

Minutes of the Community Advisory Council Meeting

Tuesday October 15th, 2019 6:30 pm-8:30pm
Boardroom

PRESENT:

Community Members: Veralyn Alleyne (Co-Chair), Leroy Clarke, Raphael Francis, Sandra Forsythe, Blessing Morka,

Board Members: Bryan Buttigieg, Aisha Delpeache, Elaine Forde

Staff Members: Rona Jualla van Oudenhoven (Co-Chair), Dawn Walcott-Parris, Steve Woodman

Item	Agenda Item	Item Discussion (if required)	Action / Decisions
1.	Welcome	Land Acknowledgement and CAC Statement	Land Acknowledgement and CAC Statement read at the beginning of the meeting.
2.	Approval of Agenda	The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm. Co-Chairs acknowledged the work of Terri as the Council's administrative assistant and informed everyone that Terri will no longer be with the Council and that the Co-Chairs have agreed to share the task of taking the minutes.	MOTION by Leroy and seconded by Blessing to accept the agenda dated October 15, 2019. CARRIED
3.	Declarations of Conflict of Interest	There were no conflicts of interest declared.	
4.	Welcome Steve Woodman	Brief Introductions of Names	All members of the CAC introduced themselves briefly.
5.	Approval of Past Minutes	The minutes of May 13 th , 2019 were reviewed and the following was noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With respect to Point 4 of the Minutes of May 13th 2019 that speaks to <i>Policy Discussion: Intake Referral Form/Kinship Care</i>, the question was asked as to whether there is a complementary tool/questionnaire that accompanies the Intake Referral Form. ○ It was noted that an instrument is being worked on currently and this is one of the goals of the Working Group together with the Intake Staff on that team. Request made to see the Intake Referral Form 	Bring copy of Intake Referral Form. Motion by Bryan seconded by Sandra to accept the minutes dated May 13, 2019.
6.	Agency Updates: Steve Woodman	Brief biopic of Steve Woodman was read by Co-Chair, Rona Jualla van Oudenhoven and then Steve was invited to address the members of the Council. Steve spoke briefly as to his impression of Child Welfare in Ontario	

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		<p>and shared his vision for a Durham Children’s Aid Society as one that decreases the number of children admitted into group care. He indicated that he would embrace this opportunity to get to know the community members of the Council and posed the question to them, “<i>What does success look like to you?</i>”</p> <p><i>Sandra Forsythe</i> indicated that success in child welfare for her would translate into no children in care and agreed with Steve that when it comes to black children in care, persons are too impulsive to act devoid of context. She noted that language barriers and issues of pronunciation for example as taken as lack of knowledge of English, which is often not the case. She stated that schools, police and neighbours are too quick to call and report on Black Families.</p> <p><i>Blessing Morka</i> identified change in policies and education on cultural sensitivity as indicative of success in her eyes. She would like to see some of what the Council members have been working on adopted into practice by the agency -: such as the work done on Trite reporting, allowing for less mistakes to be made by the Agency, Parents and Everyone.</p> <p><i>Raphael Francis</i> spoke to the tendency for persons, especially young Black youth to be labelled or diagnosed with learning disabilities when in fact it may simply be a manifestation of lack of interest. As a retired educator, he would like to see a greater interest in STEM programs for young persons and innovative ways of making these avenues to pursue study in STEM more accessible. He calls attention to the minimization of the large number of Black Children in care.</p> <p><i>Leroy Clarke</i> expressed his support of Steve as an advocate for community involvement and noted that he has been doing community work for a number of years especially with young black children who are on the fringes of society and confesses to having made significant strides, which have not always been easy. He acknowledges that change is not easy but achievable and this is what success looks like to him.</p>	<p>Rona pointed out that much of the good work being done by CAC members re: recommendations around Trite reporting and the collaborative work of the Intake Supervisors and the CAC Working Group is leading to some significant changes in mindset and shift in ideology and is being reflected in the Intake Process and Policies. Dawn Walcott-Parris endorsed this.</p>

