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London
CANADA

November 12, 2023

Dear Colleagues,

Our work in understanding the complex issues in our city must be rooted in an understanding of the multitude of factors that are impacting our local shelters and those experiencing homelessness on our streets. Earlier this year, the Mayor, and myself, each had the opportunity to tour Mission Services and learn about the good work they are doing in our local community.

Like other cities across Ontario, our shelters in London are dealing with unprecedented challenges including an influx in Asylum claimants. These additional pressures on our shelters add to the beds' shortage they experience everyday. Asylum claimants have unique needs that the system must address. Through a partnership between Mission Services and London Cross Cultural Learning Centre (CCLC), they are working to address the needs. However, neither are really funded to do so. CCLC is funded to support Government Assisted Refugees and Mission services provides emergency shelter through the Men's Mission and Rotholme Women's and Family Shelter.

In order to meet the settlement needs of those staying in our shelters, they are seeking funding from the Province of Ontario, through the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. They are looking to hire staff to provide settlement counselling, permanent housing, and job search support. Mission services is offering their resource room to deliver these supports.

It is important that the City of London and all levels of Government recognize how the influx of asylum seekers is hindering emergency shelters from serving their intended purpose. This is because these shelters lack sufficient programs to help asylum seekers transition out of overnight temporary housing, and newcomers don't have the same access to programs.

Therefore, we are seeking your support for the following motion:

That staff be required to report back to Council on the impacts of Asylum claimants on our local shelter system. Based on the findings from the staff report, that staff apply if appropriate for Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP) funding if necessary, to address the impacts on local shelters.

That the Mayor BE REQUESTED to a) undertake immediate advocacy efforts with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Big City Mayors Caucus, and the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to advocate for resources for cities to address the influx in asylum claimants.

That the Mayor BE REQUESTED to b) write a letter on behalf of Council in support of the request by CCLC in collaboration with Mission Services for funding from the Province of Ontario to support the hiring of staff to provide additional supports for Asylum claimants.

Colleagues, we appreciate your willingness to address the pressing issues that are putting additional pressures on shelter beds in our community. We hope that you will support this motion.

Sincerely,

Councillor Corrine Rahman

Mayor Josh Morgan