

Delegation, Dr. Hillary Allen & Mr. Jeff Crowley, regarding 310 Division Street - An Opportunity for Community Integration

Synopsis of Durham Region and Town of Whitby Low-Barrier Emergency Shelter Agreement

A Precedent For Integration Of Low Barrier Emergency Shelters In Ontario

In 2023, Durham Region purchased 1635 Dundas Street, formerly Sunnycrest Nursing Home, for the purpose of converting it into a 45 bed low-barrier emergency shelter. Located in a densely populated residential area in Whitby, the proposed shelter raised great concern about the potential negative consequences to the immediate neighbours, and Whitby community.

After several months of debate on how best to integrate a low-barrier emergency shelter into the community, stakeholders including Whitby residents, Durham Region Council, and Whitby Town Council created a binding agreement regarding the operational expectations of the shelter.

The goal of the agreement is to serve as a commitment by all stakeholders to optimize their role in the shelter's successful operation and integration into the community, in response to numerous failed examples across Ontario.

What We Are Seeking

We are seeking a similar commitment from Cobourg council to pursue an agreement with Northumberland County and Transition House, with clear expectations on how 310 Division Street will operate within our community. It is suggested that the Durham Region and Whitby proactive approach to community shelter integration serve as the basis for the development of an agreement with Cobourg, Northumberland County and Transition House.

Highlights Of Durham Region and Municipality Of Whitby Agreement

- Developed a code of conduct for shelter occupants inside the facility, as well as, in the surrounding community, with consequences for not abiding by it.
- 24/7 onsite private security deemed necessary to operate the shelter.
- Hired mobile private security patrols in the neighbourhood of the shelter day and night for enhanced security for residents and shelter occupants.
- A Community Liaison Committee (CLC) consisting of neighbouring residents, business owners, Town of Whitby, Durham Region staff, police, shelter staff, and fire department officials was created to allow ongoing productive communication and to mitigate issues with stakeholders related to the shelter as they arise.
- Officials committed to enhanced garbage and drug paraphernalia removal at private residences, businesses, and public spaces within a 500 m-1000 m radius around the shelter property on a continual basis.
- Whitby residents who are in need of sheltering services are a priority to be sheltered. - The parties acknowledge that a low-barrier shelter space is not a "no barrier" shelter space. Living in community with other people means following the enforceable principles of a code of conduct, by-laws, and laws that apply.
- A direct shelter phone number provided to allow timely communication with staff regarding immediate issues as they arise in the neighbourhood.

- Dedicated onsite smoking area 9 metres away from entrances to mitigate loitering on sidewalk and neighbouring properties.
- Durham Region will construct a 10-foot fence around the property line of the shelter to provide privacy and security for neighbouring residents and shelter occupants.
- A commitment to capping emergency shelter beds at 45.
- Acceptable uses for the facility's additional space in the future included supportive housing, legal counselling, administrative space, and classroom space.
- All future space uses will be discussed with the CLC and the Town of Whitby.
- A commitment for the Dundas shelter to NOT house a safe injection site.

Related Links:

<https://yourvoice.durham.ca/helpaddresshomelessness>

Please see additional attachment with the legally-binding agreement between Durham Region and the Town of Whitby for full details.