



## MINUTES

### Social Determinants of Health Advisory Committee – Everyone Matters

Thursday, Sept. 8, 2022 1 p.m. VIA MS Teams

#### Attendees:

Co-Chair Lori Kleinsmith, Bridges CHC  
Co-Chair Angie Desmarais, Councillor  
Sherry Hanson, Manager, Municipal Law Enforcement  
Jay McKnight, Niagara Regional Police  
Phil Licskai, Niagara Regional Police  
Jeffrey Sinclair, Community Services, Niagara Region  
Judy Cassan, Bridges CHC  
Tara McKendrick, Canadian Mental Health Association  
Kaitlyn Kerridge, Health promoter, Niagara Region

#### Guests:

Kim Simons, Anchors Away  
Rob Salewytch, GO

#### Regrets:

Christine Clark-Lafleur, Port Cares  
Aidan Johnson, Niagara Community Legal Clinic  
Bill Steele, Mayor  
Scott Luey, Chief Administrative Officer  
Taralea McLean, Bridge CHC  
Susan Therrien, Director of Library Services

#### Minutes

Gail Todd, EA to Mayor and CAO

#### Call to Order

Co-Chair Lori Kleinsmith called the meeting to order at 1 p.m.

#### Approval of the Agenda

Moved by J. McKnight  
Seconded by A. Desmarais

That the agenda for the Sept. 9, 2022 meeting of the Social Determinants of Health Advisory Committee – Everyone Matters be approved.  
CARRIED.

### Approval of the April 7, 2022 minutes

Moved by S. Hansen  
Seconded by T. McKendrick  
That the minutes for the April 7, 2022 meeting of the Social Determinants of Health Advisory Committee – Everyone Matters be approved.  
CARRIED.

### Business Arising

Lodging bylaw – Scott Luey

Deferred to November (or next) meeting.

City of Port Colborne Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan – Scott Luey, Gary Long  
Report to be presented to Port Colborne City Council Sept. 13. (report attached)

Transportation – NRT on demand – Rob Salewytch, manager transit services, GO  
Implementation, Niagara Region Public Works

(Full report deck attached.)

As a resident of Port Colborne, Rob proud to see shared-ride on-demand service underway and growing, with more success stories than missteps in innovative service. Software from US company because it's the best in the world, allows complete turnkey operation. Because it's a pilot project, nothing in stone, lots of opportunities to learn and grow.

OnDemand runs 7am to 10pm Monday to Saturday. Not on holidays yet; coming. Busiest time 2 to 5pm. Pick-ups and drop-offs to be within 100m of caller's residence, but it's actually been door-to-door.

All vehicles are branded mini-vans, can carry bicycles, 40 per cent are wheelchair accessible, but wheelchairs are less than one per cent of ridership. R

Regarding complaints of "not being able to get a ride:" a large number of ridership makes requests but cancels within five to 50 minutes of pick-up; relying on "on-demand" rather than booking ahead. 90 per cent of users are on the app; Port Colborne a little

higher percentage of calls by telephone rather than app. All rides can be booked by old-school telephone, for those without smart phones or home computers/internet.

There is no on-board pay currently, and drivers visually validate passes. Will be harmonizing services across Niagara; ApplePay and GooglePay in 2023. The free transit app is a worldwide app: one day we'll be able to book passes for transit all over Niagara, Ontario, Canada, the world.

Lori thanked Rob for presentation.

Angie asked where riders direct complaints.

Rob responded: reach out to service provider; there is a toll-free number.

### New Business

#### Request from Steven Soos for Declaration of Emergency Re: Mental Health

Consensus that there is not a mental health emergency, per se, that numbers do not illustrate an emergency, and without any proposed action or advocacy behind the request, a declaration is of no consequence.

P. Licskai reported from January to Sept. 2021 there were 96 non-apprehendable mental health calls; 33 calls which resulted in apprehensions. Similar numbers in same period 2022. Not seeing an increase in mental health calls.

J. Sinclair said Niagara does not see skyrocketing homelessness and encampments as in other municipalities.

T. McKendrick said, yes there are concerns, which people read in newspaper and on social media, but there is so much advocacy, so much good work going on, which are not covered in the press and online. People focus on the crisis, not the many programs in place, action tables, Niagara Ontario Health Team, none of which get the attention of the negative pieces. Yes, there is need for expanded cost-effective prevention programs, and maintenance of hospital and emergency resources; current government focused on hospitals and long-term care, not so much on mental health.

L. Kleinsmith asked if anyone supported/recommended the declaration of emergency. No hands raised.

Moving on.

Update on presentation by Ian de Jong, "post pandemic approach to homelessness." – Angie Angie expressed how impressed she was with presentation, recommended everyone read it, follow-up.

Judy asked how statistics were gathered in Port Colborne, that situations here not like other places.

J. Sinclair said numbers in Port are similar and comparable to statistics around the region.

Angie Desmarais noted city council needs to be aware of homelessness services, that there was lots of work being done elsewhere, but not here.

#### Update on quarterly homelessness services newsletter – A. Desmarais

Angie highly praised and recommended reading the Housing and Homelessness newsletter on Niagara Region website.

#### Update on Housing Homeless action plan – J. Sinclair

Jeff thanked Angie for the plug on the newsletter, just released.

Updated committee on Housing Master Plan. Affordable housing targets: 479 new units per year for the next 25 years. There is enough land.

Niagara Regional Housing manages co-operative, non-profit and profit some properties are rebuilds, for example on Hawkins Avenue in Niagara Falls, where eight units were converted into housing for 76.

There is a new incentive program to support housing through the Niagara Prosperity Initiative, with \$1million to kickstart the Port Cares project.

Judy asked how to determine “affordable” housing. J. Sinclair explained housing should cost 30 per cent of household income before tax; the lowest 60 per cent of income earners need affordable housing. Region insists 20 per cent of all new housing needs to be affordable. Always looking for partnerships in master plan. One site if Port Colborne will see 54 units.

Plans for seasonal shelters are underway. There are 15 clients to date. Homeless prevention programs prioritize youth, with more mobile services, with attention to smaller communities so all is not focused on largest cities Niagara Falls and St. Catharines. Keep in mind the difference between homeless prevention and poverty issues.

The Niagara Assertive Street Outreach is doing amazing work seven days a week, to 11pm. A simple call to 211 prompts the NASO to respond.

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/housing-homelessness/assertive-street-outreach.aspx>

Calls about “renovictions” are constant; need for more legal services, greater access and sooner.

### Update on Bill 164

Angie is concerned there is no overriding municipal bylaw to protect residents of “supportive living.” Hoped the committee could take some action.

Sherry Hansen said there are efforts to capture those places within bylaws regarding dwellings, but not retirement homes/residences which are regional or provincial.

Lori agreed that no action can be taken until we see what’s coming from Region or province, and perhaps tweak the recommendations to include private “supportive living.”

Angie suggested directing concerns for supportive living residents by going directly to provincial Ministry as local MPP is in opposition; governments in power not likely to pass legislation suggested by opposition.

### Community updates

None.

Lori requested all members complete the Niagara Region five-year poverty reduction strategy online survey.

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/projects/poverty-reduction-strategy/default.aspx>

Public information session to be held in Port Colborne Oct. 3; members encouraged to attend.

### Next meeting

Thursday, Nov. 3, virtual.

### Adjournment

The meeting adjourned 3:10 p.m.

(We learned 30 minutes into the meeting HRH Queen Elizabeth II died)