

Sharing with the general public some feedback I had received on my open letter in Vol 12, iss 4

Also my ideas, thoughts, and opinions on how a poverty reduction should work and what they should be looking at.

You regular readers of Street Feat may remember reading in the last issue of Street feat, my open letter I had written hoping that someone from the poverty reduction working group talked about on page 7 in Vol.12, Iss. 2, would be a Street Feat Reader. Well guess what! I get a bit of news from someone who saw my article which I personally do not believe. I was told that the group was only doing its work on a 6 month contract.



**by Kendall Worth
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Question – Is this true?

If the answer is yes, which we do not know what the answer is because as the old saying goes, “a person cannot believe everything they hear” and for this reason, I do not believe this feedback being the turf.

Ok regular readers of Street Feat, at this point in my article let me ask you a favour.

Question – Do you still have a copy of street Feat Vol 12, Iss. 2 kicking around at home?

If yes, I would like to ask that you please open the paper up to page 7 and read through the article on that page.

Then ask yourself this question – Can the work talked about in this article be done in just a period of 6 months?

Answer – if you are a good person of good judgement, I think you will agree with me on my opinion, “the answer is no”.

Question – How did the poverty reduction working group do its research and get its information?

Answer – Don’t know!

However the following paragraph will explain my ideas of how they should have went about doing their research and getting their information.

A poverty reduction working group of any kind has to be an understanding group of people who take their job seriously, especially considering that their job is to eliminate poverty. First thing - They have got to have an understanding that there is poverty in our own back yards, as well in places such as Africa, etc. Because the poverty reduction working group talked about on page7, in Vol12, Iss. 2 in Street Feat, was set up to look at local poverty here in Nova Scotia means that it is important for them to find out why local people are living in poverty (low income) situations and also to find out why we have homeless people here in Halifax. There are local organizations such as H-CAP, Community Action on Homeless, People First Nova Scotia, Oh and lets not forget us Street Feat Newspaper, etc., who are trying to fight poverty. I think the group needs to be setting up focused round table discussions with representatives from groups such as those. The second thing is that the group needs to set up public hearings where people who live in low income situations can come in and present their case to the working group, whereas those who live in low income situations plus the homeless are the ones who experience poverty. These types of events are important for a poverty reduction working group to host, because it plays a big

part in doing their research on figuring where to go next with their planning. Things they need to have a good look at is issues relating to persons with disabilities and mental health, and the reasons why people have difficulty working in the regular job market.

Question – what information did the poverty reduction look at or what are they looking at?

Answer - I do not know because I did not get the opportunity to attend any of their meetings nor got to talk to them.

I think they should have at least had a couple of meetings open to the general public. As far as I know this did not happen at least yet. They need to look at, the reasons why we have local poverty here in Nova Scotia.

2 Questions – Poverty Reduction Working Group, are you even looking at the following issues while doing your work.

#1 - Did you even look at the fact of the biggest reason for local poverty is the low Social Assistance rates here in Nova Scotia, which needs to increase, plus Nova Scotia Department of Community Services needs to change some of their policies?

#2 – Different reasons as to why different people are on Social Assistance?

Alot of people who are on Social Assistance are on Social Assistance because they have disabilities and mental health issues of different kinds. It is not that they are lazy and won’t work. It is because these people have difficulty working in the regular job market. For someone who is on Social Assistance, if their rent is over the amount of \$535.00 then what they pay for rent could cut into the rest of their allowance.

Landlords keep raising tenant’s rates, above and beyond what people on Social Assistance can afford and this is why Halifax needs to bring back rent control. The poverty reduction working group should have made phone calls to different landlords to get rates on what they charge for rent, then recordmended to the Nova Scotia that the Department of Community Services raises that \$535.00 by at least \$200.00 to \$735.00. I recommend this move because of the cost of today’s rents for safe and

affordable housing.

The next thing is because the cost of food and personal items has to come out of the remainder of their monthly check, the personal allowance needs to increase as well. Another allowance which needs to increase is the \$115.00 which people who live in places such as group homes and small options homes receive for this personal items and entertainment. The cost of that type of stuff keeps going up. Also people who are on Social Assistance and need a phone are required to have a note from their doctor saying they need to have their phone for medical reasons. I think this is totally unfair because not being able to have a phone cut of their right to communication. I had actually talked to someone, a couple who is on Social Assistance who told me that they cannot get a job because their case worker will not pay for a phone, and his doctor will not write him a note saying he needs it for medical reasons. This policy is an example of something I wonder if the Poverty Working Reduction even learned through their research or not. Well this wraps up my opinion of what needs to change with the Department of Community Services.

Even though changes in Social Assistance is the biggest thing, eliminating local poverty doesn’t hurt either!

The second biggest thing which needs to be done to eliminate poverty is getting the homeless off the street by creating safe and affordable housing for them. If you regular readers of Street Feat still have a copy of

Vol.11, Iss3 still kicking around in your home, read my article starting on page 3 and continuing on page 9 which talks about my idea of a housing program for the homeless. After all, the homeless need to get cleaned, and certain parts of their lives fixed up before they can enter or re-enter the workforce, let alone the fact that they need an address to go on Social Assistance. I wonder if the Poverty Reduction Working Group even looked at this when making their report.

There is so much more that could talk about in

this article, however I know my editor Mr .J.C. does not want to publish an article that is going to take up half of the paper, so I am going to stop here. Watch for part two of this article, to be published in the next issue.



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Happy Holidays

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