

Commentary on The City of Calgary Prostitution Response Framework

A Million Acts of Sustainability

Presentation to: SPC on Community and Protective Services
regarding Agenda Item 3.4

June 4, 2014

Background of Human Trafficking and Prostitution

Human Trafficking and Prostitution are inextricably linked

- 79% of human trafficking involves sexual exploitation through prostitution, where the majority of those who are being sexually exploited are women and children. (United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime)
- Research from the London School of Economics found that countries which have legalized prostitution have higher human trafficking inflows. (Cho, Dreher and Neumayer, 2013 World Development)
- Unfortunately, legislative and enforcement practices utilized in many countries make these issues separate and distinct.

Sexual exploitation embodies a significant part of prostitution

- Interviews conducted in nine different countries demonstrate that 89% of individuals in prostitution want to leave. (Farley et al 2003 J Trauma Practice)
- Interviews conducted in San Francisco show 82% of individuals in prostitution have been physically assaulted and 68% were raped while working as a prostitute. (Farley and Barkan 1998 Women and Health)

The Challenge of Addressing Prostitution

- In 2006, a federal Subcommittee on Solicitation Laws, comprised of representatives from all political parties, established that prostitution in Canada is a complex issue due to the clandestine nature of the sex trade industry.
- The Subcommittee condoned the marginalization and criminalization of the prostituted individuals and recommended that more effort should be made to change the way Canadians view prostituted individuals.
- Prostitution is not simply an exchange of sexual services for some form of payment. It is a social issue with far reaching implications.

How Canadians View the Issue of Prostitution

- The majority of Canadians feel that purchasing sexual services should be illegal, whereas selling sexual services should not be criminalized.
- The City of Calgary Prostitution Response Framework should anticipate new federal legislation that will criminalize the demand side of prostitution.
- We propose a number of initiatives that the multi-departmental City working group may want to consider as part of the City of Calgary Prostitution Response Framework.

Proposed Initiative One – Establishing Calgary Police Service Guidelines on Prostitution

- The guidelines will speak to the Police Service's philosophy on violence against prostitutes and the enforcement of new prostitution-related legislation.
- Calgary Police Service may want to consider consultation with other Canadian law enforcement agencies regarding the existence and/or establishment of such guidelines.
- Calgary Police Service will use these guidelines as a basis to develop rapport and relationships with this marginalized and stigmatized population in society.

Proposed Initiative Two – Review, propose and implement applicable changes to specific bylaws

- Bylaws pertaining to escort services, massage, body rub, adult entertainment and home-based businesses should be reviewed in light of the new prostitution-related legislation.
- The constitutional challenge by Bedford *et al*, and the results from the City of Calgary public submission speak to the issue of moving prostitution behind closed doors.
- Strict municipal regulations and bylaws which balance health and safety of prostitutes with concerns involving social nuisance (i.e. traffic, litter, etc...) need to be established.

Proposed Initiative Three – Creation of public centres in the communities of Beltline and Forest Lawn

- These public centres will bridge the gap between enforcement, community development, research, education, awareness and resources.
- Prostitutes can receive support, information and resources from individuals who work in enforcement, public health and social services in these public centres.
- The community at large can access these centres for community development, education and awareness.
- Information can be obtained from those accessing the centres to provide a basis for a report which specifically addresses the issue of prostitution in Calgary.

Proposed Initiative Four – Addressing the demand side of prostitution

- Research into diversion programs for male purchasers of sexual services reveal little impact on participant's anticipated future use of prostitutes. (Wortley et al, 2002 Canadian Journal of Criminology; Fischer et al, 2002 Criminology and Criminal Justice)
- The City of Calgary Prostitution Response Framework should also work with individuals and organizations committed to addressing the demand side of prostitution.
- Addressing the demand side of prostitution not only starts with a paradigm shift in the way people view prostitution, but is also a responsibility that every male has to own up to.