SUBJECT: Interim Funding for Neighbour to Neighbour Centre Resource Counselling Program (CS09062(a)) (Wards 6, 7, 8 and 9)

RECOMMENDATION:

That the General Manager of the Community Services Department be authorized and directed to fund the Neighbour to Neighbour Resource Counselling Program, from October 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010, at a cost of $39,716 from the Social Services Initiative Fund.

Joe-Anne Priel
General Manager,
Community Services Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Neighbour to Neighbour Resource Counselling Program provides important services to Hamilton Mountain residents. Funding from the federally funded Homelessness Partnering Strategy ended September 31, 2009. Community Services staff recommend that the Resource Counselling Program be funded on an interim basis from October 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010. A Program Enhancement has been submitted for annualized funding for this program through the City of Hamilton’s 2010 budget process.

Report CS09062 was brought forward on September 9, 2009 informing Emergency and Community Services Committee of the loss of funding for the Neighbour to Neighbour Resource Counselling Program and to propose short and long-term funding sources. In follow-up, the request to utilize funding from the Social Services Initiative Fund requires Council approval.
SUBJECT: Short-Term Funding for Neighbour to Neighbour Centre's Resource Counselling Program (CS09062(a)) (Wards 6, 7, 8 & 9)

BACKGROUND:

The Neighbour to Neighbour Resource Counselling Program provides support to people who need assistance with housing, utility arrears, emergency food, and/or legal or domestic abuse issues. The program provides some services directly and in other cases it provides clients with information and referrals to other agencies as well as advocacy services. It is the only program of this nature located on the Hamilton Mountain. The Program operates with paid staff and volunteers at an annual cost of approximately $80,000 per year.

Funding through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) ended September 31, 2009. The Resource Counseling Program’s application for renewed funding did not meet the HPS new funding criteria.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Staff recommends that the Resource Counseling Program be funded at a cost of $39,716 from October 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 through the Social Services Initiative Fund as a bridge to potential annualized funding from the City. A Program Enhancement has been submitted as part of the City of Hamilton’s 2010 budget process.

If funding is not provided, the program may cease operation or operate in a greatly reduced format. Hamilton Mountain residents would need to seek services at other agencies, most of which are located in the lower city. This would present a barrier for some residents due to transportation issues and lack of familiarity with the downtown area.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

None.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial:
The cost of the Resource Counselling Program for six months is $39,716. Once the funding is drawn from the Social Services Initiative Fund, it will be close to exhausted.

Staffing:
No additional staff resources will be required.

Legal:
There are no legal implications.
SUBJECT: Short-Term Funding for Neighbour to Neighbour Centre's Resource Counselling Program (CS09062(a)) (Wards 6, 7, 8 & 9)

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:
No policies affect this proposal.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:
Corporate Services Department, Finance and Administration Section

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:
By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, and economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Shelter, care and satisfying employment are accessible to all Hamiltonians.

Providing financial support to the Resource Counselling Program will ensure that people residing on Hamilton Mountain have access to valuable social services while longer term funding is being sought through the 2010 Budget Process.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Poverty is reduced.
The Resource Counselling Program helps clients access housing, employment and health services that are foundational for individuals attempting to climb out of poverty.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?
☐ Yes ☑ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?
☐ Yes ☑ No