



Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

COVID-19: SENIORS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TASK FORCE

**April 16, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.
Room 401, Anvil Centre**

Minutes

(In the interest of precautionary health measures and practicing safe social distancing, only City staff are permitted to attend the meeting in person)

PRESENT (In Person):

Rob Dick, Assistant Deputy Fire Chief/Chair
Dylan Myers, Acting Emergency Support Services Deputy Chief
Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner
Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst
Mike Antoniali, Acting ESS Operations Coordinator
Paolo Zenone, Recreation Leader
Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

PRESENT (via Teleconference):

Staff and Consultants

Christine Edward, Transportation Planner
Jim Luu, Assistant Manager, Queens Park Concessions
Liz Twaites, Volunteer Coordinator
Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator
Mariam Larson, Consultant, Mariam Larson Inc.

Organizational Representatives

Carole Wylie, Century House Association
Tim Hicks, Century House
Ingrid Timmermans, Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice
Kay Johnson, New West Hospice Society
Jules Wilson, Ministry of Children and Family Development
Daisy Au, MOSIAC Seniors
Sharon Ennis, Royal City Legion Manor
Calvin Donnelly, Sapperton Old Age Pensioners' Association
Earl Marshall, Sapperton Seniors Hall
Alison Silgado, Seniors Services Society
Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC

The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m.

1. Introductions

Task Force members introduced themselves.

2. Review of Draft Minutes

No comments were received.

3. Update on Actions Taken Since Meeting of April 9, 2020

Friendly Caller Program

Mariam Larson, Consultant, and Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator, provided the following update on the Friendly Caller Program:

- The Program is going well with 21 people registered to receive calls, which average approximately 10 to 15 minutes in length, less once relationships are established;
- Volunteer meetings are held on Thursday mornings for feedback on the Program;
- Seniors are being informed of the Program either via email or telephone, with approximately 611 emails being sent out and about 800 people being telephoned.

Kay Johnson of the New West Hospice Society shared that other municipalities are reaching residents through social media by providing donated tablets and training to seniors who are then more easily notified of programs and resources. Ms. Johnson will provide additional details to Assistant Deputy Chief Rob Dick.

Vivian Garcia of Spinal Cord Injury BC, noted that residents may be able to receive online technical training from Neil Squire.

Alison Silgado of the Seniors Services Society advised that the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), which has recently opened an office in New Westminster, receives technology funding from the Federal Government and reached out to the Society prior to the start of COVID-19. She will share contact information with those interested.

Grocery and Meal Programs

Paolo Zenone, Recreation Leader, advised that the first meal program was run out of Century House on Tuesday from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. with a total of 15 meals given out. Tonight will be the second evening for the program and it is anticipated that more

people will partake of the service. Statistics will be kept on program use for information and reference purposes.

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, announced that the food hamper program, which the City is facilitating in partnership with the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, started yesterday and is an emergency food service to help seniors and those with disabilities who normally use the food bank but are currently unable to access it. She shared that they have received 25 boxes of food which will make up 130 hampers.

Discussed ensued and members were advised that the Seniors Services Society received a donation of three hot meals twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays, which will continue for another month. There is currently one space left for this program.

In response to Asifa Lalji, Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee member's emailed comment regarding inclusion of disabled shoppers during the early shopping hour accommodations for seniors and immunocompromised individuals, Task Force members shared the following:

- Alison Silgado of the Seniors Services Society, volunteered to contact the managers of Safeway, Save-On Foods, and the uptown Walmart to request that they expand their special shopping hours to include those with disabilities, both visible and invisible; and,
- Many young people with invisible disabilities such as autism or fetal alcohol syndrome may fall into this category and require someone with them for assistance and wish to utilize the special shopping hours as well.

Assistant Deputy Chief Rob Dick stated that he would contact the City's Communication Department to share the information regarding special shopping hours and the need for people to be accepting of those who require this accommodation regardless of the reason.

Dylan Myers, Acting Emergency Support Services Deputy Chief, requested that Ms. Silgado include him in the conversation with the three markets so that possibly, along with the City's business task force, a list of names can be provided to them of those who may attend the special shopping hours, including family members who may be there to provide assistance.

Financial Supports and Temporary Rental Supplement

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, advised Task Force members that the COVID-19 Task Force City webpages continue to be updated with information including the Survival Resource Guide and Food Calendar. He noted that the

Community Resources section of the website now also contains updated information on Rent Bank assistance, as well as a list of other financial supports. Members were encouraged to print the pdf'd lists to share with those who do not have internet access, advised that staff are looking at other ways of sharing the information.

