



HAMILTON URBAN CORE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Strong Core Healthier Lives

Neighbourhood Liaison Table (NLT)

Meeting Minutes

August 10, 2026

Meeting Location: Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Joel MacLeod (Co-Chair), Simone Atungo (HUCCHC), Ruth Greenspan (Resident), Yvonne Stoikos (Resident), Norm Buckley Buckley (Resident), Tobi Bruce (Resident), Leah Fuller (Co-Chair), Kaywanna Gargarello (Resident), Monika Abdelmasah (De Dwa Da Dehs Neye<s>)

Absent: Mathieu Payette (Resident), Kim Ritchie (Lived Experience), Sgt. Allen Shultz (Hamilton Police)

Regrets: Susan Boyd (Hamilton Public Health)

Meeting Notes: J. MacLeod

1. Welcome

- a) J. MacLeod called the meeting to order and delivered Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre's land acknowledgement.

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

- a) J. MacLeod invited members to declare any conflicts of interest. No conflicts were declared.

3. Minutes from Previous Meeting

- a) J. MacLeod asked whether members had any corrections or proposed edits to the minutes from the previous meeting. No changes were requested.
Motion: Approve the previous meeting minutes as circulated.
Moved by: L. Fuller
Seconded by: Y. Stoikos
Result: Carried with four votes in favour and one abstention
K. Gargarello abstained because she had not read the minutes.



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4. Opening Debrief -HART Hub Residential Treatment & Recovery Program

- a) J.Macleod introduced a discussion about the opening of the residential treatment centre. He noted that he had been away and did not attend but felt the resulting news coverage was positive. He invited members who attended to comment.
- b) L.Fuller asked whether Hamilton Centre elected officials and Ward 1 staff had been invited, noting that there appeared to be limited representation from them at the event.
- c) J.Macleod responded that:
 - i. The Mayor's Office was invited, and Mayor Andrea Horwath provided remarks because she could not attend.
 - ii. Councillor Maureen Wilson's office was invited but did not respond.
 - iii. MPP Robin Lennox's office was invited, but the invitation was declined.
 - iv. MPP Monica Cirillo was invited and passed the invitation to the associate minister responsible for HART Hubs.
 - v. The provincial representatives had indicated that they planned to attend and had provided quotations for the media release, but they later sent regrets.
 - vi. He did not know why their plans changed.
- d) L.Fuller asked whether Hamilton Centre's federal MP had been invited. J.Macleod said the MP had not been invited because the federal government had no direct funding or implementation role in the project. He explained that invitations had focused on provincial representatives because the program was provincially funded and on municipal representatives because of the City's involvement in permits and approvals
- e) K.Gargarello questioned why nearby residents had not been invited when they had a direct connection to the facility. She expressed concern that describing the event as "controlled" suggested that the community was being excluded and said the opening had been a missed opportunity to make neighbours feel welcome and included.
- f) J.Macleod agreed that the community had a direct connection to the facility but explained that the event had not been intended as an open house. It was₂



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planned as a short, scripted event involving government representatives and was scheduled to last approximately one hour.

- g) L.Fuller asked whether there could be future opportunities to involve the local community, potentially through engagement with program graduates or another community activity.
- h) J.Macleod said nothing formal had been planned. However, the broader program model anticipated that successful graduates might eventually return as volunteers or peer mentors for future cohorts. He said a formal graduation event might not be feasible but that the general idea could be considered after the first cohort.

5. Early Operations & Community Update

- a) S.Atungo added that members of the liaison table had previously expressed interest in volunteering and contributing their professional skills. She said the centre remained open to those offers and invited interested individuals to begin a conversation about possible volunteer roles.
- b) L.Fuller suggested an informal community meet-and-greet or small neighbourhood gathering. She acknowledged that participant schedules, privacy, and operational issues would need to be considered.
- c) S.Atungo agreed to take the suggestion back for internal discussion. She emphasized that some program participants might not want their involvement publicly known, so any event would need to protect their anonymity and privacy.
- d) T.Bruce asked how members should express interest in volunteering.
- e) S.Atungo said interested members should email her and J.Macleod, explain what they would like to contribute, and participate in a follow-up conversation. Volunteers would then complete Hamilton Urban Core's standard onboarding process.
- f) K.Gargarello clarified that she did not expect or want residents to meet program participants. Instead, she proposed an opportunity for neighbours to meet facility staff during a period when no cohort was in residence. She explained that recognizing staff and knowing the appropriate facility contacts could help the centre feel more integrated into the neighbourhood.



