

**Municipality Of Chatham-Kent**  
**Community Human Services**  
**Employment and Social Services**  
**Information Report**

**To:** Mayor and Members of Council  
**From:** Polly Smith, Director, Employment and Social Services  
**Date:** September 1, 2020  
**Subject:** Shelter Services Location Change

---

This report is for the information of Council.

**Background**

In July of this year, Council tasked Employment and Social Services to review a variety of shelter building options for the longer term provision of emergency housing services. At the August 10<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, the negotiation of a two (2) year lease agreement for 280 Merritt Avenue, Chatham was approved by Council, with terms as described in the report and provision of a future report on Indwell, a charity that develops supportive housing. This report is available at the following web link: <https://www.chatham-kent.ca/Council/Meetings/2020/Documents/August/Aug-10-15c.pdf>

The lease for 280 Merritt Avenue in Chatham is no longer being pursued for the emergency homeless shelter. Despite the sincere efforts of the owners and administration, an agreement within the period needed to move was not reached. The John D. Bradley Convention Centre has been experiencing demand for rental space and can no longer accommodate the shelter. Motels came forward identifying their renewed capacity to serve individuals and families who find themselves homeless and are willingly participating in the sheltering plans. This was not the case at the start of the pandemic and the temporary shelter opened in response to a lack of availability of hotel rooms and the need for people to have a safe place to socially distance.

Employment and Social Services needs expanded emergency accommodations and services for the foreseeable future in order to best serve the most vulnerable members of the community. Funding for these services is provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing through the Social Services Relief Fund.

Since opening the shelter on April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020:

- more than 160 unique individuals and families received services
- 106 individuals and families engaged with staff to work on securing permanent housing
- 77 individuals and families were housed
- 25 chronically homeless individuals were found permanent housing

### **Comments**

Employment and Social Services will move out of the John D. Bradley Centre on or around September 8<sup>th</sup> and use motel rooms within Chatham-Kent, primarily in Chatham, to meet emergency accommodation needs.

Community partners have been notified, and outreach efforts to advise people who are experiencing homelessness are under way. People in danger of or who are experiencing homelessness should call the Employment and Social Services main office at 435 Grand Avenue West, Chatham, or attend the office in person between 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. After hours, and on weekends and holidays, individuals in need of emergency housing should call the Homeless Response Line (HRL) at 519-354-6628.

In the coming months, Employment and Social Services and municipal and community partners will work on the goals of the Municipality's Housing and Homelessness Community Plan, to increase capacity in supportive and affordable housing. Further, a report and presentation on Indwell's supportive housing development opportunities will be presented to Council before year end.

While the problems of homelessness are massive, pervasive, and occurring across the country, there is reason for hope. Nearly every day in Chatham-Kent someone who was homeless is housed. If this municipality is interested in seeing all community members housed they need to support efforts to this end.

### **Consultation**

There was no consultation required in producing this information report.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications to this report. All funding related to these activities is provincial.

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

---

Polly Smith, Director  
Employment and Social Services

---

April Rietdyk, RN, BScN, MHS, PHD PUBH  
General Manager  
Community Human Services

Attachment: None

P:\RTC\Community Human Services\2020\ESS\RTC Shelter Location Plan Change  
0920.Docx