An updated rental supplement fact sheet will be provided to Task Force members, including staff contact information for those who may need assistance with the program. As the renter and landlord must complete the application, Mr. Mehdic will contact Landlord BC to find out what information they are sharing with landlords with respect to the application.

In response to questions from Task members, staff provide the following comments:

- As the rental supplement information may not be user-friendly for seniors, it may be possible for Friendly Caller Program callers to identify those requiring assistance in filling out the forms for follow up; and,
- Staff will see if the rental supplement program is working and report back to the Task Force.

4. Task Force Ideas and Suggestions to Assist Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

Discussion ensued and members provided the following comments:

- In anticipation of the possible increase of those who may require house cleaning, Alison Silgado of Seniors Services Society will find out if the Better at Home cleaning agencies are able to accept more clients;
- SFU Vancouver will be hosting a free technology lunch and learn for seniors. Tim Hick of Century House will provide more information to Mr. Mehdic who will include it in the meeting's follow up email to members; and,
- Members were encouraged to refer newcomers to MOSIAC Seniors and/or the Seniors Services Society who can provide multilingual support.

In response to questions from Task Force members, staff provided the following comments:

- Regarding Ms. Lalji's emailed suggestion that the City maintain a list of vulnerable residents, it was noted that while the Fire Department does not keep a list of persons with disabilities, all buildings with fire alarm panels and/or a sprinkler systems have fire safety plans which should include a list of individuals with mobility issues or otherwise, alerting the Fire Department in the event of an emergency of those requiring assistance exiting the building; and,

- Staff can connect with the Vancouver & Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society; however, it was noted that both MOSAIC and Umbrella Multicultural Health Co-Op office services in multiple languages.

5. Identification of Other Issues

With respect to Asifa Lalji, Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee member's emailed comment regarding communication and the included weblink, discussion ensued and staff will work with the Communications Department to determine what the City's best practices are and work to reduce text-heavy communications and use simple language and infographics.

Regarding Ms. Lalji's emailed comment regarding loss of personal caregivers/cleaners due to the caregiver being sick, etc., members provide the following comments:

- After the meeting, Jules Wilson, Ministry of Children and Family Development, will share information for those with development disabilities who are experiencing this difficulty and require respite care;
- The Lifeline medical alert program, which is run by Fraser Health, may be an option for those who cannot get out of bed or who do not have a phone near them to call 911 when their caregiver does not show up. Mariam Larson, Consultant, will contact Fraser Health to determine if this is something they can offer to those who no longer have caregivers due to the pandemic (i.e. funds that would usually go to pay for the caregiver may possibly be used for Lifeline instead), and will request that information regarding Lifeline is mentioned to those registered for the Friendly Caller Program;
- During building inspections, the Fire Department urges residents to get to know their neighbours and check in with each other on a regular basis;
- Members were urged to forward the contact information of any individuals currently in need of a caregiver to Ms. Larson so that the information, including the number of people who are experiencing this problem, can be shared with Fraser Health for follow up. It was noted that the more information that can be shared with Fraser Health the better;
- Families also need to be made aware of the resources available; and,
- Alison Silgado of the Seniors Services Society will forward contact information to Ms. Larson regarding TELUS's LivingWell Companion Program as they may be willing to help if Fraser Health cannot.

6. Member Updates

Task Force members were reminded that the Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice continues to offer virtual appointments for those without a family doctor. A virtual doctor poster will be included in the meeting's follow up email for members to share with their network.

In response to the comment received by Asifa Lalji, Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee member regarding pandemic-related street closures, Christine Edward, Transportation Planner, advised that the City is identifying sidewalk areas around town that have pinch points, making social distancing unattainable, and have so far closed the McInnes Overpass as a result. Task Force members were encouraged to inform staff of other areas to be added to the list and Ms. Edward assured members that continued accessibility in these areas is a consideration of the transportation team.

Assistant Deputy Chief, Rob Dick, requested that members forward any additional issues for follow up to Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, for further attention.

7. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

Task Force members were invited to submit agenda items for upcoming meetings to Mariam Larson, Consultant, Miriam Larson Inc., who will be drafting the agendas

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 23, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

Original Signed
Asst. Deputy Fire Chief Rob Dick
Chair

Original Signed
Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk