



Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

COVID-19: SENIORS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TASK FORCE

**August 27, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.
Committee Room 2, City Hall**

Minutes

(Due to precautionary health measures, only City staff are permitted to personally attend meetings)

PRESENT (In Person):

Jacklyn Altamura, Chair/Recreation Supervisor, Century House
Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

PRESENT (via Teleconference):

Staff and Consultants

John Stark, Supervisory, Community Planning
Karen Campbell, Policy Planner
Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst
Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator

Organizational Representatives

Calvin Donnelly, Sapperton Old Age Pensioners' Association
Sharon Ennis, Royal City Legion Manor
Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC/Lived Experience
Tim Hicks, Century House
Kay Johnson, New West Hospice Society
Kyoko Takahashi, Seniors Services Society

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 August 13, 2020

Friendly Caller Program

Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator, advised that the Friendly Caller Program continues to be strong with 37 clients and 15 volunteer callers, with a total of 555 calls being made over 10,987 minutes. She noted that volunteers and staff meet two times a month to discuss issues.

Grocery, Meal, and Food Programs

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, provided the following updates:

- As food security continues to be an important issue moving into the fall with the possibility of a second wave, plans are being made and programs have been expanded beyond what was in place prior to the pandemic;
- In September, the Holy Trinity Cathedral will begin offering a food program in addition to the programs already offered by Knox Presbyterian Church and St. Aidan's Presbyterian Church; and,
- Betina Wheeler, Coordinator, New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society, and Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, continue with their development of a proposal to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to explore sustainable food support options, as it is expected that food security support will be needed for 10 to 12 months once the pandemic is over.

Task Force Web Portal

Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst, reminded Task Force members that the Task Force Web Portals on the City's website serve as repositories for resource information such as the Food Resources Calendar, the Survival Resources Guide, Key Information and Resources for Tenants, etc.

Financial Programs

Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst, advised that the List of Financial Supports, which lists federal and provincial government financial support programs, is updated every two weeks and is due to be updated next week. He noted that approximately 30 updates were made recently with many being the extension of various programs.

Key Information and Resources for Tenants

Karen Campbell, Policy Planner, shared that the eviction ban has ended so tenants may now be evicted for non-payment of rent that is owed for before March 18, 2020 or after August 18, 2020; however, they cannot be evicted for rent owed during the affected

rent period between those dates, and tenants must enter into a repayment plan with their landlord which includes a start date, installment amounts of equal value, and be paid on the same day that the rent is due, unless otherwise agreed to by both parties. Further, as of September 1, 2020 landlords can increase rents and to date, there has been no announcement from the Provincial Government that the Temporary Rental Supplement, which is currently scheduled to end on August 31, 2020, will be extended.

Other Program Updates

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, confirmed that City departments and task forces are developing second wave plans, addressing three scenarios, including:

- Current status - Phase 3: COVID-19 task forces meeting less, staff returning to work in their originating departments, addressing issues as they arise;
- Rollback to Phase 2: COVID-19 task forces starting to meet more frequently again, continue with existing actions and more; and,
- Rollback to Phase 1: COVID-19 task forces begin to meet weekly again, closure of civic facilities and businesses, essential only travel, redeployment of staff, and new actions undertaken.

Mr. Stark stated that once the plans are finalized in the next week or so, they will be presented to Council so they can be implemented in the fall and winter, if needed.

4. Extreme Heat Cooling Centre Update

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, advised that while Century House was identified as this year's Cooling Centre, there have not been many days of extreme heat so far this summer that necessitated its use. Mr. Stark noted that next year, cooling centre plans will be in place earlier, taking into account the perspectives of seniors, the at-risk community, and those with disabilities, and be available to provide assistance for extended warm periods.

5. Identification of Other Issues, Suggestions to Assist Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, and Member Updates

Other Issues – Supportive Housing

Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC/Lived Experience, provided an update on the accessible housing unit that was available for rent which she previously shared with the Task Force via email. Although a number of people in need of accessible housing were interested in the unit, Ms. Garcia advised that it was not rented to someone with a disability as none of them were eligible due to the low income government assistance. As such, Ms. Garcia suggested that there be a government policy addressing supportive housing for those with disabilities on government income assist. She noted that those

in need of the few wheel chair accessible units available, generally do not qualify for them. Ms. Garcia agreed to provide further information to John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, so that the issue could be brought to Council's attention.

Discussion ensued regarding co-op housing and Mr. Stark advised that, while some co-ops have subsidized units, each co-op would have individual eligibility requirements.

Other Issues – Food Security

With respect to food security issues, Kay Johnson, New West Hospice Society, advised of a client who, due to poor health, was unable to leave their home to get food which resulted in the person becoming malnourished and eventually hospitalized. Currently the gentleman is having food delivered; however, due to his illness, the utmost of care must be taken to ensure he is not exposed to COVID-19 and, Ms. Johnson noted, there may be other people in the same situation, with no one to check in on them. Mr. Stark replied that available, redeployed staff were assisting with food deliveries; however, many are now returning to their regular jobs. He noted that if the pandemic worsened again, staff would work with nonprofit organizations to determine how to best assist those who are immunocompromised. Mr. Stark agreed to work with Betina Wheeler of the New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society to ensure there are components that address the issue of those that cannot attend food programs in the report to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

A Task Force member suggested that smart home technology (i.e. Siri, Google Home, etc.) may be useful in situations where people have become bedbound and need to reach out for assistance.

Other Issues

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, advised that addressing a possible outbreak in a senior's residential building would be included in the Task Force's second wave plans.

Member Updates

- Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator, announced that Century House, through the New Horizon's for Seniors program, is launching an initiative called Octopus: Reaching Seniors in the Community and are currently seeking proposals from seniors to develop virtual programs to engage their peers through eight projects that will begin in the fall. Contributors will receive honourariums.

In addition, Ms. Schnee shared that there is also funding available to provide technology to seniors in the community and that they are seeking a partnership

in the community to gain more technology for seniors. Other projects being worked on will address access to information and crime prevention.

- Kyoko Takahashi, Seniors Services Society, shared that they provide prepared meal delivery on Tuesdays and Fridays with meals currently being sourced from Angelina's. She noted that some seniors are purchasing multiple meals per time in order to be prepared for when they cannot get out. Meals are \$5.00 each; however, there are subsidies available for those experiencing financial difficulties.

Ms. Takahashi also advised members of the grocery shopping program offered by the Society which offers volunteers doing the shopping for participating seniors or assisting seniors with the online ordering process (through Save On in Sapperton). Those interested in participating should contact the Seniors Services Society.

6. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

Jacklyn Altamura, Recreation Supervisor, Century House, reminded members that the September 10, 2020 Task Force meeting has been cancelled, and that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 24, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Original Signed
Jacklyn Altamura
Chair

Original Signed
Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk