivors of intimate partner violence and sexual assault. In just two years, the program has seen an overwhelming demand for services, with no expectation of abatement. This is reflective of the grim reality in our community.

From October of 2021 to present, eight people in Windsor and Essex County have been murdered as a result of intimate partner violence. Thousands more are living in increasingly

dangerous situations. According to the snapshot prepared by the Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee of Windsor and Essex County, Windsor Police received 6411 calls for service related to intimate partner violence in 2022 and 2023. While this number is staggering, of greater concern is the fact that the majority of survivors of intimate partner violence do not report to the police. According to Statistics Canada's General Social Survey on Victimization, 2019, only 19% of survivors of intimate partner violence reported their experiences to police[1]. This suggests calls to Windsor Police represents less than a quarter of all the constituents in Windsor who are living in dangerous situations.

The violence occurring in the privacy of the homes across Windsor-Essex County is as common as it is severe. Choking and strangulation have long been considered notable high risk factors for femicide, and is alarmingly common in the lives of the clients with whom we work. The team has noted a lack of accessible, affordable and long-term mental health programming has contributed to this increasing violence. It is becoming increasingly common for a survivor to describe years of a healthy relationship becoming violent when their partner experienced a mental health crisis for which they have not been able to access adequate treatment.

It is well noted a lack of access to safe and affordable housing is a significant barrier preventing survivors from exiting a violent relationship[2]. With vacancy rates in Windsor-Essex County hovering around 2%[3], survivors often face the difficult decision of entering into the shelter system in order to flee their dangerous living situations. In spite of the tremendous work by our partners in the shelter system, and the best efforts of our social housing providers, survivors often find themselves unable to access their own housing prior to the conclusion of their stay at Hiatus House. This leaves survivors vulnerable to entering into other dangerous living situations, returning to their violent relationship, or transferring into another community shelter. Some studies have identified unemployment as the number one demographic risk factor for lethal intimate partner violence[4] – Windsor has the highest unemployment rate in Canada, at 9.2% as of September 2024[5].

While the situation for survivors of intimate partner violence in Windsor and Essex County is dire, it is important to highlight the tremendous efforts being made by front line workers across our community. Windsor-Essex County has long been home to innovative programming to support some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

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[1] https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/FEWO/Brief/BR11575288/br-external/StatisticsCanada-Brief-e.pdf

[2] https://womanact.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/WomanACT_Safe-at-Home-Literature-Review.pdf

[3] https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en/TableMapChart/Table?TableId=2.1.31.2&GeographyId=35&GeographyTypeId=2&DisplayAs=Table&GeographyName=Ontario

[4] https://acws.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2019_ACWS-DA-Manual_USER-GUIDE_FINAL.pdf

[5] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/windsor-unemployment-rate-1.7315308#:~:text=X-,Windsor's%20unemployment%20rate%20is%20once%20again%20the%20highest%20in%20Canada,cent%20in%20August%20of%202023

Gender Based Violence and femicides will not stop due to one level of government intervention alone. We believe all levels of government should support funding for the provision of existing, and innovative new programming to support survivors, to prevent further incidents of violence, and to provide families with the resources necessary to foster safe and healthy relationships in the home. Declaring intimate partner violence an epidemic in our community was an important first step taken by Council, and we applaud them for it. With more than four in ten Canadian women experiencing intimate partner violence in their lifetime[6], this epidemic impacts every member of Windsor and Essex County. We support Council in making every effort to explore funding and partnership opportunities to enhance the safety and well being of all members of this community. Further, we look forward to intimate partner violence being incorporated as a key piece of the Community Safety and Well Being Plan, due to be revised in 2025.

Amanda Pierce MSW
GBV Project Social Worker

Shelley Gilbert

Shelley Gilbert BSW
Executive Director

[6] https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00003-eng.htm