



Meeting: Community Safety and Well-Being Integration Table
Date: May 17, 2023
Time: 9:00 A.M.
Location: Zoom

Attendees: Mayor Joe Preston, City of St. Thomas
Warden Ed Ketchabaw – County of Elgin, Chair
Emilian Siman, Elgin Workforce Development Network
Danielle Neilson, Housing and Homelessness Action Table
Sandra McCabe, Elgin Mental Health and Addiction Network
Chief Marc Roskamp – St. Thomas Police Service
Marcia Van Wylie, Elgin Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy Steering Committee
Sandra Datars Bere, City Manager – City of St. Thomas
Carolyn Krahn, Manager of Economic Development & Strategic Initiatives – County of Elgin

Minutes

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

2. Approval of Minutes from October 4, 2022

The minutes were approved as presented.

3. Delegation – Elgin-St. Thomas Community Foundation – Natasha Newby, Executive Director

N. Newby provided a comprehensive overview of the Elgin St. Thomas Community Foundation's mission and objectives. The foundation's primary goal is to effect positive change in the community by working with a giving spirit. They have established an endowment, and the income generated from their investments is distributed annually to charitable organizations across Elgin County. These grants provide essential capital to support programs aimed at improving the vitality of our community.

The Foundation would like to align their efforts with the community's priorities as outlined in the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. It was agreed that obtaining more information about these priorities and the ongoing work in these areas would enable the Foundation to better support the community and make more impactful funding decisions.

4. Roundtable – Action Tables

i. Education and Skills Development – Elgin Workforce Development Network, Emilian Siman

E. Siman provided an update on the Labour Force Survey findings, revealing a low unemployment rate of 4.8% in our region. However, there has been a decrease of 3% in the labor force participation rate, indicating a transition of some individuals into retirement and a reduction in the total number of full-time employed people in the region.

E. Siman also shared information on various employment incentives and activities taking place in the province and our region. These include:

- The addition of 700 new childcare spaces in St. Thomas/Elgin.
- The Province has announced a new program to facilitate the participation of Grade 11 students in apprenticeships for skilled trades, enabling them to enter the trades at an accelerated pace and gain valuable hands-on experience.
- The Province is also implementing a mandatory technological education credit for Grade 9/10 students, with a focus on guiding them towards careers in skilled trades and providing them with foundational knowledge in these areas.
- The Ontario Made Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit will allow eligible manufacturers in Ontario to receive up to \$2 million annually for specific purchases of manufacturing and processing property, thereby supporting the growth and innovation of the manufacturing sector.
- The minimum wage is scheduled to increase to \$16.55 in October 2023.
- St. Thomas was selected as the location for Volkswagen's new EV battery plant, which is expected to generate a significant number of job opportunities and bolster the local economy.
- Takumi Stamping received provincial funding amounting to over \$1.3 million, aiding in their plant expansion and acquisition of new operating equipment. This initiative will result in the creation of 65 new jobs.

ii. Housing Security – Housing and Homelessness Action Table, Danielle Neilson

D. Neilson provided an update on social housing, highlighting the following points:

- Currently, there are 1,100 individuals on the waitlist for social housing in the Elgin-St. Thomas area.
- Rent supplements are being used to bridge the gap; however, they are a limited resource. Social Services is making every effort to maximize the effectiveness of this funding.

It was noted that Social Services is collaborating with the province to expand the social housing portfolio.

D. Neilson also shared an update on homelessness:

- The by-name list remains stable, with 130 households currently on the list.
- Regular updates are made to the list, and approximately 18-20 households are housed each month. However, new instances of homelessness continue to occur simultaneously.
- Efforts are being made in partnership with Indwell to increase housing availability.
- Notably, the City is involved in several ongoing projects, including the Tiny Hope project.

Furthermore, it was mentioned that an announcement will be made soon regarding an increase in funding for housing.

In a significant achievement, Elgin-St. Thomas has attained functional zero for veterans' homelessness through the Built for Zero initiative. This milestone places our community among the two communities in Canada that have successfully reached this goal.

iii. Mental Health and Well-Being – Elgin Mental Health and Addiction Network, Sandra McCabe

S. McCabe provided an update on CMHA services in Elgin and St. Thomas:

- In-person support requests for CMHA services in the region remain high.
- CMHA offers a strong mix of in-person and virtual programming.
- They are currently engaged in public education initiatives focusing on mental health and addiction.

Regarding new programs:

- The Withdrawal Management program, located at 110 Centre Street, has been operational since February. It currently has 3 beds. Access to the program is by referral only, and it provides 24/7 support for a 3-5 day stay. There are plans to expand the program to 7 beds in phase 2, scheduled for October. A suitable location is being sought for this expansion.
- A new program called Crossing Bridges has been established for young people aged 12-24. It enables virtual connections with an Addictions Counsellor, offering information on substance use and behavioral addiction. Additionally, the program assists young individuals in accessing substance use and addiction services and supports.

CMHA's new strategic direction aims to create hubs or mini-hubs that cater to individuals' specific needs, meeting them where they are

The Elgin Mental Health and Addiction Network recently convened and is actively working on compiling a master list of services and identifying the chairs of each service to align committee work.

It was requested to share program information with the Integration Table for wider dissemination among our networks.

iv. Public Safety – Public Safety Action Table, Deputy Chief Marc Roskamp

M. Roskamp provided an update on the activities of St. Thomas Police Services. They have been actively working on establishing partnerships to ensure the safety and security of the community. The focus is on both creating a safe environment and ensuring that residents feel safe. These activities include advocating for bail reform.

An update was given on the Community Resource Unit, which currently consists of six special constables. Recruitment for additional staff is underway. Furthermore, a satellite office has been opened in the downtown area. This initiative aims to provide a sense of security to local merchants and allow police officers to focus on their core functions.

It was reported that the Mental Health Outreach and Support Team (MOST) now has three clinicians as of 2023, and there are discussions underway to add a fourth clinician. Emphasizing the importance of well-being within the police services, M. Roskamp mentioned that the province had announced funding in

May for Mobile Response Teams. They plan to reapply for funding to further enhance the program.

It was noted that Victim Services Elgin has relocated to the St. Thomas Police Services building in late February. This move aims to improve coordination and cooperation between the two organizations, facilitating better support for victims. Mayor Preston recommended that when applying for grants, the St. Thomas Police Services should seek letters of support from community partners. These letters can strengthen the applications and demonstrate community backing for the initiatives.

v. Substance Use and Addiction – Elgin Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy Steering Committee, Marcia Van Wylie

M. Van Wylie provided an update on the activities of the Elgin Community Drug and Alcohol Strategy Steering Committee. It has been one year since the community consultations took place. The Steering Committee expressed their desire to be a committee of action. However, members of the committee are involved in multiple roles and find themselves stretched thin. They engaged in a discussion regarding the best way to proceed.

Despite these challenges, it was acknowledged that the members, in their various capacities, are making progress in advancing the priorities related to treatment and harm reduction. The work in these areas is showing promising results, and positive developments are taking place.

To further address the issue, a planning day is scheduled for May 31st to assess the feasibility of continuing as a committee. This meeting will provide an opportunity for the members to deliberate on the best course of action moving forward.

Mayor Preston also highlighted the importance of the work being done in collaboration with Indwell and emphasized that addressing housing concerns contributes significantly to advancing the overall objectives of community safety and well-being, including substance use and addiction.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The Integration Table will meet again on September 13, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned 9:55 a.m.