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- g) J.Macleod said the suggestion was worth exploring, particularly during a gap between cohorts, and suggested revisiting it in the fall.
- h) S.Atungo agreed that a staff meet-and-greet could be valuable. She said the organization would need to confirm whether there would be a suitable gap between cohorts and identify the staff members or managers who should serve as community contacts.
- i) S.Atungo introduced a draft Community Impact Report documenting the Neighbourhood Liaison Table's work and influence.
- j) She explained that members had asked for an opportunity to reflect on the table's work and see how their input had affected the program, service-delivery model, policies, and implementation decisions. The report was intended to recognize the members' contributions and provide a tangible record of outcomes
- k) S.Atungo said the table was established to support collaboration among Hamilton Urban Core, local residents, community partners, and others interested in the successful implementation of the residential treatment centre. She noted that concerns raised during initial community engagement informed the creation of the table. Monthly meetings subsequently provided a forum for community feedback, accountability, and transparency.
- l) S.Atungo identified several subjects on which the table had provided input, including:
 - i. The purpose of the program and participant eligibility
 - ii. Smoking on or near the property
 - iii. Neighbourhood safety and security
 - iv. Privacy
 - v. Deliveries and facility operations
 - vi. Communication and complaint processes
 - vii. How residents could raise ongoing concerns
- m) She identified the privacy fence and changes to the smoking policy as examples of tangible outcomes influenced by community feedback. She also recognized members' role in helping explain the purpose of the program and distinguish the residential treatment centre from other types of services.



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- n) K.Gargarello asked if the presentation was meant to represent the work of the liaison table. After S.Atungo confirmed that it was, K.Gargarello said the slides contained too much text and that important concerns were difficult to identify. She recommended using concise bullet points so the public could easily understand the concerns and outcomes.
- o) S.Atungo explained that members were not expected to read the entire report during the meeting. A detailed companion report would be circulated so members could review it and provide feedback. She said the presentation was intended only as a high-level introduction.
- p) K.Gargarello asked who the eventual audience would be and whether the material was intended solely for the group's reflection or for broader public use.
- q) S.Atungo initially described it as an internal document prepared in response to the table's request to reflect on its impact.
- r) K.Gargarello expressed concern that a report might imply that all members agreed with every statement it contained. She said she wanted to ensure that members were not portrayed as endorsing conclusions they had not approved. She also asked how members could provide edits and whether the report might eventually be published with their names attached.
- s) J.Macleod said the draft documents would be distributed for review. He noted that meeting minutes, agendas, and community-engagement presentations had previously been posted on the HART Hub website. If the table ultimately approved the report, a public version could potentially be posted there as a summary of the table's work.
- t) S.Atungo said the format could change before publication. A future public version could use plain language and a more accessible one-page format. She emphasized that the existing draft was an initial attempt to document members' contributions, not a final public product.
- u) S.Atungo also said she did not view the liaison table as a "yes table." In her experience, members had raised critical issues, offered different perspectives, and provided valuable feedback both during and outside meetings. She said the diversity of views had made the table useful and had prevented groupthink.



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- v) K.Gargarello agreed that Hamilton Urban Core had taken several community concerns seriously. She supported communicating the table's accomplishments more broadly but reiterated that any public material needed to accurately represent what members had said.
- w) S.Atungo committed to circulating the draft, receiving members' proposed edits and additions, and returning with a revised version before anything was published.
- x) J.Macleod proposed adding the report to the September agenda for further discussion.

6. Looking Ahead

- a) J.Macleod introduced a discussion about the table's future now that the facility had opened.
- b) K.Gargarello asked whether participants were already living at the centre.
- c) J.Macleod said they were not yet in residence. He explained that the City still needed to complete its final inspection and approval, after which move-in would begin shortly.
- d) J.Macleod said Hamilton Urban Core planned to hold a fourth and final broader community-engagement meeting later in the fall. By that time, the centre would likely have been operating for several months, allowing the organization and community to discuss how the facility was functioning and how it was affecting the neighbourhood.
- e) J.Macleod asked members how frequently the table should meet after the facility became operational.
- f) K.Gargarello said the table should continue but likely did not need to meet monthly. She suggested quarterly or twice-yearly meetings. She also proposed using group email between meetings so that emerging concerns could be shared with the full committee and addressed promptly. As an example, she referred to a possible concern about security staff smoking near the property.
- g) N.Buckley suggested continuing with monthly meetings in September and October while the first program cohorts begin. He said the initial operating



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period might generate local feedback that should be addressed quickly. After that, he felt quarterly meetings would likely be sufficient.