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		<p>The AOPDEI Manager gave an update on events and activities related to AO work within the organization:</p> <p style="background-color: #FFD700; margin: 5px 0;"></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Webinars and Discussions.</i> AOPDEI Steering Committee members are facilitating a series of webinars and post-webinar discussions on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gender transitioning in the Workplace; ○ Respect and Reverse Discrimination; ○ Accessibility and Economic Outcomes of disaggregated racialized groups, among others. 2. <i>Anti-Black Racism Sessions with Raphael, our community council member.</i> Sessions are set for November 27th and December 4th 2019; 3. <i>Networking and Building Advocacy and Allyship:</i> AOPDEI Manager sits on the following <i>Councils and Committees</i>: <p>OACAS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Equity Council;</i> ○ <i>The Anti-Oppression Roundtable;</i> ○ <i>Age of Protection Committee;</i> ○ <i>OACAS Research and Evaluation Committee and</i> <p>Regionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Local Immigration Diversity Partnership Council (LLDIPC)</i> ○ <i>The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Community of Practice (DEICoP)</i> 4. Member of the Board Governance Committee on AOPDEI and <i>Board’s Work Plan.</i> Met in June and September; 5. AOPDEI is now positioned in <i>Leadership Team</i>; 6. Sit on the Complaints, Compliments and Feedback Working Group – having a great deal of dialogue around how everything intersects AO/SOS/Staff Supports and how it affects the work that they do/ learning about the supports that need to be put in place; 7. Community Consultation session with the <i>Child Abuse Review Team</i> later this week; 	

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		<p>8. Collaboratively working on developing an AO/SOS training curriculum for foster parents;</p> <p>9. <i>AO Youth Council</i> will meet before end of year</p> <p>10. Actively engaged in conducting <i>policy reviews</i> to ensure AO/SOS/ Children’s Rights lens;</p> <p>11. Hoping to provide forum for African Caribbean Canadian youth in CCYS to present at the <i>Child Rights Conference – Young Persons as Researchers</i> in November, in Barbados;</p> <p>12. SOS Trainer, Director Services and AOPDEI Manager jointly exploring Best Practice at Waterloo CAS – Team Consult.</p>	
7.	Community Updates	<p>Members of the Community Partners were invited to give their Community Updates and to please feel free to be thorough as more time has been allocated to updates as these are seen as critical areas for lessons to be learnt by the agency. Leroy noted that in the past it was felt that ideas were brought to the Council and shared but were not taken further, hence a decline in the willingness to share.</p> <p>Blessing asked the question of Steve, <i>“What re-assurance can you give us that what we say here, does not end here?” “What can you give us to show solidarity within the group?”</i></p> <p>Steve noted that when he looked at the past Minutes, there were common themes that stood out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How do we educate and inform community partners and referral agencies; ○ Our responsibility to find ways to be an Active Inviter into our space to allow for sharing of the various lens from which the community views experiences; ○ The <i>“But this, then What”</i> questions; ○ The intersection of Community Partners is a big one. 	<p>Rona noted that the agency is committed to hearing the voices of the community partners around the table and to being informed about activities and events occurring in the various spheres of operation. There is a wealth of expertise in our community partners and a great deal of outreach work is being done that the agency needs to be aware of to have greater involvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Steve’s response was in the affirmative noting that indeed we have as an agency, to <i>find creative ways to put things in place at the front end of our service.</i> ○ Legislation is very prescriptive. However, a lot we can do with families, short of them being taken away. Steve noted that at the last place he worked there were 435 children in care when he started and he left at 135 children in care and

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		<p>Blessing then posed a second question, “<i>Some of your programs are an afterthought – not readily available to parents prior to them being taken in by the system. Would it not be more beneficial to have these before rather than after?</i>” She noted that it would be great to see education outreach to parents and the Durham District School Board for example.</p> <p>Blessing noted that if we are able to access documents such as policies and procedures and legislation then community partners can come to the table more informed, in greater alignment and better able to make sound recommendations.</p>	<p>brought group care down from 50 to 3;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Steve recommended that we work with our community partners in different ways and open our minds to think aggressively and outside the box to achieve better cultural and family preservation; ○ He cited Peel as one of the leaders in AO work but also an agency that has significantly reduced the number of children in care. As of today, DCAS stands at 372 children in care. This was achieved by getting voices around the table. <p>Rona reminded everyone that this was the case prior but as a result of advocacy council members have access to requested documents such as policies and intake referral forms.</p> <p>Steve suggested that maybe having a session with community members on CPIN might prove helpful in understanding the process at Intake.</p>
8.	<p>Other Items</p> <p>Building Bridges Review (SWOT)</p>	<p>Rona conducted a brief Strengths/Weakness/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) Review of the CAC’s Building Bridges Consultation held on May 30th 2019. The discussion revealed the following:</p> <p><i>Strengths:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The creation and circulation of the African Canadian Resource List; ○ Joint Power-Point Presentation by Community Partners and DCAS Staff – resulted in and displayed solidarity and partnership; 	<p>Next time these will be displayed in a more visible area. This will be replicated at the 6th Annual Building Bridges event;</p>

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	Working Group Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Large volume of DCAS Staff presence and identification of staff with ID Cards – showed a commitment of DCAS staff to community outreach and rendered them visible and approachable; <p><i>Weaknesses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Absence of children voices <p><i>Opportunities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CAC members were able to speak about their achievements; ○ DCAS able to present data in graphical format and explain data and engage in questions around over-representation of African Canadian children in care; ○ CAC able to solicit recommendations from community partners; ○ Kinship and Foster Care were able to present and answer questions from community at large. <p><i>Threats:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sound system tested prior therefore threat mitigated; ○ Singer of Black National Anthem was not well on day. <p>Rona and Sandra presented an Update of the Working Group. They noted that the CACWG was formed in response to an initiative to take the conversation around issues such as Trite Reporting to a <i>platform</i> where it could be dealt with greater analysis. The goal being to embed anti-oppressive practice, diversity, equity and inclusion within the organizational culture through continuous and sustained praxis to decrease the deleterious effects of systemic and cultural oppression on the lives of our children, especially as it relates to <i>biases in reporting</i> and <i>discriminatory practices</i> of referral agencies.</p> <p>The current <i>objectives</i> identified were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listen to the voices and opinions of key players –members of the Intake Referral Team (IRT), children, young persons, families and community partners (the Police, Schools); 2. Assess the IR Form and make recommendations for change; 3. Identify Issues of Trite Reporting :- Identify case examples 4. Outline Recommendations for Change <p>They noted that the discussion of the CACWG centered around:</p>	<p>This too will be encouraged at the next event; AOPDEI Manager committed to changing this for the next consultation;</p> <p>Have a backup of downloaded Black National Anthem to be played.</p>

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	<p>Inter-institutional Accountability</p> <p>Meeting Dates into the New Year</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The role and goal of the group; 2. IRT – with an IRT Supervisor present who was able to sit and explain the IR process and answer a series of questions that were posed to her regarding the process/issues with the process/ areas of possible intervention/ possibilities for future collaboration on this; 3. Navigating issues such as: CPIN and its many restrictions; Lessons Learnt; New strategies being used by the IRT to address some of the problems that arise as a result of trite reporting; 4. Clear indication that there is a two-way relationship here between the IRT and CAC. <p>This spoke briefly to the need for us as CAC members to create a system whereby we hold our community partners more accountable in light of the influence they have as feeders to our child welfare system. This may involve greater communication with referral agencies such as schools, hospitals and the police and joint initiatives re: education and training on biases and cultural awareness.</p> <p>CAC members discussed availability on proposed meeting dates.</p>	<p>Amended meeting dates to be circulated to members.</p>
9.	Meeting Evaluation	<p>The meeting was assessed as being a good one. Bryan reminded the members of the Council that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o All documents to be presented to the CAC has to be submitted in the package that is sent out prior to meetings so that all members have ample time to view documents; o All members of the council are to kindly seek the attention and permission of Co-Chairs prior to speaking so as, to not interrupt others, allow everyone to have a turn and ensuring that meetings end on time. 	<p>This was noted as valid reminders.</p>
9.	Adjournment	<p>The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.</p>	<p>MOTION by, seconded by....., to adjourn the meeting. CARRIED</p>