

## **COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE**

**September 4, 2018 – 5:30 p.m.  
Committee Room 2, City Hall**

### **MINUTES**

#### **VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	- Chair, Council Member
Dee Beattie	- Community Member
Chinu Das	- Community Member
Tasha Henderson	- Community Member
John Hooker	- Community Member
Sukhdeep Jassar	- Fraser Health Representative
Vanessa Woznow	- Community Member
Wesley Everaars	- Community Member

#### **VOTING MEMBERS REGRETS:**

Ramya Hosak	- Community Member
Maggie House	- Community Member
Simka Marshall	- Community Member

#### **GUESTS:**

Dr. Aamir Bharmal	- Medical Health Officer, Fraser Health Authority
-------------------	---

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Claudia Freire	- Social Planner
Carilyn Cook	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 p.m.

#### **1.0 ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO AGENDA**

There were no additions or deletions to the Agenda.

## 2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

### 2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of May 8, 2018

#### MOVED AND SECONDED

*THAT the May 8, 2018 Community and Social Issues Committee meeting minutes be adopted as circulated.*

**CARRIED.**

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

## 3.0 PRESENTATION

### 3.1 New West Overdose Community Action Team - Dr. Aamir Bharmal Medical Health Officer, Fraser Health Authority

Claudia Freire, Social Planner, introduced Dr. Bharmal, Medical Health Officer, who commenced with his presentation.

Dr. Bharmal advised that BC is in the midst of an overdose crisis with five municipalities in the Fraser Health district experiencing an overdose rate higher than the national average. He shared that New Westminster is experiencing an increasing trend of overdoses but noted that there are opportunities for community members and first responders, etc., to unite and implement “made in the community” ways to ease the problem with Community Action Teams (CAT). The BC Government is providing CAT grants of 100k to priority communities to facilitate the creation of local multi-sectoral strategies to address the overdose crisis and, as an identified priority community, New Westminster has been awarded the grant to assist with this dire situation.

Creation of the CAT will involve peers and representatives from multiple agencies, including committee co-chairs Logan Ansal from the Lower Mainland Purpose Society and Dr. Bharmal. Identified goals include developing a peer network for users, creating an action plan, and moving towards decreasing the stigma associated with drug use while increasing compassion for those that use drugs. Members were invited to the upcoming Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup> meeting being held in Council Chambers at City Hall.

**Procedural note:** Wesley Everaars, Community Member, arrived at 5:45 p.m.

Dr. Bharmal provided the following information in response to questions:

- Establishing how to reach the “hidden population”, those that use drugs in private residences, will be one of the more challenging goals of the group;
- Asset mapping and gap analysis will be undertaken to create an action plan, as well as determining how to sustain these actions for years to come;
- The cultural safety aspect of the term *Cultural Safety and Humility* refers to marginalized groups and how they understand, are made aware of, and feel

- safe in the services available to them. Humility recognizes the various assets these groups have to offer and our need to embrace them;
- Overall, the death rate is driven by the amount of fentanyl in the drug supply; however, it is encouraging that less people are going to emergency rooms as more OD's are being responded to in the community. Those that use alone are the highest risk group with the majority of those fatalities not having an associated 911 call;
  - With the change to the way 911 calls are triaged, less calls are going to fire departments, who often can get to an emergency scene first and this has been concerning for cities experiencing an overdose crises. Information sharing and good response times for these situations need to be ensured; therefore, these concerns have been brought up at the provincial level;
  - Whether or not a safe injection site, which do not experience fatalities because users are monitored, is brought to New Westminster, would have to be discussed as sites must be in areas with a high concentration of users since they cannot and/or will not travel far to get to a safe injection site;
  - 85% of OD deaths are men aged 30 to 39, although there is a trend within Fraser South that is seeing more women and youth dying of ODs;
  - While men may have more binge-type behaviours, these casualties are often related to mental health issues with drugs being used for self-medication; and,
  - Essentially, there are three groups of drug users (less frequent users, those that use to manage pain, and those who use more often) and reaching each group will require different methods.

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk, will forward to members the upcoming job posting for the peer coordinator position once it is complete.

**Procedural note:** Dr. Bharmal left at 6:08 p.m.

## **4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **4.1 Modular Housing at 838 Ewen Avenue**

Ms. Freire advised members that Council approved the 838 Ewen Avenue modular housing project after a number of consultations and a public hearing which was held on June 26, 2018. The Development Permit has been issued and it is anticipated that the application for the foundation will be received within the next month or so. Once work on the site starts, which is expected to be near the end of September or early October, the City will engage in further communication with the community. The establishment of a community advisory committee (CAC), which proved to be a successful endeavour for Vancouver's Marpole Project, will also be established and will include a range of stakeholders, one of the goals of the CAC will be to ensure the new residents feel welcome in the community. . A draft terms of reference is currently being created for the advisory committee; it is estimated that that first meeting will take place in the next few weeks. Members were informed that this item will remain as a standing agenda item in order for the group to receive updates.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Freire provided the following information:

- Staff are reaching out to the stakeholders that the City has been working with from the beginning of the project but will also look to the temple, Queensborough Residents' Association, residents at large, etc., in order to have a diverse cross-section of community members on the advisory committee;
- Staff are considering using a third party facilitator to offset some of the anticipated tension at the meetings, to allow for a more effective dialogue; and,
- Springtime is the anticipated finish time for the project.

Members provided the following comments regarding the June 26, 2018 Public Hearing (PH) which addressed the modular housing proposal:

- A member shared that he felt very uncomfortable at the PH when it was his turn to address Council;
- Members felt that Mayor Coté handled the tense environment very well;
- A member stated that she hurried home as there were groups of men loitering outside City Hall, causing her concern for her safety;
- A member and foster daughter hurried out after adjournment as the atmosphere was very tense and they felt insecure in the surroundings; and,
- Councillor McEvoy advised that Council and staff are reaching out to those who attended the PH and were against the project, in order to help them better understand the issues.

## **5.0 NEW BUSINESS**

There were no items.

## **6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION**

### **6.1 Renovictions Action Plan Update Report**

In summary of the report which was circulated to members prior to the meeting, Ms. Freire shared that renovictions are on the increase and staff, who see a lot of residents coming into city hall to discuss renovictions, do their best to inform tenants of their rights and provide access links to the Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre (TRAC), including their publication, the "Tenant Survival Guide. Ms. Freire announced that staff, in collaboration with TRAC, are organizing a Tenant's Rights Workshop, with the first workshop focussing on newcomers to the City. Members were informed that while the City is limited to what it can do with respect to renovictions, Council has championed lobbying the provincial government to amend the Residential Tenancy Act to include the following:

- Allow renters the right of first refusal to return to their units at a rent that is no more than what the landlord could lawfully have charged, including allowable annual increases, if there is no interruption in the tenancy;

- Require that the Residential Tenancy Branch eliminate or amend fixed-term tenancy agreements to prevent significant rent increases upon renewal; and,
- Require that the Residential Tenancy Branch amend the dispute resolution application process to accept one application representing more than one affected tenant.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Freire provided the following information:

- Interpreters may be in attendance at the workshop to assist those who experience language as a communication barrier; and,
- Staff are contemplating holding a workshop specifically for seniors since that demographic is being hit particularly hard by the renoviction issue.

The Committee made the following comments:

- It was noted that BC Federation of Retired Union Members (BCFL) provides good resources; and,
- Non-profit organizations are applying for housing for seniors and seniors at risk through the Building BC: Community Housing Fund with the intent being to connect city councils, planners, etc., with respect to parcels of land that can be used for housing.

## **6.2 Rental Replacement Policy and Inclusionary Housing Policy: Next Steps and Timeline**

Ms. Freire advised that a follow up report is scheduled to go to Council on October 1, 2018 with draft policy statements, a consultation program, etc., and that staff will be seeking direction from Council, including returning to the CSI for further discussion and feedback.

## **7.0 CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items.

## **8.0 NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, December 4, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. – Committee Room 2, City Hall

## **9.0 ADJOURNMENT**

**ON MOTION**, the meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Certified Correct,

Original Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
**Councillor Jaimie McEvoy**  
**Chair**

Original Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
**Carilyn Cook**  
**Committee Secretary**