



HAMILTON URBAN CORE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE
Strong Core Healthier Lives

Summary Notes - Community Meeting
October 31, 2025

Meeting Participants

Resident Representatives: Jonathan Garyfalakis (Meeting Chair), Joda Eisenberg, Megan Rafuse, Jordan Axani, Rony Mikael, Noah Taylor, Emily Garyfalakis

Hamilton Urban Core Representatives: Ike Agbassi, Board Chair; Dr. Sandy Ezepue, Executive Director; Tiffany Toplin, Manager, Substance Use Health; Wilson Lapointe, Senior Manager, Integrated Care and Client Experience; Joel MacLeod, Marketing and Communications Lead; Simone Atungo, Special Projects Advisor (virtual); and Rozan Robinson, Executive Assistant (minutes)

Elected Officials: Dr. Robin Lennox, MPP Hamilton Centre and Maureen Wilson, Ward 1 Councillor

Officials Staff: Jessica Brousseau, Constituency Assistant, MPP Lennox, and Stephanie Hilson, Strategic Initiatives and Community Engagement, Councillor Wilson's Office

Meeting Purpose

The meeting convened residents, Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre (Hamilton Urban Core) leadership, and elected officials to discuss the Residential Treatment and Recovery Facility at 276 Aberdeen Avenue. The focus was to promote transparency, address community concerns, and identify pathways to foster collaboration and build trust moving forward.



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Key Discussion Areas

1. Trust and Transparency

Residents expressed frustration regarding transparency and communication gaps. There was a vivid expression of concerns centered on the following: the 'Doctor' title of the Executive Director and a member of the Board of Directors at Hamilton Urban Core, the site selection process, and lack of acknowledgment of a 525-person signature petition requesting a pause on program implementation to conduct community consultation.

Hamilton Urban Core's Executive Director clarified the 'Doctor' title credentials, confirmed compliance with title regulations, and explained that a real estate agent conducted the site search to identify a suitable location for the program that met funding and program requirements. It was confirmed that The Board of Directors voted not to pause the project and officially responded to this request from the residents via email on September 16, 2025. The Board also acknowledged the need for improved communication with residents moving forward.

2. Accountability and Governance

Residents requested greater clarity on decision-making and accountability mechanisms. The discussion highlighted the need for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure both program outcomes (e.g., client recovery, stability, and reintegration) and community impacts (e.g., safety, responsiveness, and trust).

3. Community Engagement and Liaison Table

Hamilton Urban Core outlined plans for a Neighborhood Liaison Table with resident and community stakeholder representation. Participants raised concerns about transparency in member selection and the need for co-design of



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the table's mandate and composition to ensure trust and diversity of perspectives.

4. Equity and Partner Collaboration

Hamilton Urban Core reaffirmed its commitment to culturally responsive care, with the Hamilton HART Hub emphasizing services for Black, Indigenous, and Francophone populations. Clarification was provided regarding the importance of community partnerships to work collaboratively to address the needs of these vulnerable communities.

During the discussion, a resident raised an allegation suggesting a perceived conflict of interest involving Hamilton Urban Core, the Hamilton Black Health Community Leaders Forum, the Nigerian Canadian Association, the Greater Hamilton Health Network Primary Care Network, and TD Bank, citing that these organizations were listed as co-sponsors of a community event. The resident also noted that the owner of 276 Aberdeen Avenue is employed at TD Bank.

Hamilton Urban Core clarified that there was **no conflict of interest**, as the organization was not informed of other sponsors solicited by the event host and had no involvement in sponsor selection. The organization also reiterated its partnerships with various health system and community partners that support equitable access to care for vulnerable populations.

The Executive Director expressed serious concern about the nature and origins of the allegation, noting that it appeared to be influenced by racial bias and discrimination. The concern stemmed from the fact that the Executive Director, several members of Hamilton Urban Core's Board of Directors, and the owner of 276 Aberdeen Avenue are all of Black/African descent. The Executive Director appealed for mutual respect, understanding, and acknowledgment of the organization's diversity and staff lived experiences, emphasizing the importance



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of maintaining a safe and respectful environment during open community dialogue.

5. Common Ground and Shared Goals

All participants agreed on the importance of addressing Hamilton’s mental health and addictions crisis through safe, accountable, and dignified care. There was consensus on the need for continued collaboration, mutual respect, and transparency to ensure program success and build community confidence.

Action Items for Follow-Up

#	Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline / Notes	Status Update/Rationale
1	Provide clarification of executive titles, credentials, and regulatory compliance on Hamilton Urban Core’s website.	Hamilton Urban Core Executive Director	Within 2 weeks	Clarified during meeting with residents and elected officials held on October 31, 2025. Legal Advice: No further action required.
2	Share summary of site selection process, including selection criteria and rationale, within legal limits.	Hamilton Urban Core / Legal Counsel	Within 3 weeks	Site Selection Criteria Rubric shared. Hard copy distributed at Neighbourhood Advisory Table (NAT) meeting. Legal Advice: Scoring for specific properties of interest is confidential and not to be shared publicly.
3	Circulate written responses to community concerns raised during the meeting (petition response, sponsorship concerns, etc.).	Hamilton Urban Core Board of Directors / Marketing and Communications Lead	Within 3 weeks	Refer to the attached email communications to residents dated August 28 th and September 16 th from the Hamilton Urban Core, Board Chair, on behalf of the Board of Directors.
4	Finalize Neighbourhood Liaison Table membership and publish transparent selection criteria.	Hamilton Urban Core	Early November	Completed. Selection criteria attached.

#	Action Item	Responsible Party	Timeline / Notes	Status Update/Rationale
5	Develop joint KPIs covering both program success and neighborhood impact. Develop terms of reference for Neighbourhood Liaison Table	Hamilton Urban Core + Neighbourhood Liaison Table	First meeting deliverable	Draft Terms of Reference Developed, as attached. Joint KPIs to be developed in collaboration with NAT at future meetings.
6	Establish communication protocol for community incident reporting and ongoing resident updates (meeting notes, progress reports).	Hamilton Urban Core Marketing and Communications Lead	Ongoing	Ongoing
7	Share sample client contract with the Neighbourhood Liaison Table	Hamilton Urban Core	Prior to facility launch	Prior to facility launch
8	Report quarterly on program performance, trust-building measures, and community engagement outcomes.	Hamilton Urban Core	Starting Q1 2026	Starting Q1 2026

