

For Immediate Release

Discussion Forum for Not-For-Profit Provincial Trend Sees Demand for More Services

Cambridge, Ontario. December 7, 2009... Moments ago, Cambridge Mayor and Council held a special session to discuss the needs of the social profit sector in Cambridge. The meeting focused on the state of the local not-for-profit agencies and changes that have occurred in service demands.

Mayor Doug Craig said the annual meeting laid the groundwork for dialog and discussion and provided a forum for greater amplification of concerns. "We are trying to find a formula that works in terms of sparking dialog to help these important groups see results and outcomes."

Around the Council chambers were representatives from: Cambridge Shelter Corporation, YMCA/YWCA, Argus Residence for Young People, Langs Farm Village Association, Cambridge Self Help Foodbank, Family Counselling Centre of Cambridge and North Dumfries, Fiddlesticks Neighbourhood Association, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Waterloo Regional Police Services, Faith Community, Seniors Community, Kinbridge Community Association, Salvation Army, and the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries.

Many of these community members sit on Cambridge's Human Services Advisory Committee (HSAC). Councillor Linda Whetham is Council's representative for HSAC and said there's an exceptional level of cooperation among the not-for-profit agencies here so as not to duplicate services. One of the concerns expressed by the group is that overhead is going up and funding is going down. "According to the recent survey presented tonight in which 38 local agencies participated, 60 percent reported some level of funding reduction," she adds.

Bill Davidson from Langs Farm Village Association commended Council for recognizing the continued needs of the not-for-profit sector in Cambridge. He says the economy and tough budget year for our local hospital is one example that is greatly impacting social services agencies. "Hospitals are under increasing pressures and are divesting themselves of ambulatory programs leaving a significant gap of services that just are not there for people who can't afford them."

One of the key messages that the group wanted to put forth is to dispel the myth that not-for-profit agencies 'continue to get monthly cheques from different levels of the government' and don't need community support. They said the lion's share of their resources comes directly from fundraising. The

group also presented some suggestions to the City in terms of additional support considerations such as the provision of in-kind meeting spaces, human resources and technology support services for local agencies.

Council has directed staff to review the recommendations put forward tonight and report back at a future meeting. It was also agreed that the City will undertake to coordinate a meeting with all levels of government, The Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, and the social profit sector organizations to build on the discussions that took place at City Hall tonight.

Last year, the City funded in the area of \$1 million to help support these community initiatives through Grants to Groups, Neighbourhood Associations, and the Diversity Program at the YMCA, to name a few. City staff has maintained those line items with modest inflationary increases to bring forward to the 2010 Budget Task Force for consideration.

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The City of Cambridge is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. It is strategically located astride highway 401 in Southwestern Ontario, part of Canada's Technology Triangle. In 2009, the population reached over 126,000 people. With a multicultural mix and a strong foundation of support services, Cambridge has a diverse economic base with leading industries in manufacturing, automotive, high technology, pharmaceutical, business and financial services and hospitality/retail. The Corporation of the City of Cambridge is an employer with a work environment that offers the opportunity to provide service to the community through creativity and innovation, and with opportunities for career growth and advancement.

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