

**Joint Meeting of the:
COVID-19: AT-RISK &
VULNERABLE POPULATIONS TASK FORCE
&
COVID-19: SENIORS & PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES TASK FORCE
Minutes**

October 28, 2020 at 1:00 p.m., Committee Room 2 – City Hall
(Due to precautionary health measures, only City staff are permitted to personally attend meetings)

PRESENT (in Person):

John Stark, Co-Chair/Supervisor, Community Planning
Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst
Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

PRESENT (via Teleconference):

Staff:

Jacklyn Altamura, Co-Chair, Recreation Supervisor, Century House
Constable Camille Oliveira, New Westminister Police Department
Karen Campbell, Policy Planner
Alison Ching, Recreation Leader
Shelley Cole, Bylaw Officer, Tenant Support Coordinator
Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst
Paolo Zenone, Recreation Leader

Organizational Representatives:

Rick Bloudell, School District #40
Melita Caissie, Fraserside Community Services Society
Erin Daly, Fraser Health Authority
Calvin Donnelly, Sapperton Old Age Pensioners' Association
Sharon Ennis, Royal City Legion Manor
Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC/Lived Experience
Esther Hsieh, Umbrella Multicultural Health Co-op
Kay Johnson, New West Hospice Society
Kimiko Karpoff, Good Vibrations, United Church of Canada
Kyoko Takahashi, Seniors Services Society
Betina Wheeler, New Westminister Homelessness Coalition Society
Bill Wong, Union Gospel Mission

The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m.

1. Introductions & Roll Call

Introductions and a roll call took place.

2. Review of New Joint Meeting Format

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, reminded members that the decision to move to a joint meeting format was made in order to address the redundancy in updates given to both Task Forces individually and the desire to use staff and members' time more efficiently. He shared that both Task Forces would remain independent other than participating in joint meetings and that the new format would be reviewed after a few meetings to ensure that it is working for everyone but noted that that if we roll back to Phase 2 or 1, the Task Forces may again move back to independent meetings.

Joint Task Force Items

3. Update on Standing Items

Task Force Web Portal Update

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, reviewed the resources included on the Task Force Web Portal such as the Food Resources Calendar, the Survival Resources Guide, Key Information and Resources for Tenants, the List of Financial Resources, etc., and advised that for ease of access the link to the Web Portal is again located on the home page of the City's website. Mr. Mehdic reminded members that the resource information is also included in the weekly emails and will be shared in the New Westminster Record, CitiPage, and various social media.

Mr. Stark advised that pamphlets with resource information will also be included in food hampers for those that may not have access to a computer to learn about the resources available to them. Members were also urged to contact staff if they require hardcopies of resource information for them to share with their networks.

Discussion ensued and members suggested posters with the various resource information be printed and posted at the library, grocery stores, and other public places, and it was noted that the information could be shared in the School District newsletter.

Financial Resources Update

Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst, reviewed the various links included on the List of Financial Resources and shared that Family Services of Greater Vancouver and

the New Westminster Public Library will be holding online workshops titled, ‘Dealing with Credit and Debt’ which will address things such as budgeting and investing.

Tenant Resources Update

Karen Campbell, Policy Planner, advised that while there were no new updates to report, staff will continue to update Key Information and Resources for Tenants when appropriate. Ms. Campbell shared that BC Housing’s Independent Living BC Program was put on hold due to the pandemic and for revision, noting that they are working to re-launch the Program but are awaiting instructions from the Provincial Government.

Youth Services Update

Paolo Zenone, Recreation Leader, advised of the Youth Services’ Halloween programming including *Moody Park After Dark* which they will host in conjunction with New Westminster Fire & Rescue Services and will include a bonfire and various games and prizes. He stated that youth must register in advance of the event. Additionally, Mr. Zenone advised that Youth Services is moving to an online format for information sharing through various social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and the website, and that Youth Services has been in contact with local schools to conduct online “in-class” visits via Zoom, etc.

4. Food Security Plans Update

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, and Betina Wheeler, New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society, shared food security plan updates including:

- Food insecurity continues to be a significant issue throughout the province and it is expected to continue for the next 24 months, even after the pandemic is over. As current foundational funding comes to an end, longer term, sustainable funding may be found under the Federal Government’s Reaching Home Initiative, which may also facilitate the expansion of food security and other resources. As well, staff continue to work on the Food Security Pilot Project;
- There has been a noticeable increase in the need for food hampers in the community and the United Way is the main organization that funds are being requested from for assistance; and,
- St. Aidan’s Presbyterian Church is working on a new program for health-related testing etc.; and,
- Family Services of Greater Vancouver information will be included in hampers and their representatives will be on-site at times to meet with people.

5. Shelter and Temporary Housing Update

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, advised that the search continues for a new Emergency Response Centre (ERC) location that can accommodate 40 to 50 people while adhering to COVID-19 physical distancing requirements. He noted that, ice rinks and gymnasiums may seem like ideal locations, The Queen's Park Arena is too cold, the Moody Park Arena is operational and would impact user groups, and the Massey Gym is currently being used by New Westminster Secondary School. Mr. Stark advised that Council has directed staff to work with BC Housing to investigate smaller locations, acknowledging that those options will have cost implications with respect to on-site supervision and supports. He stated that the goal is to have an ERC functional prior to Christmas.

Mr. Stark shared that the City also continues working with BC Housing on supportive housing that is anticipated to be operational within the next 12 to 18 months, offering 40 to 60 housing units for both men and women, as well as their pets. It was noted that BC Housing would partner with a non-profit organization to run the site.

6. Partnership with the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition on Community Action Network (CAN) Training Sessions

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, shared that three sessions of the CAN Training have taken place so far, noting that participants come from a variety of backgrounds with a diverse array of experiences. He reminded members that participants are receiving training on public speaking, advocacy, City committee structure, etc., and discussions include the root causes of poverty in the community, income assistance advocacy, housing, child care, education and training for low income people, and health and food security.

Sharon Ennis, Royal City Legion Manor, shared her experience in the sessions noting that the training has been a great learning opportunity with a varied representation of the community which will help address problems and provide solutions. She advised that participants have a lot to contribute to the discussions.

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, reminded members that it is anticipated that graduates will participate on the City's advisory committees and working groups as subject matter experts, as well as working with staff on the creation of an engagement toolkit and training staff on how to better engage members of the community with lived and living experience. Mr. Stark shared that the City has contributed \$10,000 for the sessions and that a report will be going to Council to request funding to compensate graduates for their contributions on advisory committees and working groups and training of staff.

At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations Task Force Items

7. COVID-19 Testing Site for At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, announced that the City is working alongside the Fraser Health Authority to secure a location for a COVID-19 community testing site, noting that originally they were seeking outdoor space; however, with the onset of inclement weather, are now looking for an indoor space large enough to facilitate the testing of up to 450 people per day. Additionally, they are working on a possible mobile or satellite testing site in the Downtown area for the at-risk and vulnerable community members.

8. Health Contact Centre (HCC) Update

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, reminded members that the Health Contact Centre (HCC) would be a multi-disciplinary site for harm reduction, a safe drug supply, as well as being able to address other health issues. He noted that currently the Fraser Health Authority is seeking a non-profit operator for the HCC and that a site for it is still also being sought and, depending on the location, may require a temporary use permit to be issued in order to hasten opening of the facility to quickly address this urgent and growing issue.

Discussion ensued regarding transportation to testing sites for those without a vehicle and Mr. Stark advised that this issue has been brought to the attention of the Fraser Health Authority and that once a response is received from them, staff will work with the City's Transportation Division on transportation for those with mobility challenges and create an information document for public dissemination.

9. Identification of Other Issues and Suggestions to Assist At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations

- Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC/Lived Experience, shared that those with high level injuries are not prepared for the second wave and the shortages and costs of personal protective equipment (PPE), which also affects in-home care. In response, John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, advised that staff have requested funding for PPE from Council and asked that organizations in need of PPE supplies forward invoices to him for pre-approval for the City to provide financial assistance; and,
- In response to a query about technology, Mr. Stark advised of the Social Inclusion Initiative with Douglas College and the Lower Mainland Purpose Society wherein donated technical devices are provided to the at-risk and vulnerable populations to keep them connected to resources and support systems. He noted that a grant has

been received to purchase technical devices for the at-risk population and possibly seniors, noting that City may also be able to donate used phones to the program.

10. Member Updates

External Member Updates

- Kay Johnson, New West Hospice Society, shared that they have volunteers available to assist with food delivery and other errands people may need help with outside of their residence; and,
- Various members spoke of the generosity that Key West Ford has shown throughout the pandemic such as sharing PPE supplies in the community, distributing backpacks to the street entrenched, providing a bulletin board for the Royal City Legion Manor to display COVID-related information with residents, etc. John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, stated that staff could look into having the City acknowledge Key West Ford for their charity during this challenging time.

Seniors and Persons Living with Disabilities Task Force Items

11. Friendly Support Caller Program

Alison Ching, Recreation Leader, shared that the Friendly Support Caller Program now has a total of 14 volunteers and 27 clients, and that during the last two weeks, a total of 23 calls were made over 328 minutes, averaging 17.26 minutes per call. She noted that two new clients are waitlisted until they can be matched with volunteers and that a volunteer will retire once their client is placed with someone else.

Staff noted that some clients who have been on the Program since the beginning of the pandemic, are now in need of more support than the Program can offer and may benefit from the upcoming restart of the Seniors Peer Counselling Program.

Jacklyn Altamura, Recreation Supervisor, Century House, noted that the time is right to reach out to the community and publish information on the Friendly Support Caller Program as we move deeper into the second wave of the pandemic.

12. Identification of Other Issues and Suggestions to Assist Seniors and Person Living with Disabilities

- John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, urged members to continue to connect with those in their communities who may be limited in their ability to get out and take care of errands, adding that some people may be in arrears with their utilities and require assistance to keep warm through the winter;
- Jacklyn Altamura, Recreation Supervisor, Century House, reminded members of the Coffee Break with Shelly Program which is held online twice a day on

Tuesdays and agreed that this information could also be included in the hamper handouts;

- Ms. Altamura advised of social pods available for reservation at Century House and the Queensborough Community Centre which provide one hour time slots for people to meet up with friends while adhering to physical distancing protocol; and,
- Betina Wheeler, New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society, suggested that the Task Force reach out leaders of such Facebook groups as New West Helping Hands who could not only share with people what resources are available to them but also help with picking up groceries and prescriptions for those who need it. Ms. Altamura agreed to communicate with them to be better prepared for the anticipated increase in needs over the winter which would necessitate their assistance.

13. Member Updates

No updates were provided.

Next Step & Meeting Schedule

14. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, advised that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 25, 2020 and that an email update will be provided in lieu of meeting missed due to Remembrance Day.

The meeting adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

Original Signed

John Stark
Chair

Original Signed

Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk