

November 16th, 2017

To: Rick Birkel
Executive Director

From: Jill Whiteford, MSW
Director of Quality and Program Evaluation

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Director of Community Development and Housing

Topic: Summary of investigation of incidents at the Kenton Women's Village (KWV)

We are providing this memo to outline the investigation and conclusions to incidents reported to have occurred at KWV on November 6, 2017. Given the nature of the reported incidents and the commitment to share our results of this investigation externally, we have intentionally written this in memo format, and in accordance with our policies and service agreement regarding client confidentiality.

Overview

Two separate incident reports were written by a Villager and turned in to a Village Manager on November 6th. On November 7th these incidents were verbally reported by the Village Manager to her supervisor. On the same day, the Village Managers were instructed to begin an investigation with initial interviews and document review.

On November 10th, an email was received from Elspeth Tanguay-Koo reporting again the two incidents, additionally reporting the presence of a van/suv in the cul-de-sac outside KWV; a lead up to her observed interaction between the assumed van/suv owner and a Villager. The email on November 10th included a link to a video that specifically referenced one of the incidents reported previously by the Villager on November 6th.

For process, we are treating these as three separate incidents. In chronological order they are:

1. Observed van/suv in cul-de-sac outside the village: reported possible "houseless camping"
2. Observed exchange between the man from the van/suv, a Villager and her guest through the fence: reported possible "drug deal" or illegal activity
3. Observed, and video recorded, exchange between a man on a bike and a Villager through the fence: reported possible "drug deal" or illegal activity

All three incidents are reported to have occurred during day time: #1 and #2 at approximately 12:45 p.m.; and #3 at approximately 3:55 p.m.

Investigation Steps/Process

In interviews with the Village Managers and with the Villagers, we confirmed the identities of the Villagers, the male guest, the man from the van/suv, and the man on bike.

During interviews with each Village Manager, specific questions were asked about the incidents, past history of the Villagers involved, their guests, the man on the bike, and the man from the van/suv.

The Village watch log was checked for reporting of overnight camping in the cul-de-sac.

The Village guest log was checked to verify the identity and presence of the male guest.

The two Villagers identified in the incident reports were interviewed with questions about the specific interactions, any exchange, the men they were interacting with, and the male guest. The Villager Managers watched the recorded video with the Villager named in the reports.

Conclusions

Incident #1: There was no overnight camping in the cul-de-sac.

There is no record of any vehicle in the cul-de-sac overnight. We learned that the van/suv is known to the Villagers and the Village Managers. The man is friends with 2 to 3 Villagers, and he is reported to be generally a "good guy." There have been no previous issues reported or documented regarding the van/suv or the man associated with it.

Incident #2: There was no illegal activity.

We have come to understand that the man from the van/suv was hoping to make contact with one of his friends in the Village. Recognizing the man, the other Villager, who was nearby with her male guest, engaged the man from the van/suv through the fence. The man from the van/suv said he was hoping to speak to the other Villager about hiring a care taker. The engaged Villager retrieved a pen, wrote down her own phone number, and gave it to the man telling him that she had previous experience as a care giver, and that she would be interested to talk with the man about this opportunity.

Incident #3: There was no illegal activity.

We have come to understand that the man on the bike is known to many Villagers and to the Village Managers. He is friends with 2 to 3 of the Villagers and comes around fairly often seeking food, clothing, money and/or cigarettes. Though the Villager who engaged through the fence does not specifically remember passing anything between them, she reported if something was passed it was probably a cigarette and/or lighter.

Adjunct Notes:

The male guest of the Village is a friend to one of the Villagers, frequents the Villager 2 to 3 times a week, and is known to be a helpful hand around the Village on behalf of all the Villagers.

During the interview process, it was suggested that a cowbell be hung, like a door bell, by the locked gate of KVV. That way when no one is present or near the gate (which remains locked 24/7) and a visitor wants to contact a Villager, then a ringing of the cowbell would alert the nearest person that someone was “at the door.” It was suggested that this would reduce the number of interactions through the fence, like those reported in the incident reports.

This memo will also serve as our file notes.

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