

FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATION – PROGRESS ON 2016 AGM RESOLUTIONS

APPROVED RESOLUTIONS (Apr. 2016)	PROGRESS to Apr. 27, 2017	YET TO ACHIEVE
<p>I. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Poverty Awareness Working Group of First Unitarian Congregation urge the City of Ottawa, as part of the neighbourhood revitalization project or otherwise, to provide the necessary resources to review all OW files in the target communities with an eye to moving as many households as may qualify onto ODSP at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>DIDN'T PROCEED IN PART DUE TO OTHER PRIORITIES</p> <p>Reuel Amdur kindly put together the body of a draft letter to the City (attached), but it has not yet been sent.</p> <p>Linda Lalonde, chair of the Ottawa Poverty Reduction Network, advised that there was a program at Centre 454 with dedicated municipal funding to do what the resolution called for; she also felt the city's OW workers were reasonably proactive on this matter. She has initiated a follow-up (April 2017) to obtain some data to indicate whether her impression was correct. Recently available Ontario data shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of ODSP cases has increased each year since 1997-98; & • there has been a gradual decline in the number of OW cases from 2011-12 (except for 2015-16) after rising continually from 2004-05, <p>suggesting that the proportion of ODSP cases to the whole Ontario caseload has been increasing in recent years (except possibly 2015-16) which might support the view that people on OW who qualify for ODSP are getting transferred to ODSP. Nevertheless, there could be other explanations. And the number of transfers may be smaller than it should be.</p>	<p>IF THERE WERE ENERGY TO DO SO:</p> <p>The Revitalization Project is multi-year project - action on the Congregational resolution could be taken on this item in 2017-18, if warranted and desired.</p> <p>Follow-up with Linda Lalonde or City Social Services on what progress, if any, Centre 454 and the City of Ottawa have made in moving households from OW to ODSP in recent years. When we get the data, finalize & send the letter RA drafted.</p>

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<p>II. NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa authorize and encourage the Poverty Awareness Working Group in collaboration with the Mental Health Working Group to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ensure that all of the following actions are carried out with sensitivity to the needs, rights and wishes of indigenous peoples; 2. encourage the City of Ottawa to increase the supply of affordable housing in Ottawa by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) mandating inclusionary zoning in new developments in Ottawa as soon as the provincial legislation becomes effective; (b) using the existing provisions of the <i>Planning Act</i> (section 37) to permit increases in density in exchange for affordable housing (as a high priority community benefit) rather than for other community benefits; (c) applying to the Province of Ontario for a pilot project on the portable housing benefit; (d) urge local, provincial and federal governments to ensure sufficient funding to provide an adequate supply of supportive housing for people living with mental health 	<p>2(a) PAWG sent an e-mail to the Deputy Mayor, who is the City's Special Liaison on Housing, on Apr.27 recommending Ottawa enact bylaws to implement inclusionary zoning. This is a follow-up to a message in the Fall 2016, when he was appointed Special Liaison, sharing a copy of our brief to the Province on Inclusionary Zoning.</p>	<p>IF THERE WERE ENERGY TO DO SO: 2. Could follow up with the Deputy Mayor and congregants' City Councillors.</p> <p>4. Write to the Minister of Housing and Minister of Community and Social Services</p>

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<p>issues; and (e) encourage more support for Ancoura-type models of supportive housing for those living with mental illness;</p> <p>3. consult with the Board of the Congregation if it proposes to take a position on the City of Ottawa's consultations regarding “coach houses”;</p> <p>4. consult with other affordable housing advocates about, and participate in provincial consultations on, the development of Ontario's framework for a “portable housing benefit”;</p> <p>5. consult with other affordable housing advocates about the Province's proposed inclusionary zoning with a view to exploring options for strengthening it;</p> <p>6. continue to consult with other affordable housing advocates about a national housing strategy and urge the federal government to proceed with developing and implementing same at the earliest opportunity;</p> <p>7. promote an understanding within the Congregation of a national housing strategy and related federal and provincial tools to increase the availability of safe, adequate, affordable housing in Canada;</p>	<p>3. A PAWG member attended Planning Committee when the “coach house” bylaw was passed – it is unlikely to be effective as a mechanism to increase the supply of low-income housing or to relieve homelessness directly, but may provide private accommodation for family members or AirBnB.</p> <p>5. 3 members attended a provincial info session / consultation on inclusionary zoning; PAWG submitted a brief in response to the Ontario Minister of Housing's consultation on inclusionary zoning & shared with Hamilton Unitarian Congregation & MHI, the Alliance to End Homelessness in Ottawa and the Housing4All list serve</p> <p>6. submitted a brief to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and CMHC's National Housing Strategy Team in response to CMHC's consultation on the development of a national housing strategy (NHS); shared it with MHI, the Alliance to End Homelessness in Ottawa, the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association and the Housing4All list serve.</p>	<p>5. post our inclusionary zoning brief on First Unitarian website and add the URL to a page to be created to show the actions of the PAWG to which a statement on the PAWG paragraph on the Get Involved page can be linked</p> <p>6. post our NHS brief on First Unitarian website & add the URL to the page to be created to show the actions of the PAWG (see 5., above)</p> <p>7. publicize 5 & 6, above, and 8 below in the EEU and/or Spire articles</p>

