



COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

May 5, 2015: 5:30 p.m.
Committee Room #2, City Hall (511 Royal Avenue)

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	- Co-Chair
Deanna Tan	- Fraser Health (Alternate for Judith Hockney)
Norah Andrew	- Community Member
Jason Campbell	- Community Member (Exited at 6:45 p.m.)
Tammy Dewar	- Community Member
John Hooker	- Community Member
Nadine Nakagawa	- Community Member
Peter Nautenbach	- Community Member
Briana Tomkinson	- Community Member
Ken Wilkinson	- Community Member

REGRETS:

Brynn Bourke	- Community Member
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STAFF:

John Stark	- Senior Social Planner
Tristan Johnston	- Planning Analyst
Alison Worsfold	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of April 16, 2015

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the minutes of the April 16, 2015 Community and Social Issues Committee meeting be adopted.

CARRIED.

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

3.0 PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Community Poverty Reduction Initiative – Addressing Stereotypes and Changing Public Attitudes

John Stark, Senior Social Planner, and Tristan Johnston, Planning Analyst, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Community Poverty Reduction Initiative.

In response from questions from the Committee, Mr. Stark and Mr. Johnston noted the following information:

- The City's Living Wage Policy states that companies awarded municipal contracts must pay their employees a minimum of \$19.62 an hour;
- The living wage calculation is based on an array of factors, including the cost of local housing and essential expenses;
- 93% of new immigrants have indicated that they utilize the library, which is often a first point of contact for them upon arrival to the city; and,
- Income assistance rates have remained stagnant since 2007.

Discussion ensued with respect to addressing stereotypes and public perception of poverty, and the Committee provided the following suggestions:

- That social support organizations be included in community events so that they can provide information regarding their services and engage with citizens;
- That neighbourhood block parties be organized to create a broader cooperation between the community as a whole;
- That the City provide additional social programs, such as the *Protein For People* event, hosted by the New Westminster and District Labour Council;
- That citizens be provided with statistics and factual stories regarding the prevalence of poverty, as well as how easily one can become impoverished;
- That children be better educated and made aware of the issue of poverty; and,
- That video clips, graphics and social media be utilized as tools to raise poverty awareness.

The Committee expressed concerns with respect to children from higher income families being provided with greater educational support opportunities than children living in poverty. Concerns were also expressed regarding the dominance some privileged individuals may feel over individuals living in poverty.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Access to Washroom Facilities in Emergent Situations

John Stark, Senior Social Planner, advised that Council has requested that the Community and Social Issues (CSI) Committee provide comments with respect to the City in investigating whether or not local businesses would be willing to participate in a program that would allow patrons to access their washroom facilities in emergent situations.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee noted the following comments:

- It was suggested that businesses are more inclined to allow a non-costumer to utilize their washroom facility if they are a child rather than a homeless individual, due to hygiene issues and the fear of illegal substances entering their facility;
- It was suggested that businesses be better educated on the homelessness issue prior to considering a program such as this;
- It was suggested that providing public washrooms should be the government's responsibility;
- It was suggested that public sector organizations, such as hospitals, be approached to provide public washrooms to alleviate pressure on private businesses;
- Concerns were expressed regarding public urination in certain locations throughout the city, such as at the 22nd Street SkyTrain station;
- Each SkyTrain station maintains its own public washroom; however, access to the facility requires an attendant who is not always available;
- It was suggested that municipal park washroom hours be extended;
- It was suggested that the Anvil Centre provide public access to their washrooms during all hours of operation;
- Plaza 88 provided a public washroom when it opened but it has since closed; and,
- It was suggested that the City partner with the Business Associations and local businesses to establish public washrooms around the city, as well as to create a 'bathroom hot spots' map.

Procedural Note: Jason Campbell exited the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

4.2 Funding Cuts to Housing Outreach, Referral and Advocacy Programs – Possible Letter from the CSI Committee

Procedural Note: Councillor Jaimie McEvoy declared a conflict of interest and exited the meeting at 6:53 p.m. Norah Andrew assumed the Chair.

John Stark, Senior Social Planner, distributed a draft letter regarding Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding cuts to housing outreach, referral and advocacy programs in New Westminster.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee suggested that the letter be forwarded to the federal government representative on behalf of the Committee.

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Community and Social Issues Committee endorse the letter dated May 5, 2015 from John Stark, Senior Social Planner, addressed to the Minister of State (Social Development) regarding the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) funding cuts to housing outreach, referral and advocacy programs in New Westminster.

CARRIED.

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

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the Minister of State (Social Development) explore new funding sources to ensure that housing outreach, referral and advocacy programs can continue to address the needs of people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness in New Westminster and elsewhere in Canada.

CARRIED.

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

Procedural Note: Councillor Jaimie McEvoy re-entered the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and assumed the Chair.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 BC Aboriginal Network on Disability Society

John Stark, Senior Social Planner, summarized the letter dated February 6, 2015 from the British Columbia (B.C.) Aboriginal Network on Disability Society regarding the assistance of aboriginal individuals and families living with a disability in B.C. Mr. Stark advised that New Westminster City Council declined to support the request, as the society is not based out of New Westminster and therefore does not qualify for a grant.

The Committee considered the request but did not provide a recommendation to Council, as the City maintains a community grant process that includes eligibility criteria.

5.2 Local Immigration Partnership Community Asset Mapping Project and Report

John Stark, Senior Social Planner, noted that staff will provide a report regarding the Community Asset Mapping Project at an upcoming Community and Social Issues Committee meeting. The project, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, will provide easy online access to information regarding community and social service programs provided in New Westminster.

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

There were no items.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

June 2, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. in Committee Room #2

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting concluded at 7:15 p.m.

Certified correct,

Councillor J. McEvoy
Chair

Alison Worsfold
Recording Clerk