

# Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective (NSCC): Community Consultation & Governance Structure

In response to Town Council (Deputy Mayor Beatty) Motion at Feb. 28 Committee of the Whole:

*THAT Council refer to a decision on this file to the Monday April 3, 2023 meeting to the Green Wood Coalition and the Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective (NCSS), in order to conduct a 'Community Consultation' with local area residents and the broader Cobourg Public, Cobourg Police Services, Cobourg Fire, Northumberland County Services, HKPR Public Health Unit and other Partner Agencies; and*

*FURTHER THAT Council requests a further detailed plan about the Green Wood Coalition and the Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective (NSCC) Governance Structure.*

## Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to address the above motion with respect to our Community Consultation and engagement efforts. This is not an exhaustive overview of the project or a revisiting of all aspects of this project.

There are two additional delegation reports which provide an overview of the project as already delivered to council (50 pages of documentation). To ensure you have all the information, we will please ask you to revisit two historical submissions:

1. December 19, 2022, delegation report ([see item 9.5 at this link](#))
2. February 21, 2023, delegation report ([see various items at this link](#))

Note that as historical documents, the content submitted has been selectively updated to reflect further consultation with the community and Service Providers.

The report will provide an overview of community and stakeholder engagements that took place from October 2022 - present day. The goal of these engagements was to provide a variety of opportunities for neighbors and local groups to learn about our proposal, build awareness about the needs around housing in our community and provide opportunities for feedback.

NSCC has engaged in countless hours of meetings and presentations to achieve this level of engagement and are proud to conclude we have had over 2000 engagement contacts. As per the motion, Part 1 of this report will offer further clarity about our community engagement and what we've heard from the community and service providers and Part 2 will address the governance structure.

## How we got here

Sleeping Cabin projects across North America have always evolved from bottom-up citizen involvement. In every case, concerned citizens have become frustrated with the inaction of stakeholders who bear responsibility for providing affordable housing in an era when housing is unaffordable not just to the unsheltered, but also to a growing segment of the middle class. Citizens have watched and waited while long term strategic approaches to fundamental problems stall, while those in serious need try to “make do”. However those most affected have less and less to “make do” with; to the point where too many people are living rough, often in tents or makeshift housing, and in Canada, further complicated by the struggle to merely survive in a harsh climate.

Further complicating the challenge of affordable housing supply are issues of mental health and addictions that may **lead to** or **arise from** homelessness. For these vulnerable citizens, a solution does not fit into a neat “box”, but rather challenges the resources and attention of a maze of government departments and service providers. We see emergency transitional housing as merely the **first** step on a continuum, so that other levels of government can build more comprehensive solutions. Advocates have learned to work with those in need to enable them to **survive**. We are now broadening our focus to attach complementary services to enable the unsheltered to do more than just survive, until such time as the broader more enduring solution is in place.

## Who are we?

The Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective is a committee of local residents from disparate backgrounds and experiences to find an immediate housing solution that will provide support to our unhoused neighbours. As sleeping cabin advocates we have focused on community involvement – especially the homeless/unsheltered community – and compassion to marshal the resources to execute step one of a much larger housing strategy. We represent Northumberland residents who are prepared to fundraise, volunteer, provide donations in kind, and leverage existing street level service providers to start to build a scalable solution.

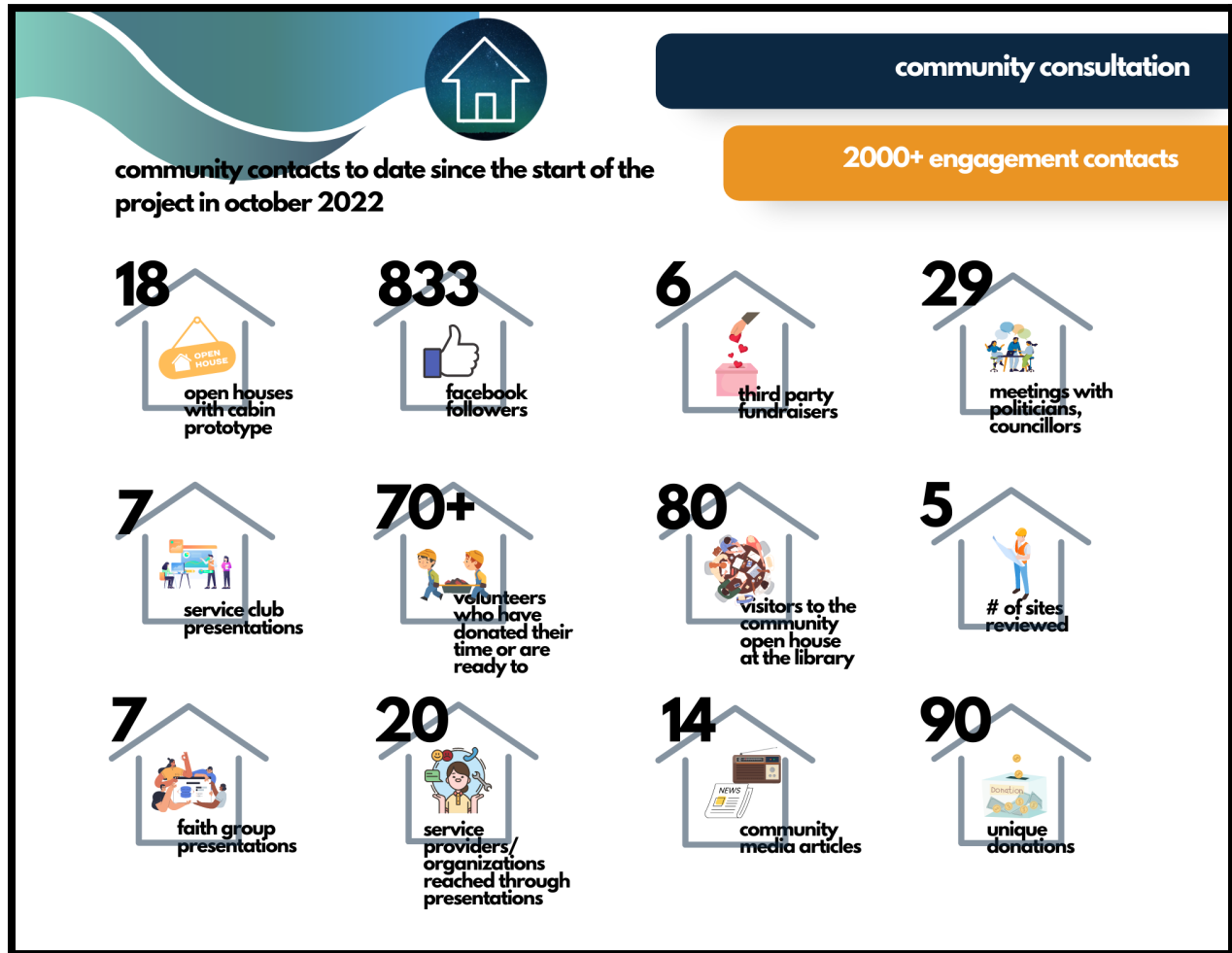
## What are we asking for?

The Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective is asking for a portion of the gravel parking lot at memorial arena at 216 Furnace street for the purpose of a 6-month pilot project to house 9-12 chronically homeless community members. We are NOT asking the Town of Cobourg to provide social services or to act as the Service Manager for Housing and Homelessness, nor are we asking for money. NSCC and Green Wood Coalition will be providing these services to help fill the gaps in housing while the government and other organizations hopefully can build more permanent affordable and geared-to-income housing solutions. If the town deems Furnace street as an inappropriate location for this supportive housing project, we are happy and eager to hear the Town’s suggestions for other sites.

## Part 1: Community Consultation

### Engagement to Date (October 2022 - March 2023)

The image below provides an overview of the community engagement that the NSCC has undertaken since October.



## Community Engagement Approach

We define community engagement as informing and listening to the community as well as mobilizing citizenry.

Sleeping Cabin Communities are new to most people and novelty can invoke fear and apprehension as well as opportunity. The purpose of this round of consultation is to understand and respond/adapt to tangible community concerns; some unique to a site, but equally important independent of site (as we would continue to advocate for additional sites in diverse areas to address the needs of more than 9-12 individuals participating in the initial pilot project).

Over the past six months, the NSCC has undertaken extensive community engagement in order to **provide** information about the project and to listen to community concerns. We have taken both a targeted approach where we have visited service clubs, churches and community organizations in addition to engaging the larger public through open houses, social media and community events. Throughout these six months, we've also held one-on-one meetings with the town, county and service providers.

All of the feedback we have heard is important to this project and will be used to inform its design and implementation.

As advocates, we've come to realize the importance of working together, with Council, town staff/planning and engineering while also engaging the voices of lived experience to move this project from an idea to reality. We understand that concerns will arise, but we are determined to engage with our community to provide answers and solutions and work collaboratively to destigmatize housing needs. A real village evokes particular concerns to those most affected. We understand the need to explain to, and hear from, all of the community; and especially express and tailor governance – how real things will work in the challenging environment of a real community.

***In total, we estimate over 2000 engagement contacts (opportunities for citizens and service providers to see the cabin, hear about the project or connect with us for feedback - virtually or in-person).***

The following pages provide a detailed list of this engagement.

Following this overview we will further report what we have heard from residents and provide an overview of how we have responded to their concerns with an extensive FAQ.

## Citizen Engagement

### *Service Clubs*

We have received several direct invitations from service clubs for their members to hear about the project. Formats included In depth slide show presentations providing an overview of homelessness in the area, high level research on how to best address homelessness and resulting mental health issues, and how sleeping cabins fit within a broad range of solutions and time frames. Presentations were followed by Q&A and discussions of how members could help the project. In some cases those discussions evolved into financial or in kind contributions. In the case of the Columbus Center, they offered their property as a potential location for the pilot project.

- November 15, 2022: Columbus Community Centre, 10 people
- November 28, 2022: Bewdley & District Lions Club, 25 people + \$1,075 financial contribution
- January 16, 2023: Rotary Club of Port Hope: 30 people
- February 23, 2023: Society of St. Vincent de Paul Cobourg: 10 people
- February 23, 2023 100 Guys Who Care Northumberland, video submission: 100+ people + several thousand dollars (total amount unknown at this time) financial contribution
- March 9, 2023 Probus Club of the Ganaraska Valley: 45 people + \$100 donation
- March 15, 2023: Community 101, Emerging Realities: 26 people

### *Church Congregations*

As above for Church Congregations and Faith Groups

- September 8, 2023: St, Peter's Church Cobourg: 5 people
- October 4, 2023: Fellowship Baptist Church Cobourg: 10 people
- October 23, 2022:: Grace Evangelical Missionary Church: 50 people
- November 17, 2022: Cobourg Clergy Network: 15 people
- November 20, 2022: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church: 50 people + \$3,000 financial contribution
- January 10, 2023 St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church: 10 people + \$900 financial contribution
- January 10, 2023: Grace Christian Reformed Church Cobourg: 12 people + \$2,285 financial contribution

### *Sleeping Cabin Open Houses*

In these appearances at community events, we've had the opportunity to feature the cabin for community members to better understand what a sleeping cabin is. In these open houses

community members had the opportunity to understand what the project is, what the state of homelessness is in Northumberland County and go inside the cabin to experience the structure.

- Oct 16/22: Community Sleeping Cabin Community Building, Grace Church: 50 people
- Oct 23/22: Grace Church, Open House, Port Hope: 80-90 people
- Nov 2/22: Corner of Chapel and Division Street, Cobourg: 25 people
- Nov 5/22: Christmas Market, Lions Club, Port Hope: 40 people
- Nov 3/22: YMCA Northumberland, Cobourg: 30 people
- Nov 7/22: Farmers Market Parking Lot, Cobourg: 30 people
- Nov 9/22: Green Wood Coalition Business Breakfast, Cobourg: 60 people
- Nov 9/22: Community 101 at Trinity United Church, Cobourg: 25 people
- Nov 16/22: St. John's Anglican Church, Pine St, Port Hope: 25 people
- Nov 20/22: St. Andrew's Church, Cobourg: 20 people
- Nov 26/22: Port Hope Santa Claus Parade
- Dec 4/22: The Port Christmas Market, Port Hope: 150 people
- Dec 3/22: Cobourg Santa Claus Parade
- Dec 15/22: Council Member Open House at St. Andrews, Cobourg: 5 people
- Feb 18/23: St. John's repair cafe, Port Hope: 50 people
- Feb 25th/23: Coldest Night of the Year, Port Hope: 300+ people
- March 21/23: Library Open House: 80 people
- March 30/23: Green Wood Coalition Community Listening on Homelessness: Upcoming Event at Cobourg Library

## **Community Open House - Local Area Residents**

On March 21, the Collective hosted an Open House for the community and local area residents between the hours of 4 - 8 pm at the Cobourg Public Library (fully accessible space). The model cabin was parked outside allowing people to view the structure. A robust FAQ sheet was offered, sticky notes for open input were offered and many important conversations with the community were had. Over 80 people were in attendance. Please see below in "What We Are Hearing" for specific citizen comments from this event.

As per the advice of Cobourg Communications Manager, this public consultation was advertised via a press release to local media distribution lists (radio and newspapers) (see Appendix A for press release), Facebook, postering of downtown businesses and personal email invitations. Flyering of the immediate Furnace street neighborhood (Victoria, Furnace, Ontario and University Streets on the same block as the proposed west parking lot of the arena) and the West Northumberland Curling Club was conducted. In total 35 flyers were delivered to that neighborhood.

Overwhelmingly, the feedback we received at the Open House was positive. Community members feel something must be done to improve the housing situation for our unsheltered neighbors and that this is one solution that could work. In addition to the comments which we

will know note below “In what we heard”;

- We received one cash donation
- 5 people signed up to volunteer with NSCC
- We handed out over 50 FAQ sheets
- 8 unsheltered community members attended to show their support and help answer questions
- A dental service volunteer organization (Northumberland Oral Health Association) attended to offer their dental supplies to the village once we are set up

## Community Engagement Survey

As per the advice of Cobourg Communication Manager, a digital survey was provided to the community to provide an additional opportunity to gain feedback from the entire community on the proposed project and its associated goals. This survey was conducted by citizen volunteers in accordance with town engagement guidelines.

In addition to last name and first initial, and first three digits of their postal code, three questions were asked of survey participants.

1. Do you support a sleeping cabin village at 206 Furnace Street, Cobourg? (Old Memorial Arena parking lot) - Yes/No
2. Do you support a Sleeping Cabin Village in Cobourg, in general? - Yes/No
3. I agree that the Town of Cobourg is in urgent need of more affordable housing and shelter. - Yes/No

In total **158 responses** came in with the 24 hour period the survey was active prior to this report being submitted.

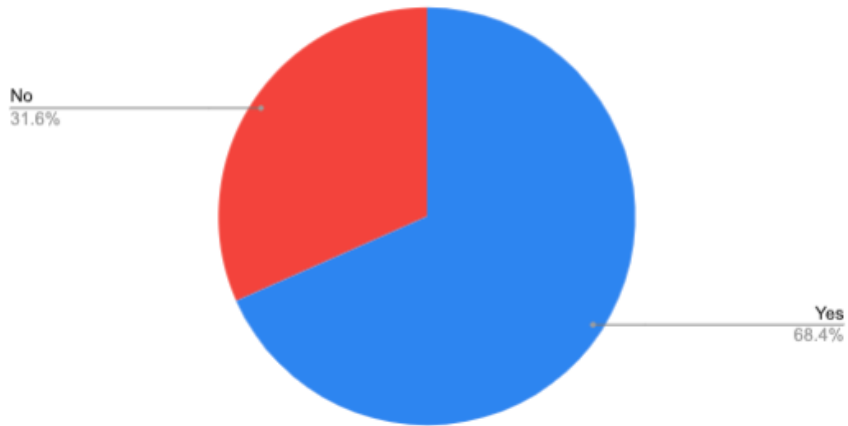
**Of the 158 respondents: 118 identified as having a K9A postal code.**

NSCC will keep the survey active and give an update re: the results of this survey at the April 3rd, 2023 delegation. Before that time, the Clerk will be provided with all associated data to ensure time for staff validation of survey results.

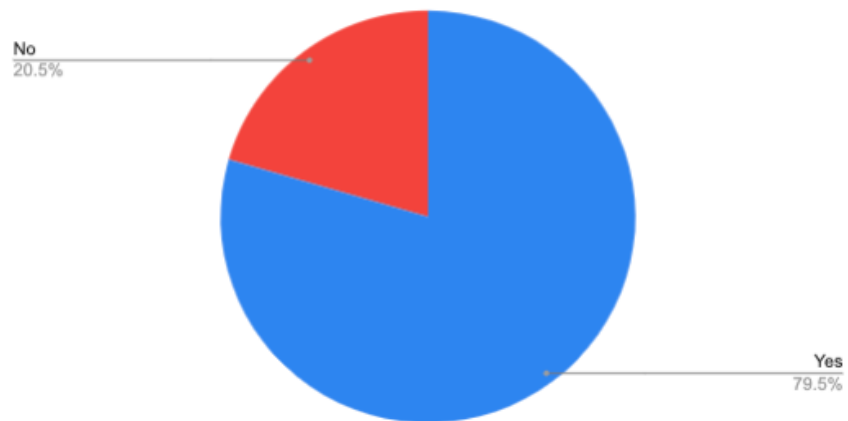
The results as of March 24th, 2:00pm are as follows:

***Of those 118, K9A respondents:***

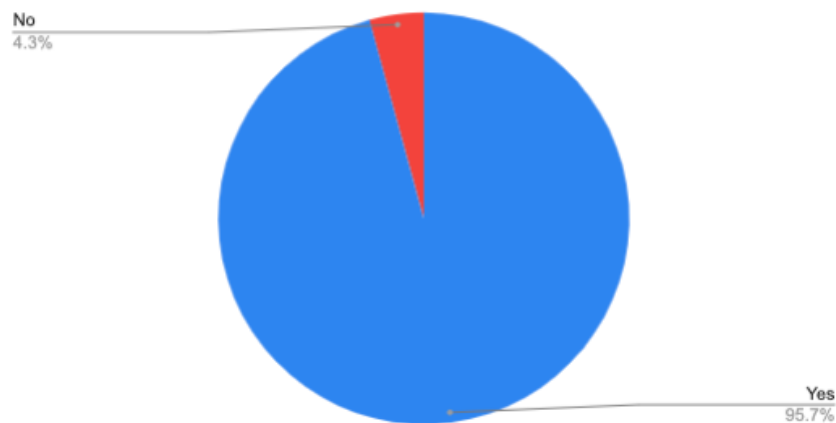
Do you support a Sleeping Cabin Village at 206 Furnace Street, Cobourg? (Old Memorial Arena parking lot)



Do you support a Sleeping Cabin Village location in Cobourg, in general?



I agree that the Town of Cobourg is in urgent need of more affordable housing and shelter.





## Service Provider and Partner Agency Engagement

### *Round Tables*

When NSCC is invited to Round Table discussions we typically give a short presentation, take questions and hear feedback in an informal setting. Members assigned to these round tables are aware of the project as per the presentation or agenda minutes.

- Dec 7/22: Mayors, Cobourg and Port Hope: Roundtable Discussion on Social Services
  - Attendees:
    - Green Wood Coalition
    - Mom's Stop the Harm
    - Habitat for Humanity
    - Children's Aid Society
    - Rebound
    - WrapAround Northumberland
    - Transition House
    - Five Counties Children's Center
- March 1/23: Northumberland Affordable Housing Committee
  - The organizations that sit on the committee are:
    - Canadian Mental Health Association
    - Habitat for Humanity Northumberland
    - The United Way Northumberland
    - The Legal Centre
    - The Haliburton, Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit
    - Community Power Northumberland Co-op Inc.
    - Alderville First Nation
    - St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
    - Highland Shores Children's Aid
    - Community Living
    - Northumberland County Community and Social Services
    - Northumberland Hills Hospital – Community Mental Health Services
    - The Help Centre
    - Transition House
- March 31/23: Homelessness Leadership Table
  - The organizations that participate in HLT are:
    - Cornerstone Family Violence Prevention Center
    - Canadian Mental Health Association Haliburton, Kawartha, Pineridge
    - FourCast
    - Green Wood Coalition
    - Northumberland County Community and Social Services
    - Northumberland Hills Hospital - Community Mental Health Services
- April 25/23: HCRT - Homelessness Coordinated Response Team: Meeting Upcoming

- The organizations that participate on HCRT are:
  - Canadian Mental Health Association
  - Cobourg Police Service
  - FourCAST
  - Green Wood Coalition
  - Northumberland County Community and Social Services
  - Northumberland Hills Hospital – Community Mental Health Services
  - Rebound Child and Youth Services
  - The Help Centre
  - The Salvation Army
  - Transition House

### *Overview of Project Specific Meetings with Service Providers and Municipal Council or Staff*

As seen through this meeting calendar documentation, NSCC has engaged members of the town and service providers throughout the process of its development, constantly looking for feedback or further contacts needed to forward this project through institutional requirements.

Nov 3: Call with Councillor Beatty

Nov 17: Opportunity for town and planning staff to learn about this initiative, and offer suggestions for how to interact with the council.

Services Present: Planning, David Hancock (Building Code), Brent Larmer (Town Clerk), Vanessa Russer (Town Planning), Brain Geerts (Community Services), Steve Koomen (Fire Prevention),

Nov 22: Meeting with Lucas Cleveland and Nicole Beatty, Town Hall Cobourg

Nov 23: Call with Chief VandeGraaf, Cobourg Police Service

Nov 28: Dwayne Campbell and Lisa Horne, Northumberland County Community & Social Srvc

Nov 29: Call with Olena Hankisky, Mayor of Port Hope

Nov 30: Meeting with Watton Employment

Nov 30: Call with Lucas Cleveland, Mayor of Cobourg

Nov 30: Meeting with Fair Share Food Bank

Dec 1: Meeting with Brett Larmer, Cobourg Town Clerk

Dec 1: Meeting with Theo Merepaza, Todd Davis, Port Hope Planning

Dec 6: Kelly Bairstow, CMHA KPR

Dec 6: Delegation to Port Hope Committee of the Whole

Dec 8: Meeting Anne Taylor, Brain Geert, Memorial Arena

Dec 20: Met with David Piccini, MPP

Jan 10: Anne Taylor and Vanessa Reusser (Cobourg Planning)

Jan 11: Pre-Consultation Meeting Planning Meeting with Town

- Services Invited:

- Planning - Anne Taylor Scott, Director of Planning and Development
- Planning - Vanessa Reusser, Manager of Development Review
- Building – Dave Hancock, Chief Building Official
- Engineering - Terry Hoekstra, Manager of Engineering & Special Projects
- Engineering - Rhianna Basinger, Engineering Technician
- Fire Department – Steven Koomen, Fire Prevention Officer
- Fire Department – Ellard Beavan, Fire Chief
- County Plumbing - Kirk Johnstone, County Senior Plumbing Inspector
- GRCA - Ken Thajer, GRCA Planning & Regulations Co-ordinator
- LUSI - Larry Spyrka, Lakefront Utility Services Inc. – Water
- LUI - Dereck Paul, Lakefront Utilities Inc. -Electrical
- Community Services – Brian Geerts, Director of Community Services
- Community Services – Jason Johns, Manager of Facilities
- Parks/Forestry - Rory Quigley, Manager of Parks
- Parks/Forestry - Eddie Cork, Municipal Arborist

Jan 15: Discussion with David Piccini and Lucas Cleveland at MPP NY Levee

Jan 15: Discussion with several Port Hope Councilors at NY Levee

Jan 25: Nicole Whitmore, Green Wood Coalition Outreach worker and Red Path Facilitator

Jan 27: Dr. Bonham Carter, Doctor with Ontario Addiction and Treatment Center

Feb 1: Meeting with Brett Larmer re: Licensing

Feb 7: Call with Abby Tobaco (HKPR Health Unit) and Bernie Mayer (Manager Environmental Health)

Feb 9: Morgan Emerson (NHH Homelessness Case Manager)

Feb 16: Counsellor Adam Bureau Conversation

Feb 17: Mayor Cleveland Conversation

Feb 17: Meeting with Debbie Wood (Help Center)

Mar 10: Meeting with Lisa Horne (Director, Community & Social Services) and Bill Smith (Housing Services Operation Supervisor)

March 24th: Meeting with Alison Stagg (Fourcast)

March 30th: Meeting with Chief VandeGraaf, CPS

## *Cobourg Police Services*

As part of our research for this initiative, members of NSCC have had extensive conversations with police, fire and planning departments to ensure consultation and clarity of community safety.

In the July 4<sup>th</sup> Staff Report entitled: (Larmer, Brent, 2022), town staff engaged with Cobourg Police Services (CPS) and Cobourg Fire Department in regards to concerns related to sheltering and permitting camping on municipal land.

In this report CPS stated that: “The Cobourg Police Service should not be a primary response to many of the issues surrounding homelessness....We support all community

agencies aimed at enhancing community safety and well-being. And we recognize that we are not the leaders in certain issues and want to support those agencies in resolving issues of greatest concern for them.”

In our conversations with Chief of Police, Paul VandeGraaf he was supportive of our initiative and stated: “homelessness is not our core police mandate. We unfortunately are left with the unexpected aftermath of the lack of supports.”

A further meeting with Chief VandeGraaf is scheduled for Mar. 30th.

## *Cobourg Fire*

The cabins will adhere to all building and fire code requirements set forth by the town and the province, much like any other development. After connecting with Cobourg Fire, the department provided a list of requirements for the village. All these requirements have been reviewed and incorporated into the village design and will be enforced.

1. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed and properly maintained in each cabin.
2. Any use of fuel-fired appliances inside a cabin shall be prohibited and strictly enforced.
3. Open air burning (i.e. campfires) anywhere on the site shall be prohibited and strictly enforced.
4. Unsafe use of electrical extension cords shall be prohibited.
5. The accumulation of excessive amounts of combustible materials in and around the cabin shall be prohibited and strictly enforced.
6. A minimum spatial separation of 3 metres shall be maintained between each cabin and all other structures.
7. Suitable access for emergency vehicles shall be maintained throughout the site. All access roads shall be a minimum of 6m in width and capable of bearing the weight of a 45,000 lb fire apparatus.

Additional recommendations that will be considered by the NSCC:

- Cabins should be fitted with doors that swing in an outward direction.
- Overhead, infrared heating units are preferred by fire prevention experts instead of electric baseboard heaters. Baseboard heaters can also easily be obstructed by stored items in such a limited space.

In the June 2022 staff report, Cobourg Fire staff reported many concerns with outdoor encampments such as: open air fires, dangers of propane heaters and other heating equipment and concerns about staff being overwhelmed by fire safety prevention calls. Many of their concerns are negated in a sleeping cabin village because all cabins and community trailers such as washroom and kitchen are heated, and fires will not be allowed on site.

## *Northumberland County Services*

In fall 2023, NSCC met with members of staff from Northumberland County Social Services and Planning (not an official consultation). At that time we asked if the County had any surplus land for affordable housing we could apply for and we were told that they were struggling to find land for their own housing projects.

As a result of this meeting, it was decided to approach the Town of Cobourg for a potential license for surplus land. NSCC is asking for a license agreement to use the Furnace Street/former Memorial Arena site as it has been previously identified as part of the town's land inventory, and designated within that document suitable for emergency, transitional and/or affordable housing.

NSCC has confirmed with Northumberland County Social Services that a direct deposit for OW housing for each resident can be made to NSCC to help cover monthly costs (as is commonly done with private landlords).

At our March 10/23 meeting, the County requested that we ask for a formal consultation to further determine how NSCC and Northumberland County (as the Service Manager for Housing and Homelessness), might partner to best work alongside the chronically unhoused individuals this project aims to support.

In order for this meeting to take place we were asked to provide the following in a 5 page document: summary of the project, summary of ask, whether or not NSCC is asking for money, explain how this project is a housing first approach, outline our participation agreement, explain our governance structure, explain how we fit into the Counties homelessness system and how we fill gaps in this system. The County is unable to provide us any official feedback until we request a formal consultation. We will not be moving forward with an official consultation until we have secured land.

## *HKPR Public Health Unit*

HKPR Public Health Unit has provided us with a letter of support for the project stating that:

*“Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective (NSCC) is a committee working to create a transitional cabin village that provides safe and secure living for those who are currently unsheltered. This is a housing first initiative that provides rapid shelter supportive services to individuals. The Health Unit will continue to provide support through consults and conduct an inspection of the facility once it is complete.”*

For the complete letter please see Appendix B.

Additional details to share on structural components: On February 7th, NSCC met with Abby Tabaco and Bernie Mayor from the Health Unit to discuss the shared kitchen trailer. They were very informative and helpful in discussing the various options with us. Since a commercial kitchen is much more expensive, they helped to outline that from their perspective we have the following alternative options:

- Less than 10 residents living on site we do not need a commercial kitchen.
- 10 or more residents: A commercial kitchen is not necessarily required and perhaps we could provide the following instead: a microwave and small fridge in each cabin and a small kitchenette in the trailer with no communal food prep and/or food is prepared off site, then delivered and warmed up on site.
- If we had a commercial kitchen we would need an extensive exhaust system. Without a stove we do not need this exhaust system. In a commercial kitchen we would need 4 sinks (handwashing, a food prep and 3 washing sinks- wash, rinse, sanitize)
- Regardless of if we have a commercial kitchen or not, the washroom trailer would need to be a separate trailer from the kitchen trailer
- They outlined we should speak with County plumbing to ensure we are meeting their standards as well. We have since had email contact with the Senior Plumbing and Sewage System Inspector but have yet to arrange a meeting.
- If we choose to go ahead with a commercial kitchen they directed us to the requirements for building a commercial kitchen.
  - [O. Reg. 493/17: FOOD PREMISES \(ontario.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/govt/reg/49317)
  - [Starter: A Guide to Opening and Operating a Food Premise \(phsd.ca\)](https://www.phsd.ca/food-premise)

When NSCC has obtained a license agreement we will follow up with the Health Unit and County.