- h) T.Bruce agreed with N.Buckley's proposal. She noted that a September meeting would provide an opportunity to review the Community Impact Report. At that meeting, members could decide whether an October meeting was necessary and then consider moving to a quarterly schedule.
- i) L.Fuller supported quarterly or twice-yearly meetings, saying there might not be enough ongoing business to justify monthly meetings. She suggested that the table's immediate role could include helping Hamilton Urban Core plan outreach for the final community-engagement meeting. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that everyone in the surrounding area received an invitation and suggested door knocking, direct invitations, or another targeted approach.
- j) J.Macleod said the meeting schedule would be revisited in September. No final long-term schedule was adopted.
- k) S.Atungo said Hamilton Urban Core could undertake door-to-door outreach. Staff could speak with residents who answered and leave information for those who were unavailable.
- l) She also invited the table to recommend additional engagement methods. She noted that previous outreach had included contact with the local business improvement area, residents' association, and community Facebook groups.
- m) K.Gargarello said she lived very close to the centre but had never received information at her door. She recommended:
 - i. Posting in the Kirkendall neighbourhood Facebook group
 - ii. Sharing materials through the neighbourhood association
 - iii. Distributing notices throughout Kirkendall North and Kirkendall South, not only along Aberdeen Avenue
 - iv. Providing liaison table members with flyers or invitations to distribute
- n) K.Gargarello offered to assist with distributing information on her street and nearby streets.
- o) R.Greenspan said people who had previously been contacted should receive an update confirming that the centre had opened and, without



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compromising privacy, explaining how operations were proceeding. She recommended using community associations, business groups, and neighbourhood Facebook pages. She observed that when information is absent, people tend to create their own narratives.

- p) S.Atungo agreed that Hamilton Urban Core should provide a community update once occupancy had begun or shortly before full occupancy. She committed to including this communication in the outreach strategy.
- q) R.Greenspan raised the upcoming municipal election and suggested that candidates could be asked about their views regarding services of this kind in the community. She also expressed disappointment that the Ward 1 councillor's office had not responded to the opening invitation.
- r) J.Macleod said Hamilton Urban Core would not take a position in the municipal election because it needed to work with whoever was elected. He also noted that the facility was provincially funded and said he did not believe making it a municipal election issue would be an effective use of the organization's efforts.
- s) K.Gargarello said she would not be comfortable with the liaison table attempting to influence voters.
- t) R.Greenspan clarified that she was not recommending that the table endorse candidates or sway voters. She was interested in hearing candidates' views about community services.
- u) S.Atungo explained that candidates and elected representatives sometimes attend Hamilton Urban Core's larger community events to learn about the organization's programs, priorities, and needs. She said these events offered an appropriate setting for such conversations.
- v) J.Macleod added that the residential treatment centre was only one part of Hamilton Urban Core's broader work and that the organization engaged municipal officials on many issues. He recommended allowing the new facility time to begin operating before drawing conclusions or pursuing additional advocacy.



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7. Wrap Up and Closing Discussion

- a) K.Gargarello commended Hamilton Urban Core for maintaining the property and installing cypress trees along the side of the site.
- b) K.Gargarello relayed an observation that a security guard had worn a protective vest over their clothing. She said that an externally visible vest could create a more intimidating or institutional appearance, while wearing it beneath a uniform could support a friendlier presence in the neighbourhood.
- c) J.Macleod said the issue had been raised with the operations manager. He explained that the guard at the ribbon-cutting event normally worked at Hamilton Urban Core's Cannon Street location and may have arrived in the equipment normally worn there. Because security services were provided by an outside contractor, the organization needed to clarify the contractor's occupational-safety requirements.
- d) S.Atungo confirmed that the issue had already been discussed internally. She said Hamilton Urban Core would continue working with the contractor to find an appropriate balance between security protocols and the desired community-facing appearance.
- e) K.Gargarello relayed a neighbour's report that someone believed to be a security guard had smoked near the front edge of the property. She clarified that she had not personally observed this and could not confirm the accuracy of the report.
- f) S.Atungo asked whether the individual might have been a construction worker. K.Gargarello said the neighbour had specifically identified the person as a guard but reiterated that she was passing along unverified feedback.
- g) J.Macleod said he had not seen either of the two security guards smoke. However, he reiterated that Hamilton Urban Core has a non-smoking policy that applies to the Aberdeen site, staff, and contractors, including areas close to the property.
- h) S.Atungo agreed to take the concern back for review

8. Adjournment

- a) N.Buckley Buckley moved to adjourn the meeting. R.Greenspan seconded the motion. The motion carried without opposition.



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- b) J.Macleod thanked members and confirmed that the documents would be distributed and that the table would reconvene in September.