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<p>8. encourage (or collaborate in developing and encouraging) an understanding of these concepts among other Unitarian-Universalist congregations and fellowships in Canada; and</p> <p>9. work with others, including faith communities, locally, provincially and nationally who are interested in these strategies to promote their implementation.</p>	<p>7. posted info in EUU & Communicate about how to participate in NHS on-line consultations; kept extended PAWG e-mail list informed of developments on an ongoing basis</p> <p>8. CUC posted our NHS submission on its website here: http://cuc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/National-Housing-Strategy-First-Unitarian-Ottawa.2016-09.pdf & wrote its own letter and encouraged other Congregations to do so: http://cuc.ca/national-affordable-housing-strategy</p>	
<p>III. NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Poverty Awareness Working Group of First Unitarian Congregation in collaboration with the Mental Health Working Group:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. encourage the City of Ottawa to negotiate with the Province of Ontario to establish a basic income pilot in Ottawa as a whole or in one of the 3 neighbourhoods it recently identified for revitalisation; 2. urge the Province of Ontario to : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) provide more meaningful increases to social assistance rates, including those for Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) pending implementation of a guaranteed minimum income; (b) stop deducting federal 	<p>INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES FOR SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVES</p> <p>Regarding items 1 & 2c) & d), PAWG continued to monitor and share with interested congregants the Province's progress in consulting on a Basic Income Pilot. One member attended the Ottawa Consultation, where there was support for increasing the rates generally (which was acknowledged by the Minister of Community and Social Services as a related initiative of her Ministry) and a representation to choose Ottawa as one of the pilot sites and . The summary of consultations is available here: https://files.ontario.ca/bi_wwh_final_english.pdf . While this report refers to the concepts about site selection, it does not include the recommendations and rationales that were</p>	<p>IF THERE WERE ENERGY TO DO SO, Acting on many aspects of this resolution would still be timely .</p> <p>1. Write to the Mayor & councillors, if it's not too late (announcement may be made on Apr.24)</p> <p>2a), c) d) Write to the Ontario Minister of Community and Social Services – it is well recognized that there is a need to significantly increase the rates: http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/september-2016/ontario-social-assistance-doesnt-meet-basic-human-needs/ - even the government appointed Income Security</p>

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<p>government child benefits from social assistance allowances;</p> <p>(c) implement and evaluate its basic income pilot at the earliest opportunity, rename it more suitably and consider how to broaden its coverage at the earliest opportunity;</p> <p>(d) consider the desirability of selecting Ottawa or one of the three neighbourhoods Ottawa has recently identified for revitalisation as a location for one of its basic income pilots;</p> <p>3. urge the federal government, in response to the March 7/16 report of the UN Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, to :</p> <p>(a) to develop a framework, in consultation with provincial and territorial partners and with civil society organizations, for a national guaranteed minimum income program that allows a decent living for all in Canada so as to ensure an effective income safety net;</p> <p>(b) integrate accountability provisions in the Federal Social Transfer as a means to allow monitoring of how the funds are allocated to social assistance benefits;</p> <p>(c) ensure that all claw-back provisions in provincial</p>	<p>made about specific sites. Circulated the press briefing and backgrounder when the announcement of the pilot and 3 sites was made on Apr.25/17: https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-basic-income-pilot .</p> <p>Regarding 2a), the Board recently accepted the request of the Mental Health Working Group to recommend that the Province of Ontario increase to \$100,000 the amount of non-exempt assets ODSP recipients may hold. (This initiative arises from families who have adult children with developmental disabilities. The proposed increase in asset limit has already been enacted in BC & Alberta. The proposal does not assist people who are not disabled who fall on hard times and are in receipt of Ontario Works allowance. Nor does it alter the social assistance rates themselves.)</p> <p>3. some PAWGers completed the federal on-line consultation about Poverty Reduction; we have shared information with those on the expanded PAWG e-mail list about how to participate: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/poverty-reduction/consultation-poverty.html .</p>	<p>Reform Working Group recommended this early in its mandate: http://incomesecurity.org/publications/provincial-budgets/Ontario-Budget-2017-ISRWG-letter-Nov-2016.pdf</p> <p>2b) Research further information and determine what action to take, if any</p> <p>2c) & d) – see 2a), above</p> <p>3. Write to the federal Minister of Social Services and MPs of congregants</p>

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<p>jurisdictions are repealed; and</p> <p>(d) ensure that refugee claimants and other persons without permanent status in Canada can access social assistance without discrimination;</p> <p>(e) increase investments in the Canada Social Transfer, earmarked for direct benefits to social assistance recipients, pending implementation of a guaranteed minimum income; and</p> <p>(f) revise the eligibility thresholds for, and amounts of, employment insurance to ensure all workers, including part-time and temporary foreign workers can access adequate employment insurance benefits, without discrimination; and</p> <p>4. urge the federal government and the Province of Ontario, in response to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to commit funding that would permit indigenous nations to alleviate the deep poverty that affects many indigenous people across the country.</p>	<p>4, The Province of Ontario recently announced it is working with First Nations to implement a basic income pilot project.</p>	<p>4. Write to the PM, the Minister of DIAND, the Minister of Social Services & the Finance Minister and to the MPs of congregants</p>