## Additional Letters of Support

As reported in the Feb 21 delegation, NSCC has received letters of support, indicating that the following social services **will provide onsite services for our residents:**

- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Kawartha Pine Ridge Four County crisis manager
- Watton Employment (employment services)
- Fare Share Food Bank
- Green Wood Coalition (specializing in harm reduction, outreach support with navigating social services and health care systems, Red Path in community treatment programming and WrapAround training and facilitation)
- Help Centre (for affordable housing case management, Rentsmart courses, Tax courses)
  - NEW LETTER - see Appendix C
- Fourcast (addiction counseling) - verbal support, letter to come soon

We are working towards similar on site partnerships and have had meetings with the following organizations to begin to determine how best to work together with our residents, which will ultimately require more specificity of timeline to move forward:

- Northumberland Hills Hospital (mental health and homelessness outreach services)
- Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre (for methadone treatment)

## Media Appearances

Nov 7: 93.3 MyFm Interview

Nov 7: Northumberland News, *"A better alternative to a tent - check out the sleeping cabin touring Port Hope/Cobourg"*

Nov 17: Green Wood Newsletter, *"Mobilizing Around Housing"*

Nov 17: Cobourg Now, "Small Homes Projects Anxious to Proceed"

Dec 19: Today's Northumberland, *"Cobourg Council - Cobourg May House Sleeping Cabin Pilot Project"*

Dec 21: Global Peterborough News Interview, *"Sleeping Cabin's Proposed for those experiencing homeless in Northumberland County"*

Dec 22: Peterborough Examiners, *"Cobourg Council will consider Sleeping Cabin Pilot at Memorial Arena Site"*

Jan 7: Northumberland 89.7, Robert Washborn, Consider This, *"Sleeping Cabin proposal before Cobourg Council Unpacked"*

Jan 7: Northumberland News, *"Sleeping Cabin Group to meet with Cobourg Planning Staff"*

Jan 8: Northumberland 89.7, Interview

Jan 9: The Northumberland News, *"CNOY calls on Northumberland to help with outreach, Sleeping Cabins"*

Jan 10: CBC Ontario Morning with Ramraajh Sharvendiran, *"A new initiative to combat homelessness in Cobourg."*

Feb 20: Northumberland Women Radio Show on 89.7FM

March 16: Northumberland News article, *"Cabin Collective Hosting Open House"*

## Unique Donations

NSCC's fundraising efforts will remain minimal until land is secured. That said, in December, we put a call out on Facebook for donations and since that point donations have steadily come in. To date we have raised \$40,000. Most donations have been made by individuals, service clubs and organizations. Once NSCC has obtained a license agreement for a site we will initiate a capital campaign and begin applying for grants. We feel it is important to note that 90 people/organizations made up of many people support the concept of NSCC so much they are willing to donate to us in the early phases of our planning. We feel confident that once we have a site we will be able to raise the remaining \$120,000 required for the capital campaign and operations for 6 months (see budget in historical documentation). The majority of donations have come from within Cobourg and Port Hope.

Please see statistics about these donations below.

- Unique donations: 90

- Service clubs: 4
- Businesses: 6
- Church donations: 3
- Individual donations by address:
  - Cobourg: 20
  - Port Hope: 17
  - Greater Northumberland County: 7
  - Other towns/cities: 6
  - Anonymous unknown location: 25

## Third Party Fundraising

These organizations and business promoted the project to their customers and supporters:

- All Creatures Great and Small - \$5143.54
- Ten Thousand Villages - \$550
- George and Orange - \$103
- Let's Talk Books - \$519.50
- Coldest Night of the Year, Green Wood Coalition - \$10,000
- 100 Guys Who Care - several \$1,00, total is unknown at this time

## Facebook Interaction

- 833 followers on <https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandcabins>
- 536 likes
- The Facebook page was created on October 5/22. Since that time, we have created or shared **95 posts** that provided community members with an opportunity to engage with the initiative.
- Top Post was on Jan 4, 2023. This post was asking community members if an engineer or planner could volunteer some time with the committee. 8561 post impressions (the # of times this post was on a screen), 720 post engagements (the # of times people shared, liked or clicked on the link to view the post).
- Of the 145 comments made on our posts, 10% did not identify that they were supportive. Of that 10%, which were made of 4 individuals, most of the comments were in support of housing for folks experiencing homelessness, but identified living in the Furnace St. neighbourhood and were concerned about the logistics.
- 693 content interactions on Facebook

## What we are hearing:

During the past six months we've had the opportunity to learn from our community. We have heard how important this project is to the community at large and the absolute necessity for real and tangible solutions to the housing crisis in Northumberland County.



Overwhelmingly we've heard support for the project. As stated above, we have received offers of donations from individuals, local businesses, community organizations, service clubs and faith groups. We have had the opportunity to see first-hand how much our community cares and is willing to support this project and housing solutions in Northumberland. From these open houses we have a list of over 70 people willing to volunteer for NSCC when we need help.

Some themes that have emerged from community feedback to date:

Impact of the surrounding community, life for village residents and governance. Additionally we have heard specific feedback from the community related to the housing and homelessness crisis which NSCC hopes the council finds useful:

- **The homelessness situation should be seen and treated as a crisis**
  - *"It is a "bloody" emergency – we need to do something now."*
  - *"It is a local temporary solution - until a better solution is found."*
  - *"Are these folks not part of our community?"*
- **The need for more affordable options in our community**
  - *"We need more supportive and affordable housing in the County"* - This was said by virtually everyone at the consultation.
  - *"This is the first step in a long process of funding affordable housing."*
  - *"The County should find a solution to the homeless issue– why hasn't the County been part of this proposal?"* It was noted that NSCC have been in contact with the County.
- **Community members expressed concern about the location and suggested other areas to consider**
  - *"I have a concern about how everything fitting on Furnace Street – curling club parking, police uses old arena for training - you should find a better place."*
  - *"How about using the land (industrial) on Kerr at Darcy?"*
  - *"What about Brookside?"*
- **Community members are generally supportive and interested to know how they can help**
  - *"What can I, as an individual do to further encourage and support NSCC?"*
  - *"I think it is a great idea - needs to be done"*
  - *"Everyone deserves a safe place to be."*
  - *"No shortage of land, just a shortage of will power."*

The most common concern we've heard is about community safety. We acknowledge this concern and have created a FAQ to provide a response to address the above themes and many of the concerns we've received.

This FAQ is an important document for our community and for the Council to know we have responded to the concerns we have heard. This document can be reviewed in Appendix D.

## **Part 2: Detailed Plan of Governance Structure**

### **Green Wood Coalition and NSCC Partnership**

Green Wood Coalition (GWC) is a street level organization operating in Port Hope and Cobourg (Northumberland more broadly) since 2009. They work daily to support individuals living sheltered and unsheltered, with meals, survival gear, harm reduction supplies and system navigation. They specialize locally in harm reduction (partnership with PARN), addiction support (Red Path Facilitation) and Wraparound Support programming. Their strengths are relationship based support, community activation and creating spaces for trauma informed healing through creative expression.

NSCC is a special project of Green Wood Coalition (GWC). The vision for the NSCC project developed throughout the summer and fall of 2022, after a series of community activation sessions hosted by GWC inviting the local community to consider, “What can the community do to support the homelessness crisis?” Working on the front lines of homelessness crisis and the drug poisoning crisis and being involved in service provision during the pandemic running the 2020 warming room, GWC is acutely aware of the increasing challenges our community faces around homelessness. Through their work with communities, it is also quite clear, our community members have abundant skills and talents and are waiting to be asked to contribute to the challenges they care about within our community. The group of citizens associated with NSCC regularly meets with Green Wood Coalition staff to discuss challenges and opportunities for this project.

GWC is managing all finances including budgets, donations, tax receipts, and fund distribution. **They are the legal entity of the project** and will manage all governance, insurance and signing of any required contracts.

Board Members of Green Wood Coalition Include:

- Caleb Carisse (Board Chair since 2019)
- Phil Redford (Board Member since 2019)
- Shane Watson (Board Member since 2022)
- Leslie Lester (Board Member since 2022)
- Missy McLean (Board Member since 2022)
- Emily Taylor ( Board Member since 2022)

Current Green Wood Staff:

- David Sheffield (Executive Director)
- Nicole Whitmore (Outreach Coordinator)
- Joyce Lichtenberger (Outreach Worker)
- Jenna Braun (Outreach Worker)
- Lana Missen (Capacity Development Coordinator)
- Sophie Kneisel (Administrative Coordinator)
- Aimme Jonston (Community Connector)

In partnership with GWC, the NSCC steering committee **will provide operational oversight of the village**. They will be responsible for all planning and fundraising initiatives for the site, managing volunteers, coordinating logistics, overseeing residents and resident council and providing wraparound services. One resident will be elected by the other residents to be part of the NSCC steering committee.

As more information becomes clear with a licensing agreement, so will the needs related to this structure.

## **Village Community Charter & Operational Policies**

This project proposes a transitional housing solution for people experiencing low acuity, chronic homelessness in Northumberland County.

While not co-operative housing by definition, many of the principles are similar. Residents have a vested interest and actively participate in making their housing community work. They pay housing costs that are geared to their income and are members of a community that is successful because of the engagement of all parties.

Resident selection is being modeled with these principles in mind. It is crucial that potential residents understand the participatory nature of this housing model and that they will be required to actively engage in its success.

NSCC has begun to cultivate this community with active participation in a consultation and community-building process in the form of weekly dinners with individuals interested in participating with NSCC as residents.

Sleeping cabin residents will be program participants rather than formal tenants, according to the Residential Tenancies Act, which includes exclusions for temporary, transitional housing that includes rehabilitative or therapeutic services. This means that participants will not have the legal rights of a tenant, nor access to the Landlord-Tenant Board, and will not sign a lease. Rather participants will be brought in through an intake process and may be removed from the program through a discharge process, rather than formal eviction proceedings.

Program participants will be selected based on referral from partner organizations, with final selection being approved by Green Wood Coalition leadership. Participants must be experiencing chronic homelessness within Northumberland County in order to apply.

The sleeping cabin residents will be active participants in the governance of the sleeping cabin village through a leadership team made up of 4 elected residents. These 4 residents will participate in bi-weekly meetings with residents and program staff, as well as monthly meetings with NSCC steering committee leadership. The village meetings will allow community members to resolve issues as they arise and to discuss each person's roles and responsibilities as needed. A paid project manager may provide facilitation scaffolding if required.

**What does self governance mean?** Self governance means that residents will be accountable to one another. Issues will be escalated to the steering committee if the resident council has been unsuccessful in resolution. At which point, NSCC staff and the steering committee will work to facilitate mediation and, if necessary, eviction interventions.

The following basic rules will apply to the village community:

1. I will not commit violence.
2. I will not persist in disruptive behaviour.
3. I respect each person's property and the property of the village—I will not steal or damage property.
4. I will contribute to the operation and maintenance of the village and attend bi-weekly village meetings.
5. I will treat others with respect regardless of beliefs, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and background.
6. I will be a positive member of this community and surrounding neighborhood making it a safe, secure and pleasant place to live.

## **6-month Pilot Project Viability**

There has been some expressed concern about the project's viability as being a pilot project of 6 months. The intention of positioning this as a pilot is to gain buy-in from our institutional partners, learn about running the village within our Cobourg context and provide relief for residents currently living unsheltered.

After consultation with NSCC potential residents living unsheltered, a temporary solution of 6 months is not a barrier. Six months is a longer duration than any available current emergency responses/shelters. If the village did have to move at the end of six months, residents living would move with it, a minor inconvenience in comparison to the current realities of finding shelter while living rough.

Should a council member like to see an extension to the pilot project period, we encourage members of council to contact us and determine how best to motion for that.

## APPENDIX A: Press Release

Alastair McKeating  
Chair  
Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective  
647-308-2252  
alastairmckeating@gmail.com

**For Immediate Release: 03/09/2023**

### **Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective (NSCC) hosts Community Open House at Cobourg Public Library Tuesday March 21st 4-8pm.**

*Citizen group invites the public to check out their proposal to address the immediate needs of Cobourg residents experiencing homelessness. A prototype of the cabin will be on site.*

**Cobourg, ON:** A group of concerned volunteers from across Northumberland County has proposed to Council one small part of the solution to the housing crisis we face.

As a transitional, emergency response to fill the gap in housing, the group proposes a “village” of 9-12 sleeping cabins: small, “bunkie” style insulated units, where a person can shelter, sleep, and keep themselves and their belongings safe. Washrooms and cooking facilities are shared in a separate common space. This supportive housing program will include on-site management, and offer social services such as mental health and addiction counselling and WrapAround Facilitation.

Successful examples of this sleeping cabin village can be found in Kingston and Waterloo. A Peterborough group is currently working towards a similar goal. Established sleeping cabin villages have existed across the USA for years. From them NSCC has incorporated not just the cabin prototype, but also the governance, resident supports, and community integration to prove village viability over time and help residents transition to longer term housing.

NSCC has been working with the Town of Cobourg to licence a location for a 6-month pilot project to house 9-12 people experiencing homelessness. As part of the process, NSCC is hosting a Community Open House at the **Cobourg Public Library on March 21st 4-8pm**. NSCC has borrowed a sample sleeping cabin from the established Kingston village. The public is invited to drop in and understand how the project has evolved, share their ideas, hopes, concerns and feedback with the Collective so that we can evolve further.

Alastair McKeating, who chairs the Collective, states: “our engagement to-date with hundreds of Northumberland residents continues to inspire us to become the first achievable piece to bridge the housing gap that we all acknowledge is a heart-breaking situation. It’s not the best solution, it’s not the long term solution, but it can provide some respite for a small number and other providers can follow with more enduring solutions.”

**About Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective:** We are members of Northumberland County – housed and unhoused – advocating for a pragmatic emergency response to the need for shelter and housing for our neighbours. We are only the first step.

Find out more at: [www.facebook.com/northumberlandcabins](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandcabins)

## Appendix B: Letter of Support from Health Unit



March 21, 2023

[www.hkpr.on.ca](http://www.hkpr.on.ca) • [info@hkpr.on.ca](mailto:info@hkpr.on.ca)

1-866-888-4577

Alastair McKeating, Chair  
 Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective  
 4 Centennial Drive  
 Port Hope, Ontario  
 L1A 4C54

Dear Mr. Alastair McKeating,

RE: Letter of Support for Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective

As Medical Officer of Health for the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, I am writing to express support for the Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective. Together with our communities, the Health Unit strives to improve health for all by promoting and protecting the health of those who live, work, learn and play in Haliburton County, Northumberland County, and the City of Kawartha Lakes.

The Health Unit's Environmental Health team has met with the organizers to ensure they are aware of the requirements relating to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* and its regulations to ensure the health and safety of the residents who will be using the sleeping cabins in the Municipality of Cobourg. Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective (NSCC) is a committee working to create a transitional cabin village that provides safe and secure living for those who are currently unsheltered. This is a housing first initiative that provides rapid shelter supportive services to individuals. The Health Unit will continue to provide support through consults and conduct an inspection of the facility once it is complete.

Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Abby Tabaco, Emergency Management and Health Hazard Coordinator at [atabaco@hkpr.on.ca](mailto:atabaco@hkpr.on.ca) or at 1-866-888-4577 x 1333.

Yours truly,

BOARD OF HEALTH FOR THE HALIBURTON,  
 KAWARTHA, PINE RIDGE DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

Dr. Natalie Bocking, MD, MIPH, CCFP, FRCPC  
 Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer  
 NB:at

## PROTECTION · PROMOTION · PREVENTION

**HEAD OFFICE**  
 200 Rose Glen Road  
 Port Hope, Ontario L1A 3V6  
 Phone · 1-866-888-4577  
 Fax · 905-885-9551

**HALIBURTON OFFICE**  
 Box 570  
 191 Highland Street, Unit 301  
 Haliburton, Ontario K0M 1S0  
 Phone · 1-866-888-4577  
 Fax · 705-457-1336

**LINDSAY OFFICE**  
 108 Angeline Street South  
 Lindsay, Ontario K9V 3L5  
 Phone · 1-866-888-4577  
 Fax · 705-324-0455

## Appendix C: Letter of Support from Help Center



1005 Elgin St. West, Suite 301  
 Cobourg, ON K9A 5J4  
 Charitable Reg. No.: 88894 3198 RR0001  
[www.thehelpandlegalcentre.ca/help](http://www.thehelpandlegalcentre.ca/help)



Phone (905) 372-2646  
 Fax (905) 372-2205  
 Toll free (888) 698-3382

February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023

**RE: Support Letter for Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective**

To Whom It May Concern,

The Help Centre is pleased to support the Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective project. Since 1983, The Help Centre has been supporting and assisting our vulnerable residents who are facing homelessness, are at risk of homelessness or facing housing instability. As an organization committed to provide social-justice advocacy, education, and direct services to empower the disadvantaged and vulnerable low-income residents of Northumberland County, we applaud the effort from the Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective to support and help those who are battling homelessness in our community.

Our agency will be committed to scheduled visits to your location and provide housing services, advocacy, referrals to other community organizations, rental listings, among others.

This initiative is a significant and important step towards helping to ensure that the most vulnerable residents of our community have access to housing, community resources, health services and food.

The Help Centre welcomes the opportunity to work with you on this to improve the well-being of our disadvantaged community members.

Sincerely,

Patricia Orantes Kamphorst  
 Executive Director, The Help Centre

## Appendix D: Northumberland Sleeping Cabin FAQs





# frequently asked questions

**The following Q&A is based on questions that the Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective have been asked by members of the public, politicians or government staff.**

## impacts on the surrounding community

**Q Will it increase evidence of drug use and criminal activity in our community?**

**A** Homelessness, substance abuse, and community mental health are already at the top of mind for all Cobourg residents (see the Town's recent pre-consult for budget priorities). The only way to reduce homelessness is to provide shelter alternatives. Sleeping cabins are only one such alternative, positioned as an emergency transitional alternative to sleeping outside until a broader range of housing alternatives are built. Our approach is based on the concept of Housing First; a belief that those facing substance use or mental health issues will be better equipped to address their recovery if their attention is not focused exclusively on surviving the next night on the streets. A sleeping cabin village is more than a collection of cabins.

Our first delegation report contains references to several studies that have examined the relationship between stabilizing shelter and criminal activity. Consistent findings have demonstrated that people who would be housed in a sleeping cabin are much more likely to be victims of crimes than their neighbours who are housed. Providing housing for the unsheltered can reduce crime by providing a safe place to sleep and live rather than resorting to crime in order to survive on the streets.

**Q How is the sleeping cabin village different from an encampment?**

**A** Encampments are typically a collection of tents or other structures that provide neither security of person or belongings. Encampments are set up by folks as a last resort to seek shelter from the elements. Sleeping cabins offer stability, heat and privacy for residents in a way that tents simply cannot.



Follow us on Facebook: Northumberland Sleeping Cabins Collective



# frequently asked questions

## impacts on the surrounding community continued

### **Q Will the village reduce the value of my home?**

**A** There is no evidence from other established sleeping cabin communities that it will. House prices are much more susceptible to interest rate fluctuations and more general market conditions. A broader study on supportive housing conducted in Toronto found that, “there was no evidence that the existence of the supportive housing buildings studied has negatively affected either property values or crime rates in the neighbourhood. Property values have increased and crime decreased in the period considered by the study.”

*(de Wolff, Alice. We are Neighbours: The Impact of Supportive Housing on Community, Social, Economic, and Attitude Changes, 2008, Wellesley Institute, p.iv.)*

### **Q Is a Sleeping Cabin different from a Tiny Home?**

**A** Yes. A Tiny Home is a self-contained unit with washroom, kitchen, sleeping area, and potentially more depending on the design. Tiny Homes are considered permanent housing. They may be gathered into communities, similar to a Sleeping Cabin village, or they may be combined with a wide range of housing options (sleeping cabins, tiny homes, rent-geared-to-income apartments, etc.). Think Tiny Homes Northumberland (TTHN) is a project similar to NSCC in that it is proposing a village of multiple units, and like NSCC is willing to explore a combination of housing solutions.

### **Q Is this a long-term solution/commitment?**

**A** No. This is a proof of concept – of the solution and the community. If the pilot is not extended past 6 months, the village can be dismantled. If the project continues, the village can expand/replicate to provide emergency housing until more and better solutions exist. It is more refined than an encampment and the only practical solution that can be up and running before next winter.

### **Q Is locking village residents inside a fence segregating them?**

**A** Village residents will live behind a fence but they are not locked in. They leave and enter at will. The access will be controlled to prevent non-residents from unauthorized access (they must be signed in by a resident). The potential residents themselves have asked for the controlled access for their safety and well-being.



Follow us on Facebook: Northumberland Sleeping Cabins Collective



# frequently asked questions

The following Q&A is based on questions that the Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective have been asked by members of the public, politicians or government staff.

## life for village residents

**Q Will residents be living with dependence on alcohol or drugs?**

**A** The instability that homelessness brings also leads to folks using coping strategies that are not ideal. As such, there will be residents who are living with a dependence on alcohol or drugs. Housing First principles tell us that people need access to secure and affordable housing before they can heal.

The sleeping cabin community will include access to a staff person and trained facilitators who can work with residents to heal.

**Q Will residents be able to use drugs and drink alcohol?**

**A** Yes. Just as residents of any home in Northumberland are able to. This is supported housing that will give people the dignity of autonomy over their living situation, it's not a dry community, and will operate from a harm reduction perspective.

**Q What is harm reduction?**

**A** Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences of drug use: safer use, managed use, and abstinence. It is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs. Harm reduction addresses conditions of use along with the use itself. There are many resources online that explain this practice.  
<https://harmreduction.org/about-us/principles-of-harm-reduction/>

**Q Who can visit the village residents?**

**A** The village environment will encourage family visits of children visiting parents who had no prior safe and welcoming place to reconnect. This is one of the reasons we have confidence that village residents will want to maintain a safe environment.



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# frequently asked questions

## life for village residents continued

### **Q** What is Wrap Around?

**A** Wrap Around facilitation is a person driven, team-based planning process that develops an individualized plan drawing from personal strengths to develop strategies to address a person's needs/goals. This facilitation will enable the residents to work towards their goals and decide which other social services may be appropriate to utilize/access on site.

### **Q** What do you mean by Wrap Around Facilitation?

**A** A trained facilitator works with the individual accessing the Wrap Around program. Through the facilitation process, the individual/family create a team and identify their individual strengths and challenges. The team works collaboratively to honour those strengths and develop an individualized plan and strategies to effectively address the person's/family's individualized needs on a day to day basis creating opportunity for incremental success. Wrap Team members ensure formal supports are arranged and the service provider partnerships listed above will ensure we have service navigation pathways with formal and specialized services as needed.

An outcome of the Wrap is a plan which builds upon the foundation of the person's strengths and promotes empowerment. In this way, our goal is to put people back in charge of their lives so that they don't feel helpless and powerless. Rather, we teach and support them how to direct their own change process which often leads to hope that their life can be different.

### **Q** Are residents required to participate in a Wrap?

**A** No. It is completely voluntary. However, because the focus is on recognition of individual strengths and self identification of obstacles, folks are typically very receptive to participating. Through the building of this initiative, potential residents have identified that they would like facilitated support such as a Wrap.



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# frequently asked questions

## life for village residents continued

### **Q Which services will be available to residents? Are they required to engage?**

**A**

The following service providers have committed to supporting village residents:

- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Kawartha Pine Ridge Four County crisis manager
- Watton Employment (employment services)
- Fare Share Food Bank
- Green Wood Coalition (specializing in harm reduction, outreach support with navigating social services and health care systems, Red Path in community treatment programming and Wrap Around training and facilitation)
- Help Centre (for affordable housing case management, Rentsmart and Tax courses)

NSCC has also engaged with the following services in hopes of partnering:

- FourCast (addiction counselling)
- Northumberland Hills Hospital (mental health and homelessness outreach services)
- Ontario Addiction Treatment Centre (methadone treatment)

Residents will not be required to engage these services. Many residents will either be clients already, or will avail themselves of services unavailable while 'living rough'.

### **Q How will potential residents be screened?**

**A**

Candidates experiencing chronic homelessness in the County will be invited to join the village as space becomes available. Invitations will not be based strictly on highest acuity (need) nor the County's 'By Name' list of the homeless, but rather their readiness to improve their lives, fit in and contribute to the community and approved by Green Wood Coalition. To this end, potential residents have been meeting regularly for dinners hosted by GWC to assist in program development.

### **Q What about washrooms and kitchens?**

**A**

We're hoping that the site will have these services, but if they do not - we will bring in a trailer or two that is equipped with these services and will operate in accordance with health unit requirements.



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# frequently asked questions

**The following Q&A is based on questions that the Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective have been asked by members of the public, politicians or government staff.**

## **governance**

**Q What is the structure/interaction among Northumberland Sleeping Cabin Collective (NSCC), Green Wood Coalition (GWC), Residents, and other service providers?**

**A** NSCC is (currently) a group of concerned citizen volunteers from across Northumberland County, operating as a Steering Committee for the project and existing as a special project of GWC. The Steering Committee will oversee the operational aspects of the village, conduct all fundraising, manage volunteers, coordinate logistics, and overseeing the Resident Council. The Steering Committee will also coordinate third party services (e.g. Wrap Around facilitation).

Day to day management of the site will be governed by the residents, as active participants in the governance of the sleeping cabin village, through a Resident Council made up of 4 elected residents. These 4 residents will participate in bi-weekly meetings with residents and program staff, as well as monthly meetings with NSCC Steering Committee. The village meetings will allow community members to resolve issues as they arise and to discuss each person's roles and responsibilities as needed. They will be supported by one full time staff position who may provide facilitation if required.

GWC currently operates as the financial partner of the Collective (approving budgets, holding donations, offering income tax receipts, and disbursing funds as required). GWC is the legal entity of the project that will manage all governance, insurance, and signing of any contracts.

Discussions are under way to incorporate the Collective, potentially along with a similar initiative such as Think Tiny Homes Northumberland. Until that happens, the NSCC will remain under the governance structure of GWC.



**Follow us on Facebook: Northumberland Sleeping Cabins Collective**



# frequently asked questions

## **governance** continued

**Q How will this project integrate with Cobourg/Northumberland County Social Services for folks experiencing homelessness?**

**A** Much like the Housing and Homelessness Plan published by Northumberland County in 2019, the NSCC is simply one proposed solution to address the lack of deeply affordable housing stock in our community. Collectively, we all want our community to be enjoyed by all of its residents and we acknowledge that housing stability can be tricky. This pilot has been designed to give folks who are currently experiencing homelessness a voice and choice.

This project has been designed to be community driven and funded. We are hoping that land designated as ideal for affordable housing through the Town of Cobourg's Affordable Housing CIP process will be available for use by the NSCC for our pilot.

**Q Are village residents 'tenants' under the Ontario Residential Tenancies Act?**

**A** Residents will sign, and be bound by a signed Village Agreement that has worked in other sleeping cabin communities. The agreement lays out mutually agreed to basic rules for behaviour and contribution to the well-being of the village.

Sleeping cabin residents will be program participants rather than formal tenants, which includes exclusions for temporary, transitional housing that includes rehabilitative or therapeutic services. Participants will be brought in through an intake process and may be removed from the program through a discharge process, rather than formal eviction proceedings.

**Q How will the village remain financially sustainable?**

**A** To date, we have raised over \$40,000 from private donations for capital/up-front costs with little to no contribution requested of or required by any level of municipal government (however we are examining provincial or federal grant money available to such community initiatives).

Ongoing maintenance will be covered in part by the monthly financial contributions required by residents – whether from employment earnings or, if unemployed, by their Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program shelter allowance.



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# frequently asked questions

## **governance** continued

### **Q How will residents enforce the rules they agree to?**

**A**

The rules of the village are being developed by prospective residents, and so they'll be 'enforcing' the behaviours they agree/aspire to. Part of the governance of the village is how to deal with non-compliance to the ideals of creating a community. Governance is intended to model ideal community behaviour in a supportive rather than punitive manner in order to prepare residents for living in permanent housing. It will be up to the village residents – with the support of Green Wood Coalitions outreach staff – to learn to deal with non-compliance. Some of the rules will be dictated by, say, Fire Prevention standards and will be strictly enforced for safety reasons.

### **Q What does self-governance mean?**

**A**

Creating trust with folks that have experienced homelessness also means acknowledging that a sense of autonomy is critical. The NSCC village is modeled on the historically successful Opportunity Village in Eugene, that operates with 1 staff and site self-governance/management done by the residents. They have been operating since 2013 and have many different villages. Similarly to other sleeping cabin villages, there will be a part time staff person hired.

Self governance means that residents will be accountable to one another based on the mutual set of rules the community has created. Issues that cannot be resolved by the resident council will only be escalated to the steering committee if the resident council has been unsuccessful in mediating conflict. At which point, NSCC staff and the steering committee will work to facilitate eviction interventions.



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# frequently asked questions

**governance**  
continued

**Q** Wouldn't it be more cost effective to simply raise money to subsidize the rent of people currently unsheltered?

**A** We don't believe this is scalable, due in part to the lack of affordable housing in the County. Renting an apartment would require the provision of much more up front (appliances and furniture). Moreover, scattering people across the County would scatter the need for support services necessary to fully transition to a successful member of the community. Simple as the sleeping cabins are, we see the larger value as the self supporting community that it will create.

**Q** What happens if the project does not continue past the pilot?

**A** We have a decommission budget line; hard dollar costs will be nominal. Cabins are easy to move – ideally to another location. The impact on physical plant at the location ought to enhance the value of the property rather than require remediation (e.g. the removal of a fence around the community).

When a resident is discharged from the program or the pilot project ends, GWC staff will make every reasonable attempt to assist the participant in finding appropriate alternate accommodations (e.g. shelter, longer-term affordable housing, other programs).

**Q** What can I, as an individual do to further encourage and promote the need for such cabins?

**A** Please continue sharing our posts on social media. Reach out to local officials at the Town of Cobourg to express your support. Chat with your friends and neighbours. Through all of our consultation efforts, we have found that most everyone agrees that we are experiencing a housing crisis. If you have concerns and idea, bring them forward.



Follow us on Facebook: Northumberland Sleeping Cabins Collective