



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the Committee of the Whole

From: Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services

Meeting Date: September 6, 2016

Subject: Report CSSS16-003
Food Security and the Municipal Role in Peterborough

Purpose

A report to provide Council with an update on food security, and to approve the plan for a new Community Meal Program supported by the municipality.

Recommendations

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report CSSS16-003 dated September 6, 2016, of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

- a) That a presentation from Linda Mitchelson, Social Services Division Manager and Dr. Rosana Salvaterra, Medical Officer of Health on the topic of food security be received;
- b) That the staff proposal to proceed with an Expression of Interest to obtain community partner(s) for a new Community Meal Program be approved.

Budget and Financial Implications

There are no specific budget implications from approving the recommendations of this report. The anticipated costs of the new program can be managed within the overall Social Services budget and is a consolidation of existing related budget lines including the Homelessness Budget, Employment Services Budget and in-kind staff contributions through the Community Social Plan.

Background

There are many programs and organizations that have a food component in Peterborough. The information paper attached as Appendix A provides an overview of most of these programs and outlines the current role of the municipality in local food programs along with the current status of meal programs. The paper is comprised of the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Update on Provincial activity related to Income Reform
3. Role of Municipality in food security
4. Role of Peterborough Public Health in food security
5. Role of Peterborough Food Action Network
6. Role of Kawartha Food Share and food banks
7. Role of the YWCA Peterborough-Haliburton
 - a. The Nourish Project
 - b. JustFood Box Program
 - c. Community Gardens
8. Role of the Salvation Army
9. Food Security in other Ontario jurisdictions
10. Role of faith community and volunteers
11. Current status of Community Meals
12. Summary

Immediate Pressures and Need to Evolve the Meal Program

Current trends at local meal programs and food banks are cause for concern and warrant consideration for a change in the delivery of emergency food. The approach of providing a hand-out of food through food banks and meal programs is not improving long-term food security. It gets clients through the day, but leaves them in the same situation the next day. The cost of running these programs continues to rise in a manner that is unsustainable. Food bank use continues to be high, as outlined in Appendix A, while donations of food and money decline. Operating two municipally supported community meals (Lighthouse and One Roof Community Diner) is financially costly and an inefficient use of resources.

The breakfast program at the Salvation Army has lower client levels compared to other meal programs and is working well. All other meal programs, including those not receiving municipal support, are struggling with one or more of the following difficulties:

- Shortage of volunteers
- Volunteer burn-out
- Lack of paid coordination
- Insufficient resources for food including budget and storage
- Inability to meet all dietary and nutrition requirements
- Need for a consistent and accessible location
- Inadequate kitchen facilities
- Insufficient hours to operate

Proposed New Meal Program Structure

To address the current meal program challenges and to improve the system of community meals, the following approach to the future municipal meal program is contemplated:

1. **One meal per day every day of the year.** This provides a consistent and predictable schedule for accessing a free community meal every day.
2. **Open a minimum of 4 hours per day.** This time is needed to meet the socialization needs of clients and ensure adequate time for meal preparation and clean-up. It allows outreach for other program services with a focus on social, recreational and life skill opportunities. This time also provides some warming and cooling service. The ability to expand these hours during heat and cold alerts will be included in the program expectations.
3. **Provide funding for staff coordination.** Having paid staff through an established local organization ensures consistency in the program and that adequate policies and procedures are in place.
4. **Role for volunteers.** Volunteers play an important role in delivering community meals and their ongoing contribution will be critical to the success of this program. We expect better coordination and less stress and financial burden on volunteers under this program.
5. **Provide funding for food.** Having a budget for purchased food will assist in meeting nutrition guidelines provided by Peterborough Public Health (PPH) and dietary needs.
6. **Operate a food services employment training program.** This program facilitates the delivery of some meals while providing training opportunities that could lead to employment. This program is further described below.

The annual budget for this program will be approximately \$250,000 with a standard of living increase each year. This budget is derived from the combined expenditures being made from the Homelessness budget for the Lighthouse Program and One Roof Community Diner. Approximately \$50,000 of this budget must be dedicated to the food services training program.

Anticipated Impact on Existing Services

The expected start of the new meal program is on or about December 3, 2016. As a result, the current agreements with Canadian Mental Health Association and St. Johns Anglican Church, which expire on March 31, 2018, will be terminated to coincide with the start date of the new program. The current agreement with All Saints Anglican Church will expire on December 2, 2016 and needs no action. Each of these groups is welcome to make a submission to the Expression of Interest.

