

May 28, 2019 – 7:00pm

Community Safety Meeting –Old North, Piccadilly, Woodfield, Bishop Hellmuth, Old East Village

39 attendees

Deliah Cummings - PANA Co-Chair

Kubet Weston - PANA Business Liaison

Kate Rapson - Woodfield Chair

Claude Bastin - Old East Village

Jill Wright - rep for Old North - west of Richmond

Phil Squire, Ward 6, City Councilor, Civic Works Chair and LTC committee

Constable Hildebrand and Constable Tiffany Waque London Police, two representatives with the COR (Co-ordinated Response UNIT)

David Small, Canadian Mental Health Association, Public Educator and Housing Sector Worker for the past four years and a Piccadilly Area neighbour

Thanks to the Trinity Lutheran Church and Pastor Stephen Johnston for hosting us.

There is another upcoming meeting on Community Safety being hosted by Phil Squire, Ward 6 on June 18. Please tell those who could not make this meeting and please attend. All are welcome

Welcome by Delilah, PANA Co-chair

Concerns were raised at a meeting in April, several crossover issues among neighbourhoods so a plan was formed to offer a community safety meeting that would bring five neighbourhood groups together.

Scope of this meeting is to get more information and learn how residents can be involved and be part of the solution not just call 911 or post frustration on social media.

Panel introduced themselves

Then began taking questions

What are some of the root causes perpetually going into could you share details.

Phil – educated us on the Coordinated Informed Response a program being run by City of London. It is now expanded across the city and not just downtown.

Explained what living rough means– people who are living on the streets, not in housing, setting up shelter anywhere they can. In speaking with many, every person's story is different. They may have mental health issues, addiction issues,

can't conform with rules of shelters with these issues they cannot partake in several social help or housing programs. Only so much space offered. David Small stated that Housing First is working but it is a sloooooow process.

Why are there limits to stay in at the Mission or Salvation Army? Mission is only for men. Salvation Army has capacity issues.

Someone suggested city needs smaller group homes with 24/7. Strategies and models are broken. Certain individuals just can't make it on their own, need daily support. Many have their issues begin with trauma or multiple traumas.

Phil - Main issues are mental illness, addiction and poverty. Many with crossover of all three.

Questions from audience - What do we as people do when we see suspicious activity? Police - You should call 911 and give a good description and direction information. You should not follow. You need to call so the police can have the data analytics. The data analytics are informing where police resources are being placed. Policing is changing but data is directing. Phil - If you don't report consider it didn't happen.

Housing First strategy is working in baby steps.

CMHA does have a therapeutic treatment oriented program. Many have addictions on methamphetamine (crystal meth). It's a unique behaviour from the use of these drugs. David Small emphasized that he has worked for 30 years in mental health and addiction and the severity of behaviours and crisis that he is seeing is unique in the last 5 years and has changed with the rise of crystal meth. It is affecting not just pockets of London but is expanded into many different neighbourhood now. In fact it is throughout the whole city he states and not just London.

Comment - Are we not safe as residents? She was seeking information on personal safety. Police and panel agreed we are generally safe. Statistics inform that the theft acts are non violent, normally. Statistically as a human safety issue we are safe. Please appreciate erratic behaviour does not mean they will be aggressive towards you. However please call professionals if you feel unsafe or see potential for harm of the individual(s).

Every single councilor is dealing with this same issue. Everyone is being re-active. Phil mentioned having a your own "champion" in the community that will take on things like doing a Community Safety Audit and will continue to communicate and push to get things done. Really emphasized that being community driven really affects action actually happening. A councillor can not take on the details of all of these roles, so find an area champion where you live and work from there.

Phil encouraged a Neighbourhood Audit. The City of London offers this service. To engage this service please contact Karen Oldham
<https://www.neighbourgoodlondon.ca/team-2>

Police and Phil touched on police reporting The queue is so big, system is extremely taxed when you call in to 911 or the non-emergency line. But report. On-line report. The calls get triaged into priority sequence based on emergency levels, your call goes into the queue. Likely could be 30-40 calls ahead of you.

Jill Wright presented a case concerning how a neighbourhood west of Richmond Street completed their Safety Audit with the City and positive changes have occurred in the Baldwin Flats area with the City, London Cares, Informed Response and Western University. It took coordination of many services. The neighbourhood now has a who to call guide with numbers. This was shared at the end of the meeting with those who wanted a copy. The neighbours are more engaged and understand it is up to everyone now to keep watch and report.

The panel reiterated that communities need to take ownership.

A neighbour reported with many safety steps he is frustrated, rightly so as he has been been robbed three times, frustration.

Policing is changing – moving to evidence based and proactive model. What they are trying to do is identify patterns in crimes and where they are taking place. There are proactive patrols going on now that police have laid out with times and data. Arrests are being made. It's a new program but has been informed by data.

36 hours of proactive patrol - data from campaign is not available yet but Cst. Waque said that she may be able to share in future the results of the patrols. Canine Patrol, they are trying to be proactive.

More education beginning now on the LPA's Lock It or Loose It campaign run by police.

Question from audience about citizen patrols.

There is a new St Thomas program – at a chief's level is where this decision is made
Idea is there – Flint Town (a movie)

We have to change our ways

Liaise with St. Thomas Police and see how they are doing it and the Officer said they do it in Vancouver (Citizen Patrol) this frees up police resources. Are we a ways away from this being here? Likely. How did St. Thomas do this?

Everyone is trying. Empower communities

It would be helpful to have a how to guide for how to handle situations such as - what to do if urban camping is going on, needle recovery, visible injection sites on city streets, theft, casing of property.

Police stated - It's not your job to figure out if it is an emergency or not. The dispatcher will figure it out. Don't approach people. Call in.

How do we empower those individuals who need the help?

Think about how we present to people. Don't set up confrontational stances. They are a part of our community. They are not going away any time soon. Help them feel part of the community. Try to build relationships. They don't feel not connected to community.

Housing as a part of the solution - is London going to accept other housing into the existing neighbourhoods? Phil stated we have to be receptive to all types of housing and this is all over the city. Building affordable housing is a must but neighbourhoods must stop saying no.

DM - Try to heal ourselves as a whole. It's a difficult conversation. Compassion is the only solution. Get interactive with your neighbours. Fuels us to move forward.

Treating each other like humans.

Delilah - thank you for coming out

Sharing among associations

Have good strong connections with your neighbours. The more comfortable you feel with your neighbours the better the connections and powers of observation.

Action Items:

PANA/Phil Squire to summarize a "one-page resource" on who to call when with the most up to date information to be given to each Neighbourhood Association

Police had available information on Neighbourhood Watch and property theft

Information regarding new protocol of who to call regarding needle pick up and disposal- Jill

Minutes from meeting - to be shared with executive of all the neighbourhood associations, panel members, and neighbours list

Outcome:

CBC London did a story with Kate Rapson and Kubet Weston on the meeting the morning after this meeting.