

**Task Force for the Elimination of Poverty Meeting**  
**Wednesday, January 21, 2015 4:00 - 6:30 PM**  
**Heritage Room, City Hall**

**Present:**

Members: Mayor Don Iveson (Co-Chair), Bishop Jane Alexander (Co-Chair), Councillor Ben Henderson, Justin Archer, Jeffrey Bisanz, Mark Holmgren, Zahra Somani, Sarah Eadie, Sandra Huculak, Maria Mayan, Janice Melnychuk, Anne Smith, Yvonne Chiu, Tiffany Linke-Boyko, Carman McNary, Eugene Ip, Brenda St. Germain, Fiona Cavanaugh

Guests: Catrin Owen, Tanis Liebrecht, Corinne Saad, Katie Soles, Sue Heuman

COE Staff: Lyall Brenneis, Kate Gunn, Patricia Waismann, Ward Antoniuk, Lucenia Ortiz, Bin Lau, Judy Downey

Regrets: Dr. Joseph Doucet, Kate Chisholm, Daniel McKennit, Dr. Louis Francescutti, Minister Heather Klimchuk, Councillor Amarjeet Sohi

**Minutes**

Discussion	Actions
<b>1. Call to Order</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bishop Jane Alexander called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.</li> <li>■ Katie Soles and Sue Heuman welcomed to the group, as consultants engaged to facilitate discussions and write the draft of the End Poverty Report.</li> <li>■ Bishop Jane welcome Martin Garber-Conrad as a guest to the Task Force meeting.</li> <li>■ The November 25, 2014 minutes and were approved.</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Co-Chair's Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bishop Jane and the Mayor spoke to the FCSS agencies' annual meeting last January 13; these not-for-profit agencies are interested to be a part of the community engagement piece in the coming months.</li> <li>■ The Edmonton Social Planning Council launched the report, "A Profile of Poverty in Edmonton" on January 14; the report was very well-received by members of the community with full media coverage noting that the report came out with surprising data that many people did not know about. For example, "living in poverty are working fulltime".</li> <li>■ Bishop Jane engagements with Queen's University, future engagement at the University of Alberta, and the Edmonton District Council of Churches. These have led to discussions on ethics across communities to food and housing programs.</li> <li>■ United Way and the City of Edmonton are working with the University of Alberta to examine data from Families First Edmonton to create</li> </ul>	

<p>data benchmarks which will have important implications in measure success of low income families moving out of poverty.</p>	
<p><b>3. Updates from Working Groups, Round Tables and Committees</b></p> <p><u>Communications and Engagement Committee</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ February 23: A morning function arranged through the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce to begin preliminary conversations with the business community regarding the work that has been and is being done.</li> <li>■ Youth engagement initiatives at John Humphrey Center and Strathcona High School.</li> <li>■ Members of advisory group brainstorming how to roll out the broad consultation in April.</li> <li>■ Web design group hired to construct an interactive community website by the end of February.</li> <li>■ Poverty Attitudes Survey will start at the end of February using telephone and online survey. Question was raised about the participation of people living with poverty who have no access to phone or computers.</li> <li>■ Social media: 427 Twitter followers, 89 Facebook friends.</li> </ul> <p><u>Working Groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>Early Childhood Development</i> - Came up with 9 recommendations at the end of November, and have completed over 30 engagements since then.</li> <li>■ <i>Education</i> - identified key areas to explore such as supports for children, schools as community hubs. Challenged by a lack of time to develop research, recommendations will be supported primarily from the experience and knowledge of the group to best guide the task force.</li> <li>■ <i>Community Wellbeing</i> - A retreat on January 24 to create a consensus around the definition of social inclusion. Key themes to focus recommendations are access, awareness, inspiring relationship, racism and changing the conversation around poverty.</li> <li>■ <i>Housing and Transportation</i> - currently working on recommendations on housing. Raised concerns about lack of clarity for the next steps for working groups: how all the information will be compiled into a final report and the need to acknowledge that is not understood by those who were involved in its conception.</li> <li>■ <i>Economic Security</i> - identified areas for action and divided themselves into 3 subgroups to meet outside working group meetings to develop key ideas, with the intention of coming together in February to synthesize ideas and concepts.</li> <li>■ <i>Justice and Democratic Participation</i> - seeking an extended deadline to the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March to present their recommendations to the task force. They have a process mapped out focusing on identifying barriers to democratic participation and solutions to them. Engagement taking place at the community level.</li> </ul>	<p>Communications Committee to identify strategies for participation of people living in poverty as well as track demographics of survey participants.</p>

## Round Tables

### *Information and Research Round Table*

- Responding to research requests from various working groups that include literature review for the Aboriginal Round Table, and looking at information regarding living wages at a municipal level.
- Working with a Senior Information Architect with the City of Edmonton to create an analytic center for poverty work and drafting a framework for data collection and analysis.
- Updating poverty measures.

### *Aboriginal Round Table*

- Have requested that data from other working groups' engagements with aboriginal persons be shared with them, to allow the group to stress the cultural differences and understandings.
- Community engagement on January 26: session open to aboriginals only, elders will be in attendance. Providing a safe place for people to share their stories.
- Internal deadline of February 17 to compile all thoughts, experiences, and engagements into recommendations.

### *Discussion on Recommendations*

When the Task Force receives the recommendations from the working groups, these are ideas to consider:

- Compare or review recommendations with existing initiatives or plans in the City.
- There is a need to formalize the filters and lens through which the recommendations will be seen.
- A discussion is needed in terms of convergence, how the work will be done, and clarifying how various lenses (aboriginals, newcomers, low income workers, children and youth, persons with disabilities) will be applied.

