

**CityPlace Residents' Association Stakeholders Meeting on Harm Reduction Services
Harbour View Estates SuperClub, 11 Mariner Terrace
November 5, 2018, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm**

Attending: Gary Pieters (CityPlace Residents Association), Nicole Sparks (CityPlace Residents Association), Carolyn Johnson (York Quay Neighbourhood Association), Susan Shepherd (Toronto Public Health), Lorraine Barnaby (Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre), Janice Solomon (Toronto Entertainment District Business Improvement Area), Karolina Lesniowska (Property Manager - 35 Mariner Terrace), Chris Glover (Member of Provincial Parliament/MPP - Spadina-Fort York), Aleksandar Bundev (Shared Facilities Manager - Harbour View Estates Shared Facilities).

Regrets: Ryan Myhal and Rhonda Farrell (Fort York Neighbourhood Association); Matt Johnson (Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre).

MINUTES

Introduction and Welcome

Gary Pieters, president of the CityPlace Residents' Association (CPRA) welcome everyone and invited participants in attendance to introduce themselves, then made some short remarks (excerpted below).

CPRA collaborates with residents, the BIA, and other community partners to organize events to create a sense of community. The CPRA also bring forth priority issues and concerns to our elected officials. CityPlace is a high density vertical neighbourhood with 33 Multi-Residential Buildings (3 TCHC Affordable Housing); Canoe Landing Campus Facility (Under Construction - 2 Schools with 500+ student capacity each, Community Centre, Daycare with preliminary opening date of September 2019); 18-20,000 residents; Public Library; Canoe Landing Park and North and South Linear Parks; and a healthy mix of retail businesses and day/nightlife venues. The CityPlace Residents' Association along with various community partners organize a spring community clean up to coincide with Earth Day, and during the clean up, needles were found in both the North and South Linear Parks. Recently a child saw a needle while waiting for a school bus at Dan Leckie Way and Fort York Blvd. The rising vulnerable population of unsheltered homeless people around the CityPlace area can be found in various public spaces and private property including under the gardiner, sidewalks, stairwells, underground garages, squares,

parks, coffee shops, the public library, outside commercial establishments such as Sobeys, and bus shelters.

Presentation - Lorraine Barnaby - Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre

- Lorraine Barnaby provided written information on their services including her presentation “Harm Reduction & Supervised Consumption Services”; a 1-pager on Supervised Consumption Services; Frequently Asked Questions; and a leaflet on the supervised consumption service at 168 Bathurst Street.
- Lorraine explained that the Parkdale Queen West Community Centre is operational at Queen and Bathurst; Dufferin and Queen St W.; and Roncesvalles.
- The Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre is one of 70 funded CHCs in Ontario and provides activities for various demographics facing barriers to health care (Low Income, Mental Health, Newcomer Immigrants).
- The Centre provides youth drop-ins, point of care testing, clothing distribution and harm reduction supplies distribution.
- The supervised consumption site includes satellite workers providing outreach services in vulnerable unsheltered areas of high use including their original location Under the Gardiner, parks, and alleyways.
- Workers are trained in safe handling of needles and sharpies, and are provided with puncture proof gloves. The community outreach workers are available 6-days weekly and volunteers/peer workers who have lived experience are situated in vulnerable unsheltered areas like parks and alleyways.
- There is an opioid crisis and overdose epidemic in Canada. 4,000 Canadians died of overdose in 2017 and it is among the lead cause of death among young people.
- Toronto has 8 supervised consumption sites (SCS) that deal with the opioid crisis, improve safety of injection drug users and link them to services. Supervised consumption sites are considered a public health response that saves lives and reduce unsafe injection needle use and disposal in public spaces, parks and alleyways.
- Looking at the data, the Parkdale Queen West SCS served 3,000 clients (some with complex health issues, social isolation, precariously housed, and others with traumas) among addiction population and homeless with substance use disorders - connecting them to the programs and services of the SCS and community health Centre.
- The Parkdale Queen West CHC distributed 300,000 syringes; distributed overdose prevention and Naloxone Kits; distributed Works kits and biohazard containers; provided training on safe needle disposal, conducted community clean up of areas where there is a spike in unsafe needle disposal; collect returns of used needles and paraphernalia.
- St. Felix works with local businesses and provides training on needle handling to coffee shop staff, and what to do if needles are either found or discarded unsafely in their establishments. St Felix also has a community liaison committee.

- The Parkdale Queen West CHC committed to community outreach and opportunities to connect with local resident associations as demonstrated commitment to developing and maintaining positive and effective relationships with our community.
- Parkdale Queen West CHC encourages residents to call if they see discarded needles. Residents can also contact 311 or 311@toronto.ca.

