**August 14, 2023: Email Update to CLC Participants and Next Steps**

Good afternoon!  We are reaching out today because you expressed interest in participating as a community member and stakeholder to better understand concerns and identify possible solutions to the collective implications of the increasing number of people experiencing homelessness and the toxic drug supply that Sandy Hill is facing at this time.

To date, we have spoken with over 50 people representing 5 different stakeholder groups in Sandy Hill and have worked diligently to ensure that there is fair outreach across the community in all our efforts. We discussed 3 different ways to be involved and asked you to let us know which of these options would work best for your: as a member of the ***Sandy Hill Community Liaison Committee (SHCLC),***as part of the Communications Network (CN), or a member of the Volunteer Force (VF).

As we (City of Ottawa, Action Sandy Hill Community Association and Sandy Hill Community Health Centre) coordinated the creation of this *Community Liaison Committee (CLC)*, our ultimate purpose has been to ensure broad and inclusive representation from business owners, service providers, housed residents, residents experiencing homelessness and/or addictions, and others who do not fall into the stated categories (i.e., Library). We engaged Community Mediation Ottawa, part of Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution, to guide us in this process to ensure that we found a way to be as inclusive and representative as possible. At their recommendation, the CLC will have approximately 25 members: big enough to ensure the equitable representation of the different groups mentioned above, but also well positioned to be operative, nimble and efficient.

As for the*Communication Network (CN)*, we will all be automatic members, and others who have or will come forward as interested parties will be included. The*Communication Network* will serve as an even greater opportunity to gather community ideas, preferences, and guidance and to ensure even broader awareness and support. The*Volunteer Force*will be key to bringing to life the ideas of the *CLC* and engaging the wider Sandy Hill community in events and outreach activities.

Community Mediation Ottawa (*Community Mediation Ottawa - Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution* (CICR) (cicr-icrc.ca)) will continue working with the *Community Liaison Committee* to facilitate our first meetings and guide us through developing the formal structure. More specifically, we will get to work with Lorna Lemay, who is an expert in the field of launching, developing and establishing effective community committees. She will bring her many years of experience in fostering dialogue, building trust, and giving a voice to all. She will be joined by another Practitioner, Norm Desjardins, who brings his volunteer support and expertise in conflict resolution to the table towards our success.

Over the next week, we will be contacting everyone we have spoken with by email to discuss logistics, including meeting dates and times, confirmed committee representation, an official email list for the *Communications Network,*and other such items. We want to express our deepest appreciation for your willingness to be part of this innovative, collaborative and much needed strategy that we believe can make a difference in the safety and wellness of our community.

**Note 1:** As many of you know, there have been multiple emails sent to large lists of people who may or may not want to be receiving this information. We don’t know who everyone is and are concerned about spamming parties who may not be interested. As such, the distribution list for this update is limited to those who have participated in discussions with Calla and Wendy and those who have indicated they would like to be kept in the loop. However, there is no intention to exclude, so if we have missed anyone, please forward this along!

 **Note 2:**There has been an impressive level of engagement from housed residents. We are all so grateful for all of you and your desire to participate in supporting this community. As mentioned in the email, the total number of committee members is around 25 and each group needs to be represented in equal measure. That means that not every resident who wants to will be able to sit as a committee member, but that does not mean we don’t need you too!! We need you to participate actively in the *Communications Network*and *Volunteer Force.*And, as residents of Sandy Hill, there is a resident-specific committee that has been set up in a more traditional way by Action Sandy Hill. Calla is the Chair of the ASH Community and Social Services Committee. The work will be different from that of the liaison committee, but definitely related, and you can join the ASH committee whether you are on the liaison committee, or not. The approved terms of reference are available here: [Community and Social Services Terms of Reference – ASH-ACS](https://ash-acs.ca/community-and-social-services-terms-of-referece/). If you would like more information about the ASH CSS committee, please contact cssc@ash-acs.ca.