Tammy Corrigal

North Point Douglas Women's Centre Inc.

Presentation to the Executive Policy Committee concerning Police Advisory Board and Policing Issues September 19, 2007

Summary of position: we are here because we want Winnipeg to establish a full police commission. We believe this would support a stronger commitment to community based policing and more effective partnering with the community.

Who we are

My name is Tammy Corrigal. I am the Safety Coordinator for the North Point Douglas Women's Centre, a community based women's resource centre. My Executive Director, Elaine Bishop and Chair of the Board, Irene Brown, send their regrets as they are unable to be here this morning.

We offer a variety of services to citizens of North Point Douglas including meeting basic needs, advocacy, access to information services, recreation programs especially while children are out of school and health programs. We work collaboratively with other community organizations like the Point Douglas Residents Committee, Norquay Community School and SISTARS.

Our mission is: *To create opportunities for women in North Point Douglas to develop their potential and to engage fully as citizens in their neighbourhood and in the broader community.*

Neighbourhood Safety Work

Responding to neighbourhood safety is an important part of our mandate. We are an active member of the Point Douglas Residents Committee's Safety Committee. With other community organizations we responded to the letter about safety issues written by students of Grade 5/6 at Norquay School (attached) which was read to the Governor General during her June visit. Part of the role of the Women's Centre is to be a safe place for women and children. We support and offer crisis intervention to women experiencing family violence and other neighbourhood safety issues. We offer Peace Begins at Home, a parenting support circle that includes addressing issues of gang involvement. A special grant enabled us develop the my position of Safety Coordinator this summer. My work includes supporting a Youth Safety Council started with the Norquay Grade 5/6 class, doing safety audits, supervision of our recently hired Youth Activity Workers and taking a coordinating role in implementing our Neighbourhood Safety Plan. We have funding for the position until December. We have submitted a funding proposal to the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement to allow us to extend this position given the difference it has made to have someone in our community focusing on this work.

Policing and neighbourhood safety

We are working to build a safer community in North Point Douglas. We know that this requires an effective and close working relationship with the Winnipeg Police Service. Regretfully over the past 18 months our experience has been of a less effective police presence. We are concerned about reductions in officers available in our area even though there appears to have been an increase in gang related activity experienced in our community. The loss of our community officers means that there is no longer anyone to bring in for early intervention and support in addressing community conflicts. We miss having the Northend Police Service Centre at 1085 Main Street regularly open. We observe that these situations exist despite Winnipeg having the highest relative police to citizen ratio for a large city in Canada. We have appreciated the efforts made by the Patrol Sergeant Supervisor in our area to respond to some of these concerns as he is able. This makes a difference to us. This collaborative relationship contributes to the trust that we believe is an essential part of an effective police-community partnership.

Our response to the Police Advisory Board model

We do not support the proposed model of the Police Advisory Board as described in City documents for the following reasons:

- It increases bureaucracy and distance between the WPS and the diverse communities in Winnipeg.
- It 'advises' to Council rather than actively engaging with the WPS in policy development, appointment of leadership, administration of a public complaints system and relationships between the WPS and the community.
- It proposes to meet the majority time of time 'in camera'. We note on the web sites of some of the other Police Service bodies in Canada that provisions are made for public meetings after each in-camera meeting and for the full posting of agendas and minutes on the web. We believe that such openness is essential for effective working relationships between the police and the community.

Our vision of policing in Winnipeg is of a partnership, between the WPS and the community, that focuses on prevention and intervention as well as in suppression. We are seeking a system that ensures an important place for community policing, building the sorts of relationships between police and our communities that we see in schools between our students and the School Resource Officers. We need the skills and resources to ensure effective 'weeding'—removing from our communities those involved in drug, gang and other activities compromising the safety of our citizens while also 'seeding' the community—building relationships with all segments of our community and building capacity and alternatives to address underlying problems. We need police partners with whom we are building relationships so that we are working effectively together. We are asking City Council to establish a full Police Commission in Winnipeg. We believe that such a body, with effective oversight and decision making powers, to be necessary to accomplishing our vision.

Thank you!