

## THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF NIAGARA

### COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

#### REPORT 10-2004

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services Committee held in Committee Room 4, Regional Municipal Building, Thorold, Ontario, on June 7, 2004, commencing at 3:10 p.m.

#### ATTENDANCE

Committee: Councillors Marshall, Vice-Chair presiding; Bailey; Baty; Casselman; Katzman; Mastroianni.

Staff: Ms. Reid, Commissioner of Community Services; Ms. Reilly, Legislative Assistant.

Staff

Part-time: Ms. Beamer, Coordinator, Dementia Resources; Mr. Hutchings, Director, Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities; Mr. Tarajos, Manager, Community Services; Mr. Ventresca, Director, Seniors Services.

Others: Councillor Timms.

#### PRESENTATION

76. Second Chance for Kids

Sheila Volchert, Spokesperson for "Second Chance for Kids", a self help group for grandparents raising grandchildren, attended to provide background information on the resolutions previously supported by Regional Council. The resolutions recognized the custodial care by extended family members as a legitimate intervention and supported the related funding for these care arrangements. Resolutions of April 8, 2002 and June 10, 2002 were previously approved by Committee and Council and former Regional Chair Debbie Zimmerman corresponded on June 14, 2002 with the Honourable Brenda Elliott, Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services regarding this matter. Ms. Volchert commented that these recommendations, also approved by Brant Region, are still outstanding. Committee received a copy of Report COM 24-2002, dated April 8, 2002 and asked Committee to support the recommendations contained therein.

Moved by Councillor Baty  
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That Report COM 24-2004, dated April 8, 2002 respecting Supports for Extended Families Caring for Children, be received and the following recommendations approved:

That the Province of Ontario amend the Child and Family Services Act to recognize custodial care by extended family members as a legitimate intervention and that the related funding to support these care arrangements be made available.

That the Temporary Care allowance rate pursuant to the Ontario Works Act be altered to reflect established rates for similar care by foster parents.

That the Regional Municipality of Niagara along with the Niagara Family and Children's Services train their respective staff on the program options available to extended family members wishing to care for children.

That the Region of Niagara along with Family and Children's Services advocate for the recommended changes with the Ministry of Community and Social Services as well as relevant Associations, such as the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.

That other Consolidated Municipal Services Managers be informed of this issue through circulation of this committee report.

That the Province of Ontario be encouraged to consider legislative change to permit open adoptions.

That the Regional Chair correspond with the Minister of Community and Social Services to advise the Minister of these recommendations and that this letter and background report be circulated to the local M.P.P.s for support.

Carried.

### **COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

77. **Supports to Extended Families Caring for Children**

Moved by Councillor Baty  
Seconded by Councillor Mastroianni

That Report COM 44-2004, June 7, 2004, respecting Supports to Extended Families Caring for Children, be received.

That the recommendations of COM 24-2002 (attached) continue to be endorsed specifically:

That the Province of Ontario amend the Child and Family Services Act to recognize custodial care by extended family members as a legitimate intervention and that the related funding to support these care arrangements be made available.

That the Temporary Care allowance rate pursuant to the Ontario Works Act be altered to reflect established rates for similar care by foster parents.

That the Province of Ontario be encouraged to consider legislative change to permit open adoptions.

That the Regional Chair correspond with the Minister of Community and Social Services and the Minister of Children and Youth Services to advise the Ministers of these recommendations and confirm Niagara Region's continuous support of these recommendations.

Carried.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

78. **Learning, Earning & Parenting (LEAP) Graduation 2004**

Members of Committee were invited to attend the Learning, Earning & Parenting (LEAP) Graduation for 2004. The graduation ceremonies will take place on Thursday, June 24, 2004 from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the St. Columba Anglican Church Hall, 7 St. Columba Drive, St. Catharines. A light luncheon will immediately follow the ceremony. R.S.V.P. to Gail Webster at 905-984-3792 by June 17, 2004.

79. **Grand Opening –Woodland Sunset**

Committee members were invited to attend the Grand Opening of the Woodlands of Sunset. The celebration will take place on Friday, June 11, 2004 at 2:00 p.m. at 920 Pelham Road at Foss Road in Welland. A reception is to follow. The facility is a 120 bed, two-storey, 83,000 square foot building located on a large wooded lot on the border of the communities of Welland and Pelham.

80. Seniors Services Quality Improvement Report  
First Quarter – January 1 – March 31, 2004

Moved by Councillor Casselman  
Seconded by Councillor Baty

That Report COM 42-2004, June 7, 2004, respecting Seniors Services Quality Improvement Report First Quarter – January 1 – March 31, 2004, be received for information.

Carried.

81. Seniors Cluster Services Mapping:  
A Tri-government Level Initiative

Mr. Ventresca, Director, Seniors Services, provided a brief overview of the Seniors Cluster Service Mapping Initiative. The project engaged participants from federal, provincial and municipal government levels in identifying current services and in visioning improvements in delivery of services to seniors. Ms. Beamer highlighted the outcomes of the Seniors Cluster Mapping Initiative.

Moved by Councillor Baty  
Seconded by Councillor Casselman

That Report COM 43-2004, June 7, 2004, respecting Seniors Cluster Services Mapping: A Tri-government Level Initiative, be received for information.

Carried.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

82. Homelessness Issue

Councillor Casselman asked for further information on the Homelessness Issue that Mayor Rigby and others are trying to solve. She commented that while a number of individuals have been transferred from Montebello Park to the Merriton Hall, a sustainable solution is required. Ms. Reid advised that the Region is working with the Mayor and other support groups to address this complex matter. Further information will be coming to Committee on this matter.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Committee adjourned at 4:15 p.m. to meet again on Monday, July 12, 2004 at 3:00 p.m. in Committee Room 4, Regional Headquarters Building.

George Marshall  
Vice-Chair

Gail Reilly  
Legislative Assistant

Pam Gilroy  
Acting Regional Clerk