***Meeting Notes of Local Basic Income Groups and Activists***

[**Ontario Basic Income Network**](https://www.obin.ca/)

Weds. Nov. 14, 7:00 – 8:20 p.m. ET

Hosted by OBIN Coordinating Team (C-Team)

**Participants:**

Barbara Boraks, C-Team External Relation Coordinator

Monika Ciolek, Hamilton

Tim Ellis, C-Team Network Coordinator

Joe Foster, C-Team Facilitator & Ottawa BI group

Ron Hikel, C-Team, Stratford & Toronto

Susan Hubay, BI Peterborough Network

John Mills, C-Team Internal Relations Coordinator

Tom Mullan, Picton

Jim Mulvale C-Team, chair and recorder for this meeting

Rob Rainer, Tay Valley Township, Lanark County

Tracy Smith-Carrier, C-Team Special Projects Coordinator & London BI group

Daniel Snider, Toronto Basic Income

Carol Stalker, Basic Income Waterloo Region

Jamie Swift, Kingston Action Group for Basic Income

1. **Welcoming remarks**

This is our first meeting of local OBIN people using this on-line format (Zoom). We hope to make these meetings regular ones, likely 3 – 4 times per year.

1. **Self-introductions by all participants**

All participants briefly introduced themselves and their connection to BI activism in Ontario.

1. **Update from OBIN Coordinating Team (Joe Foster and other C-Team** **members)**

Joe mentioned the need for co-coordinators for all areas of responsibility on the C-Team. He is preparing a semi-annual report for OBIN constituents that will be available shortly.

Tracy and Barb are creating the format for a community event that highlights the differences between “charity” and “justice” (with basic income being a program that fits into the latter category). It is expected that one such event will occur in London in the spring.

1. **Developing the topic team for Basic Income day at Queen’s Park (Barbara Boraks)**

Barb described the Queen’s Park Day that is being planned for 2019 (April or Fall, date to be determined). She is working with a former MPP and others connected with QP to organize this event. During the day of the event, volunteers will fan out across the Legislative Building to meet with MPPs from across the province and from all parties. In the late afternoon, a brief reception will be held at QP to which all MPPs will be invited. The purpose of the day is to inform and educate MPPs and their staff about basic income and its potential.

Barb is looking to form an organizing committee of 6 – 10 volunteers to help with this event. This committee will identify people across the province who can reach out to local MPPs and have a preliminary discussion of BI with each of them, and then ask them to commit to participate in the QP Day meetings and reception. Barb wants to constitute this organizing committee by the Holiday Break, and to begin outreach to MPPs early in the new year.

Tracy is preparing a survey for MPPs designed to help with this outreach and with planning the details of the QP Day.

1. **Updates from local groups and activists**

Carol Stalker (Basic Income Waterloo Region):

* presentations have been made to Social Work classes at Wilfred Laurier Univ.
* a grant application is being prepared with other community groups for a community-engaged theatre project focussing on what is wrong with our current social assistance programs
* other activities include pub nights, a newsletter, and a FaceBook page
* BIWR is wondering how to grow its membership. Tim and Carol will discuss this question further.
* Barb will liaise with Carol about an upcoming BI event at the Dept. of Economics at WLU

Rob Rainer (Tay Valley Township):

* Rob was elected last month to the Tay Valley Township Council in Lanark County. He will be carrying the BI message to other municipal politicians and their organizations.
* Made recent presentations on BI to a community group in Montreal and to a Health Studies class at Queen’s University

Tom Mullan (Picton):

* Tom has been engaged in discussions with local people on what happens in the wake of the cancellation of the Ontario BI Pilot, funding for and benefits of BI, etc.

John Mills and Monika Ciolek (Hamilton):

* The local group is hosting speakers and a film on Nov. 21: [The Manitoba Story: A Basic Income Film & Panel Presentation](https://www.bruha.com/event/4036)
* Local creative / artistic endeavours have been focussing on the real human costs of the BI pilot project cancellation

Susan Hubay (Basic Income Peterborough)

* The group’s focus has been on community awareness and meeting with politicians
* Work in partnership with community members and community organizations/coalitions.
* Most recent public events, through Nourish, with Lindsay BI Pilot participants and Prof. Elaine Power from Queen’s Univ.
* The group has 10 members on a steering committee and ~ 200 members on their contact list/FB page.

Jamie Swift (Kingston Action Group for Basic Income)

* Doing outreach to students and youth, emphasizing universal appeal of BI beyond poverty reduction
* Have discussed BI with local MPP Ian Arthur, MP Mark Gerretsen, Senator Kim Pate, and municipal councillors
* Jessie Golem (Humans of Basic Income photo exhibit) has spoken
* Planning a retreat for January

Daniel Snider (Basic Income Toronto)

* Have sent a letter to Hon. Lisa Macleod
* Developed a website: <https://www.basicincometoronto.ca/>
* In touch with Floyd Marinescu (CEOs for BI) and Jessie Golem (Humans of Basic Income)

Tracy Smith-Carrier (London BI group)

* Doing outreach to students (e.g. Nursing students)
* Group has hosted pub nights to prepare op-ed articles (one published in Toronto Star, two published in London Free Press)
* Did presentation to local group dealing with homelessness

Joe Foster (Ottawa BI Group)

* Upcoming [event](https://carleton.ca/socanth/wp-content/uploads/Basic-Income.pdf) on Nov. 19 with Dr. Evelyn Forget
* Has been working on a letter aimed as small businesses about BI
* Has been in discussion with David Kilgour, human rights activist
1. **Brainstorming re: priorities and strategies at the provincial / federal levels**

Participants offered these suggestions:

* It makes sense to focus our advocacy efforts on a variety of people and groups in Ontario receptive to concept of basic income, but ***not*** to spend a lot of time advocating for BI with provincial government leaders or officials during the mandate of the current government, given their antipathy to the BI model.
* It may be helpful to align our efforts and form coalitions with other progressive campaigns such the Living Wage, Fight for $15 and Fairness, etc.
* We have tremendous opportunities to continue to build awareness of basic income at the local level. We should develop resources on how to start a local group.
* It would be helpful for local groups with action plans to share them with the OBIN C-Team and other local groups, as examples of what can be done.
* OBIN will continue to track and support the lawsuit that has been launched by BI pilot participants in Lindsay against the government of Ontario, in regard to the cancellation of the pilot project last summer.

*Date of Next Meeting (in 2019): to be announced*