Discussion

- Needle drop boxes in CityPlace as a short-term solution to unsafe needle disposal in the Spadina underpass, North and South Linear Park, and Under the Gardiner. CPRA to send map with suggested locations. Key issue is that the drop boxes have to be connected to a local area sponsor responsible for monitoring disposal and maintenance of the drop boxes. Toronto Public Health to look at options.
- Availability of Supervised Consumption Sites and Overdose Response Sites. 5 Overdose response sites in Toronto - in areas where there is a spike in overdose. Funded by the province of Ontario - short-term.
- Supervised Consumption Sites exempted by the Federal government. New provincial funding stream for 21 supervised consumption sites across the province of Ontario.
- Public education - Is there any programs and available public education initiatives to educate children and young people on what to do if discarded needles are found, drug education and the opioid crisis? Toronto Public Health has Public Health nurses. Expert speakers target schools with identified needs when invited. Toronto Public Health has posters that are targeted at kids.
- One Parent expressed concern about children and youth exposure to parents experiencing addiction, substance use disorders, or opioid drug use by adults at home or in the community. The Children Aid Society, Catholic Children Aid Society, Native Child and Family Centre have positive parenting programs that work with families to connect children and families to resources and services. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) also have staff who may be able to address issue. In some cases addiction comes from doctors prescribing strong opioids.
- Decriminalization. The Toronto Board of Health motion to the city supports decriminalization and asked the federal government to decriminalize drugs to allow for safe drug supply. Portugal as example of decrease use when decriminalized
- Rise in homeless population. Most beds at shelter and respite centres at 90-100 percent capacity. Crisis in shelter housing and supports as more people unable to find beds. 8,000 people on the streets of Toronto nightly sleeping rough.
- Rogers Centre - Poorly lit location areas near the underpass between Rogers Centre and the Chinese Railway Workers Monument becoming a hazardous environment as a growing number of injection drug users and homeless are congregating, engaging in injection drug use and unsafely discarding needles. Toronto Entertainment District Business Improvement Area - Contact with Toronto Police 52 Division to monitor and

respond to policing and community/public safety issues from areas around the Toronto Entertainment District including Rogers Centre.

- Property Managers - Dilemma regarding obligation to protect safety and quality of life of their own staff and residents who are approached by aggressive panhandlers near their buildings (one staff member chased by a panhandler and changed her route to work to avoid re-experiencing this situation), growing number of tents under the gardiner (both East and West of Spadina at Lakeshore Blvd), homeless sleeping in stairwells and parking garages, locker break-ins, discarded needles in public realm areas and garbage bins, aggressive behaviours towards staff and residents by injection drug users who are impaired. Security intervene with little training in de-escalation, 911 sometimes called for assistance. Suggestion that security be provided training in de-escalation as well as mental health, and mental health first aid.
- Respite Centre - In September 2018, a new 24-Hour respite centre (150 beds capacity) opened at 545 Lakeshore Blvd W. and have added a growing number of vulnerable people to the neighbourhood. Various communications with city as well as residents involvement in fostering community safety, belonging and inclusion aim to build trust and community well being for everyone. CPRA president to visit the respite centre for a walk though on November 7. The respite centre is not a supervised injection site.
- Parents not training kids on how to respond appropriately to the vulnerable population of unsheltered homeless people in and around the CityPlace neighbourhood. Need for some type of street proofing/street smarts workshop to ensure safety for everyone.

Next Steps

- Explore the possibility of a safety awareness session that provides guidance to children and youth or any interested community member on street proofing and safety awareness including:

Awareness of surroundings

Not to go or follow someone into poorly lit or secluded areas alone

Not to poke at nor wake up homeless people sleeping (parent raised concern about children teasing, tormenting and poking at homeless people in the area)

Who to call for community clean up?

What to do if discarded needles are found?

- Follow up with Toronto Public Health on Drop Boxes for CityPlace
- Engage the Parks Supervisor of Canoe Landing Park on Community clean up efforts

- Community information session to answer questions and respond to issues and concerns from residents
- Community safety walk focussed on public injection drug use hot spots in CityPlace in coordination/collaboration with the Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre
- Meeting with City Councillor Joe Cressy on Friday, November 9th to look at the issue, interventions and solutions
- Engage the respite centre in any ongoing efforts
- Affordable Housing Panel on November 25. Details forthcoming

Appendix A - Toronto Public Health Resources

Needle Safety:

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/harm-reduction-supplies-and-locations/needle-safety/>

Locations of needle drop boxes:

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/harm-reduction-supplies-and-locations/needle-drop-box-locations-in-toronto/>

STOP

IF YOU FIND A NEEDLE



**Don't touch it.
Tell an adult.**

416.338.7600 toronto.ca/health

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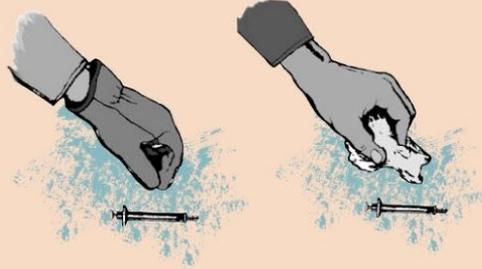


Be careful with needles!

If you pick up needles – handle them with care.

Be careful.

- ◆ Protect your hands! Wear heavy gloves or use a thick cloth or tongs to pick up a needle.
- ◆ Keep needles away from children and pets.



Be safe.

- ◆ Hold the needle tip away from you.
- ◆ Be careful not to prick yourself with the needle.
- ◆ Put the needle in a plastic container with a lid, or a can. Cover the top of the can with a puncture proof lid or seal.



Be aware.

The proper disposal of needles is important.

- ◆ Do not put the container or can in the garbage or the recycling bin.
- ◆ Call 311 to find out where to take the container or can.



For more information call 311

Call **311**

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