## **4. Discussion on the Guiding Principles**

The sub-group assigned to work on the revisions of the Guiding Principles began their presentation with Brenda St. Germain's personal story and that of Aboriginal people's experiences of poverty. Anne Smith presented a context and background for the development of the guiding principles noting that the guiding principles have to be centered and focused around people. It is essential that Task Force members ground themselves in stories from the community, as many do not live or understand what living in poverty really means.

The previous guiding principles have now evolved into a set of Statements of Belief with guiding questions. These statements of belief reflect the following:

- Economic urgency needs to be balanced with human needs. Poverty is

not just about income, and has to include a sense of belonging and inclusion.

- Ending poverty will not require changing people, but systems and attitudes in the broader community.
- Short and long term approaches as well as holistic approaches will be necessary to this plan to succeed.
- A recognition that the EPE is an opportunity for this Task Force report to exist as a living document that changes over time.

### Discussion

Points raised in the discussion were:

- When looking at root causes, need to be careful with language. Addressing and alleviating the immediate effects of poverty should not be considered a bad thing. Need to ensure that basic needs are met is fundamental to eliminating poverty.
- Poverty needs to be dealt with at a system level, but also at a human level. That cannot be lost.
- Statements of belief should reflect the inclusive approach: all voices need to be heard, those in poverty and those who are not, as everyone will be a part of the solution. This has to be an opportunity for all Edmontonians to be engaged.
- Statements of belief to act as an external document for the public, while guiding principles are a tool for the Task Force. Guiding principles are to anchor the recommendations of the working groups into the beliefs of the task force.
- Looking at systemic change, advocacy needs to be more strongly considered as the provincial government manages many of the systems.
- There is a fine balance between creating a great report that espouses great ideas, and developing something that is practical and able to be implemented in a meaningful way. The task force will eventually want to bring something forward to council that will be able to be approved.
- Working poor to be included in lenses, and seniors to be removed.
- There needs to be an addition of a 7<sup>th</sup> question looking at evidence and evaluation.

The statements of beliefs were adopted and will be available to the public. The guiding principles with revisions will be for internal use by the Task Force and the Working Groups in developing their recommendations.

## **5. Guest Presentation: Martin Garber-Conrad, CEO Edmonton Community Foundation (ECF)**

### Presentation Overview

- ECF has a long history working to eliminate poverty and homelessness, supporting mostly organizations with a mandate to end poverty in their mission statements.
- Over a third of their granting resources each year directly affecting poverty driven initiatives (\$6.4 M in 2014); annual granting program ranged from \$10-12 M but has increase to \$19 M with expected growth over time
- Donors are interested and attracted to poverty to which the Task

- Force has built new momentum waiting to be capitalized on.
- ECF suggesting long-term (3-5 years) targeted grant program to align with Task Force recommendations directed at poverty elimination.
- ECF able to work with partners in the community to leverage their commitments, which can double or triple investments.
- ECF will move forward in this direction whether with or without the City, however would prefer to work with Task Force
- Potential areas where resources can be directed are:
  - Social finance efforts can work with or separate to granting programs, already \$15 M in social venture start-ups. Social financing to bridge a gap and leverage commercial financing.
  - Affordable housing a proven and effective way to eliminate poverty.
  - Projects targeted perhaps not at those deepest in poverty, but the working poor. Moving them out of social housing would open new positions for those more in need.
  - Community Development Corporation, something the ECF could create or work with for the city.
- If there were an initiative requiring significant investment from the ECF, upwards to \$30 M, the ECF would like to sit at the table and work with the City, and would be more willing to work with the City if they themselves would invest significantly. Investment could come through development of land.

#### Discussion

- The province and the city both support projects that leverage their contributions.
- The deeper the subsidy, the more needs to be given upfront. Contributing land can make projects work at 25% below market costs.
- If more families could afford slightly subsidized housing, that would free up space in other social needs systems.
- There are many ways to make this potential partnership work, and the ECF is serious about their commitment towards eliminating poverty in the city of Edmonton. It would be most beneficial if the partnership rolled out in a way that would maintain and build momentum for the cause. The earlier a plan is put in place, the earlier a project can come to life.
- City Council will have to make a difficult decision about who will benefit from potential projects as discussed, as those living in extreme poverty will not be able to attain any benefit from slightly subsidized housing.
- It was further recognized that there is no one right tool to solve all poverty, but that a partnership of this extent could benefit many of those dealing with life in poverty in a realistic way.
- Capital investing is not within the City mandate, but the municipal government may be able to work with the province to best direct capital funding.
- A capital housing project is nearing its end, with 3500 homes on City land. The beginning of a conversation with the province.

Create a subgroup to look at how to approach financing the End Poverty Edmonton Plan in a coordinated way that leverages all the resources.

<p><b>6. Wrap Up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Work is still needed in the areas on stewardship, advocacy, implementation, high level measurements of progress, and more.</li> <li>■ Partnership as a key message, we are all in this together. Martin's presentation brings hope to that perspective.</li> <li>■ A small group to look at finance and implementation, leveraging money, unpacking and aligning recommendations. Something that will be done near the end of February.</li> <li>■ Early March looking at a showcase for working groups to share their works and thoughts, an opportunity to examine convergences.</li> <li>■ It was suggested there are many learning opportunities around Edmonton's Winter City initiative that may help guide the implementation plan surrounding poverty.</li> </ul>	<p>A new critical path/project plan/project update visual is necessary to help bring everyone together.</p>
<p><b>7. Adjournment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.</li> <li>■ Next Task Force meeting: February 18, 2015</li> <li>■ Location: Heritage Room, City Hall</li> </ul>	