



November 10, 2016

Social Development Centre

— WATERLOO REGION —

Michael May
Deputy CAO, Community Services Department
City of Kitchener

Greetings Michael:

Re: Meeting on Friday November 4, 2016

Thanks to both yourself and Mark Hildebrand for taking the time to meet with Carol Motuz and I to discuss the Social Development Centre 2017 Tier 1 grant application.

We appreciate the investment the City of Kitchener has made in our work over many years. This investment has enabled our organization to contribute much to the well-being of Kitchener residents and to the City. As presented in our 2017 proposal, we have provided consistent social development leadership, contributing to social policy and helping to build the community social infrastructure in support of Kitchener residents.

As discussed, we ask that the City investment return to core funding in support of our full social development mandate. Our mandate is to understand the social needs and assets of the community and work with others to respond to these needs and plan for the future. At any point in time, the particular issues or population groups we emphasize varies in response to community needs and partner readiness.

Our role is distinct from others, such as direct service agencies that assist individual clients in a particular area of need or population group or foundations that raise funds to support these direct service providers or government bodies such as the City. We appreciate that the role of a community social planning organization is less easy to define than a direct service. However, the value of a community based social planning organization such as ours is that we are independent and can keep people's needs in focus. Anchoring our work in good research, data management and inclusive community development practices enables us to be informed, objective and able to respond to a range of issues. No one else has this mandate and is accountable to the local community.

We are pleased that staff will be recommending continued support for work we do as a partner with the City and John MacDonald Architect Inc. for the Festival of Neighbourhoods. We want to be clear that this funding is distinct from the coordination work we do on behalf of the Festival partnership.

As the *coordinator*, we maintain the Festival of Neighbourhoods program by managing the annual work plan, administration and communication. As a *partner*, we:

(2)

- Contribute to the Festival's leadership and planning;
- Provide overhead to support Festival staff and operations;
- Apply for and manage the project grants;
- Recruit and supervise staff, student placements and volunteers;
- Maintain the interactive on-line Festival of Neighbourhoods map;
- Develop and implement neighbourhood engagement blitzes;
- Explore ways to approach evaluation through pilots and external assessment; and
- Sponsor the annual Neighbourhood Connections award process.

In our discussion you framed our request for addition funding in 2017 to include:

- Education to provide information directly in neighbourhoods where people, particularly renters, live;
- Capacity building for tenant groups and
- Assessing neighbourhoods using the Decent Lives/Strong Neighbourhoods assessment framework we are developing.

The work we would be doing in a scaled up Neighbourhood Connections program would include these activities and more. Please refer to our application for more details. As we discussed, the scope of activities for 2017 will depend on the level of funding received.

We understand from what you said, staff will not be recommending reinstatement of funding levels at the risk of having to increase taxes to cover the additional \$90,000 we have requested. We can appreciate there are always budget considerations in any request. Thus we ask that funding be maintained at the current level and that staff work with us to determine how we can achieve increased funding in 2017 and beyond.

Our meeting did not give us enough time to discuss the Decent Lives and Strong Neighbourhoods work we have been doing. We have made much progress in the past year since we last met with you to discuss this part of our work. We are happy to meet again to discuss this directly.

Our 2017 proposal supports City's priorities and what we know is emerging through the Neighbourhood Strategy. We have supported the City's process as the Neighbourhood Strategy has been developed. We trust you will recognize the work we do directly to strengthen all Kitchener neighbourhoods and as a partner in the Festival of Neighbourhoods.

Would you kindly send us what you are including in the staff report to Council so we can be clear on the points you will be presenting. Our interest is in continuing to support the Kitchener community and having staff and Council value our organization and what we contribute as a 'trusted partner', as defined in your community engagement continuum.

With Best Regards,



Trudy Beaulne,
Executive Director

cc: Mark Hildebrand
Carol Motuz, Vice President, Social Development Centre
Devon Sivill, President, Social Development Centre