

GLI Newsbreeze for August 28, 2016

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BITO

Basic Income Toronto Organization August 23rd at Trinity Bellwoods community center. Seven people in attendance with two guests arriving later.

1) Venue

The place was like a sweatbox. We had noise from piano practice and volleyball games. I found it annoying that after three months of confusion about meeting places, we could have had a nice air conditioned place all along, even while we wait for the city application process works out.

Suzy said, "west enders rule, thats life". However it turned out that most of us are from the east end. This suggests asking for a central location from the city; metro hall or city hall. There are advantages to getting space from the city; we can get free venues all over the city and can even rent sound equipment from them at a good rate.

2) Councillor Mike Layton

seems to have become the Patron of this group. He can be available sometime in October to talk strategy with this group.

3) Documentary

Jon's project is proceeding. It is a 'collage'. He needs to shoot more people. It has been tough getting people out in August. Right now it is mostly white women, as opposed to the cliched "bunch of white guys". He is looking for more racial balance.

As for distribution, a film company has expressed some interest. This could solve some problems.

4) Ontario Pilot

Jon thinks it is good that the province is offering this. He thinks we should "take" it but keep applying pressure. The "national group" meaning BICN want to wait and see before forming any opinion.

I suggested remembering Winnipeg. Jurgen De Wispalaere, who is helping the Finns organize their pilot, explained that a pilot is not a test. In the correct use of the term, it is a "start small and grow" approach to a program. A pilot is meant to be ramped up into a full program.

Karl Widerquist, a founder of the world wide movement, said that there have been enough experiments. WE have proven that a BI works. We need the full thing now.

I also called to mind some of the people who had worked on the Dauphin project who told the Winnipeg assembly to not tolerate waste of tax payers money where the government is not serious about going ahead.

I also mentioned the feed back I had been getting from poverty activists about how they were being told not to worry, we will bring in BI and that will fix everything. They are also worried that BI will be the excuse to dismantle other social programs.

Thus, I concluded that Ontario should be asked how they plan to fund this thing. If they do not intend to raise taxes then it is likely a B.S.

Jon said; He is aware that Larry Summers, a top advisor to the Wynne government, is one of these austerians who has had a "come to Jesus" moment and is the one pushing the Basic Income.

5) Statements to approve

We had the federal statement (http://www.livingrant.ch/currentdocumentsfolder/TheBasicIncomeWeWant_BICN.pdf) and the Kingston statement (http://www.livingrant.ch/currentdocumentsfolder/Kingston_%20BIG_Charter.pdf). Jon feels the Kingston group is the best organized and most sophisticated in the country. I had concerns about the line about running it through the tax system.

We had some of this confusion created by the idea that all BI programs have to be run through the tax system because you will have to file a tax return to get it. No, that is not the same thing as a negative income tax. You file the tax to verify your income and place of residence, and some other details which may be required. That has to be made clear.

6) Council initiatives

Now, Jon has sent a message asking everyone to sign into google graphic so we can build this database to figure out which councilors are in support of BI. He has not learned from his last adventure with Google. I and many others have no intention of becoming captured by Google e-mail. There are easier ways of determining who on council is in support.

7) Visitors with projects

Victoria and Priyan arrived late and talked about their efforts to start a town hall in Malvern on BI.

They also informed us of a Forum being planned for September 19 in Scarborough, about participatory democracy and budgeting. Some of us were interested in this and exchanged information with them.

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HSAG Aug 25 (Health and Strength Action Group)

1) The OCAP event about a Basic Income; "Looking a gift horse in the mouth."

Those from HSAG who were able to attend reported that turnout was not high. John Clarke's message seemed to be that the government will impose a Basic Income at a low rate and then refuse to negotiate any improvements to it. What is needed is a whole new government, not of any existing party.

Clarke said that governments in Canada have been clawing back all the social gains of the previous generations, since 1986. He talked about going to London next month to talk with some unknown persons about a "new fiscal program."

Most of this is not in the podcast of the meeting, found at <http://chirb.it/b0HHAJ> but likely came in the question period not recorded. These questions to Paul all seemed like planted questions. Paul was the only one to ask a really serious question.

As well, Paul says that a few people gave Clarke shit for barring me from the hall. These people have been bad mouthing and harassing me for a long time. Of course their justification is that I have been rude and harassing to them but they can give no instances. Their efforts to intimidate me always seem to backfire on them.

2) Suzy reported about the BITO meeting.

The group technically started two years ago but has only lately got going. She feels they are pretty green and not really ready; doing pretty much what they want and not listening to anyone new. They include some "media savvy" people who are making a movie about BI.

They are frustrated that the national group, meaning Basic Income Canada network, is doing little, just telling local groups to do what they want. They have allied with the Kingston group, which they consider more advanced.

I had a bit to add to this; I was present two years back when the group was founded. The problem has been that Jon thought everything could be run on Facebook and has only lately discarded that idea. He is planning to return to the Maritimes this fall and has designated Mat Taisma as his successor.

About this Robyn recollected about the Rob Rainer forum on "BIG" Basic Income Guarantee" two years ago. Nothing ever came of it. People are still asking her about follow up to that meeting, unaware of BICN.

Regarding the provincial "pilot", Paul is worried that people will say that there is now a pilot project, so people will not have to do anything.

3) Suzy also reported about the Fair Fare coalition.

They want people to come out and depute at three events.

- The TTC commission on September 28 at which they are also planning a major demonstration.

- The Board of Health meeting on September 31st

- The city of Toronto Executive committee on October 26th

Fair Fare, along with other anti-poverty groups in Toronto, are frustrated that the city is not listening. The best they will offer is a 20% discount for low income people. They do not say how "low income" is defined.

4) HSAG also reported on "Health Week". It will have a table at the event and would also try to promote a Guaranteed Livable Income. The leaflet being worked on may be ready by that time.

HSAG also has a relationship with people who make buttons for various organizations and could make a GLI button if the artwork were provided.

The next HSAG meeting is Sept 8, 1:30 at 955 Queen street east.

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Reprise of some old meetings

podcast of OCAP speech

<http://chirb.it/b0HHAJ>

video of June 28 event

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEwlHynzF8g&feature=youtu.be>

report of June 28 event

<http://www.livinggrant.ch/currentdocumentsfolder/UBI%20Event%20June%202029.pdf>

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Some future events which may be in the works

I and Robyn have been talking about doing an event around her slide presentation. Ralph Thornton big hall is available for October 6th. Jon may be able to view the presentation.

As well, our friends from deepest Scarborough have expressed interest in a BI townhall there. I will be in communication with them about what ideas they have.