Hospitality and Food Service Employment Training Program

A community meal program provides a unique venue for a hands-on learning and skill development program. The current Lighthouse program has provided this training through a partnership with Kawarthafest over the past four years. The new program would include a component that prepares individuals for entry level food service employment opportunities. Inclusion of a food service training program will support long term solutions for food security challenges by preparing participants for local job opportunities and increasing earnings through employment. The skills development component would increase the employability of participants. Program content would include:

- Paid and volunteer workplace training experience
- Kitchen health and safety overview
- Safe food handling
- Service Excellence training
- Teamwork and team building
- Menu planning and meal preparation
- Job placement assistance

In the Peterborough area the food service sector is the 2nd largest employer. A recent Social Services Division survey found that food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support occupations accounted for approximately 25 % of all advertised job postings. The inclusion of a food service training program is considered a core element of a sustainable community meal program. Through direct meal planning, preparation and serving, interested individuals can train for food service jobs and improve their earnings and employment outcomes.

Stakeholder Consultation

In development of this report and presentation, City staff met with Dr. Salvaterra and other staff of PPH, and on August 18 consulted with 26 people in attendance at the Peterborough Food Action Network (PFAN) meeting. The group strongly reinforced the importance of emergency meals and concerns were raised about having only 7 meals a week. City staff made clear this was a minimal expectation and that with sufficient community support further meals may be possible. The group also provided suggestions about the time of operation, key program elements and the process to support community partners involved in the provision of community meals. While survey information from current programming has been reviewed, PFAN suggested that further input from individuals using meal programs would be advisable. City staff will develop additional input mechanisms including one to one interviews with as many people as possible who are currently attending community meals.

Expression of Interest Process to Determine the Provider(s) of the New Program

This program will require a collaborative approach among multiple agencies. As this Report shows, there are many organizations involved in the delivery of community meals creating an opportunity for a contribution and participation of multiple groups in the resulting service. The Expression of Interest method of securing this service is recommended as it will allow for flexibility to encourage local groups and service providers to collaborate to meet all the service levels desired.

An Expression of Interest outlining the program requirements will be made widely available to all community groups and stakeholders with some interest in food programming. City staff will organize one or more stakeholder meetings to review Program expectations and to walk interested parties through the Expression of Interest process. Final program proposals will be received and evaluated by a review panel comprised of representatives from Social Services, Community Services and Corporate Services. A Program lead organization/ proposal will be recommended for subsequent Council approval. A service agreement will be executed, ideally with a term of three to five years, with the option of extensions. The approach proposed has been reviewed with the Director of Corporate Services and is consistent with the requirements of the Purchasing By law 14-127.

Peterborough's Food Security Model for the Future

There is a desire to move from emergency food provision to a focus on capacity building and improved coordination of the organizations involved in food provision and food security work with the ultimate aim of being able to reduce reliance on and need for emergency meals and food banks. The research conducted by PPH and PFAN reinforce that existing emergency food programs are not moving clients into a situation where they are food secure. The combination of low incomes with high rental costs, lack of adequate kitchen facilities in some apartments, food costs, declining food

donations and increasing financial pressures of food programs is creating an unsustainable situation that warrants rethinking.

The new Community Meal Program is a positive step in this direction. The recommendations and observations made through client surveys and agency consultations are being met by the approach being taken with this community meal program strategy. Key improvements include consistency, more nutritious food choices, paid staff, and longer hours for socialization.

One drawback to this approach is that the total number of municipally supported meals will be reduced by three meals. The new structure has 7 meals while currently there are 11 meals (6 lunches and 5 suppers). As shown throughout this Report, there are many opportunities in Peterborough to access food, including: meal programs, food banks, food boxes, Come Cook with Us, collective kitchens, school breakfast programs, gleaning and community gardens.

Further work needs to be done to promote collaborative efforts among those who deliver food programs in Peterborough. Investigating options for improving the local food system is a logical next step.

- Developing a community food procurement system that combines the healthy food purchasing needs of multiple organizations and programs.
- Developing new strategies that reduce the need for emergency food while increasing the food security of low income individuals and families.
- Combining the objectives of the municipality, Sustainable Peterborough, the Climate Change Action Plan, and the Peterborough Food Action Network to develop a “Food System Plan” that examines all aspects of local food and creates a comprehensive review of the food system including growing, processing, packaging, transporting, selling, consuming and disposing. Such a plan could be a valuable resource for those involved with local food programs and the food industry.

Summary

Many organizations, faith groups and volunteers contribute to a networked system of food services in Peterborough. The City of Peterborough plays a role in supporting the provision of emergency food through meal programs and food banks. A number of programs are struggling, in particular, the lunch and supper services. This report recommends that the Social Services Division move forward with an Expression of Interest to evolve a new Meal Program in line with community needs and to evolve the model to improve sustainability and focus on longer term food security.

Submitted by,

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Attachments:

Appendix A - Information Paper: Food Security and the Municipal role in Peterborough.
Appendix B - Peterborough Public Health: Limited Incomes
Appendix C - Peterborough Food Action Network Terms of Reference
Appendix D - Sample Food Calendar
Appendix E - Kawartha Food Share Member Agencies