

# **COVID-19: AT-RISK & VULNERABLE POPULATIONS TASK FORCE**

## **Minutes**

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

*(In order to undertake precautionary health measures and practice safe social distancing,  
only City staff are permitted to attend the meeting in person.)*

### **PRESENT (in Person):**

John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning/Chair  
Rob Dick, Assistant Deputy Fire Chief  
Dylan Myers, Acting Emergency Support Services Chief Deputy  
Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst  
Mike Antoniali, Acting ESS Operations Coordinator  
Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

### **PRESENT (via Teleconference):**

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner  
Shelly Cole, Tenant Support Coordinator  
Diana McDaniel, Inspector, New Westminister Police Department  
Susan Hogarth, Westminister House Society  
Edith Tazumi, Union Gospel Mission  
Allison Luke, New Westminister Mental Health and Addictions Centre  
Linda Fletcher-Gordon, Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth and Families  
Courtney Pankratz, Lower Mainland Purpose Society  
Kyoko Takahashi, Seniors Services Society  
Lynda Edmonds, Fraserside Community Services Society  
Kimiko Karpoff, United Church of Canada  
Esther Hsieh, Umbrella Multicultural Health Co-op  
Lorrie Wasyliw, Monarch Place (WINGS)  
Betina Wheeler, New West Homelessness Coalition Society  
Bonnie Moriarty, Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver  
Leonard Levy, Lookout Housing and Health Society  
Ingrid Timmermans, Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice  
Sukhdeep Jassar, Fraser Health

The meeting convened at 1:02 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 March 25, 2020**

Staff provided the following updates:

- The Key Contacts of Faith-Based and Non-Profit Organizations Supporting At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations document has been created and members were encouraged to provide updates directly to Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, in order to ensure the continued accuracy of the list;
- The appeal for donations and volunteers to assist with the COVID-19 pandemic has been posted to the City's website. As well, Theresa McManus of the New Westminster Record will be reaching out to several organizations to see what their needs are and how they are coping at this time, which will run in the Record;
- The Resource Request Form has been created and will be for faith and non-profit organizations to use on an ongoing basis. The interactive form will be able to be viewed by other organizations to track required resources and create synergy between them; and,
- The Survival Guide is being updated and will continue to be updated with food, outreach s, government services, and be forwarded to organizations. It was noted that information regarding food resources will be provided on a Food Resources Calendar and sent out through the Emergency Weather Response Program distribution group.

Courtney Pankratz of the Lower Mainland Purpose Society shared that, based on the needs of the New West Homelessness Coalition Society, the City is exploring how to put hygiene kits together to disseminate as soon as possible.

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

- Resource documents will be available for display in clinics and doctors offices;
- Using the Extreme Weather Response Program distribution group allows documents to be updated and shared on a daily basis; and,
- Task Force members will receive resource documents and their web link to the City's website via email.

#### **4. Food Security Plans for Each Neighbourhood**

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, advised that, since the best-served neighbourhood is the Downtown, focus is being placed on Uptown. Ms. Freire shared food resource updates including:

- Staff are currently in discussions with Century House to set up a supper program that would run from 4:40 to 7:00 p.m.;
- Staff have reached out to St. Barnabas Church to run a lunch or brunch program out of Moody Park; and,
- An additional hot lunch program with the Salvation Army will be run through Truffles Fine Food Catering.

Courtney Pankratz of the Lower Mainland Purpose Society shared that, Holy Trinity Cathedral food programs have been suspended due to physical distancing and that the Olivet Baptist Church has moved its food services to Tipperary Park in conjunction with the Farmers Market and noted that residents need to register to access this program.

Dylan Myers, Acting Emergency Support Services Chief Deputy, announced that approximately 40 people were served in the Connaught Heights area from the Purpose Society's Health Van and suggested that awareness could be drawn to when and where the van will be located in the future.

In response to a question from a Task Force member, staff advised that regularly updated and printable copies of the Food Resource Calendar will be sent to Task Members as well as to Engineering Operations and other avenues for dissemination.

As some Task Force members expressed concern regarding access to the food bank and whether or not people needed to register or re-register and if so where, staff will contact the food bank to discuss reducing barriers.

#### **5. Shelter and Temporary Housing Needs**

John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning/Chair, shared that there has been an increase in people in the City who need shelter and that on Friday, staff will meet with Fraser Health and BC Housing to discuss housing options. He noted that whichever options are decided upon, physical distancing will have to be maintained and knowledge gained with respect to how to attend to those who are symptomatic, while keeping them isolated. All options will require some sort of supervision and support, including mental health, addictions, etc.

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

- Accommodation for those that experience partner or spousal abuse is a concern that the City is working on; and,
- Staff will investigate the possibility of using a vacant car lot to locate portables for temporary housing.

Discussion ensued and Task Force members provided the following comments:

- Members were encouraged to contact the Elizabeth Fry Society if they know of someone who can use assistance as the Society has secured housing in New Westminster and Surrey for single women, seniors, and those with compromised immune systems; and,
- Monarch Place has increased their phone capacity and have seen a surge in calls and expect even more as the pandemic continues.

Discussion ensued regarding garbage left near homelessness encampments and Task Force members were encouraged to contact Dylan Myers, Acting Emergency Support Services Chief Deputy, directly to have garbage picked up noting that there may be sanitation concerns. Members were also asked to send locations of encampments to Mr. Myers so that a map can be created of high-risk areas, and advised that this issue has also been brought to the attention of both the EOC Advanced Planning Group and the Education and Enforcement Task Force.

## **6. Member Updates**

Member updates included but were not limited to:

- Youth counsellors continue to assist clients online, Youth Centre windows will advertise resources available, staff will work on online programming for youth, and a virtual Youth Week will take place this year in May;
- Amongst other things, SD 40 has surveyed parents regarding their food, technology, and child care (for essential service workers) needs and work has started in addressing those needs. As well, staff will maintain contact with at-risk kids and work with them accordingly;
- The Seniors Services Society is closed to walk-ins but available via phone or email and is focussing on grocery delivery for seniors;
- Lookout Housing and Health Society continues to work with BC Housing for options for the street entrenched;
- Lower Mainland Purpose Society has all programs operating;
- The Elizabeth Fry Society is seeking resources for pre-made dinners for clients as the New Westminster shelter hotel does not have a kitchen facility;

- The Union Gospel Mission will be posting signage advertising their services and are giving out hygiene kits;
- The United Church of Canada: Good Vibrations project is online and offers short workshops to help reduce anxiety during this challenging time;
- The Umbrella Multicultural Health Co-op encouraged organizations with clients that are experiencing language and cultural barriers in accessing services to contact them for assistance;
- Monarch Place has phone lines open to assist with mental health issues, etc. They are also seeking materials for making their own masks and sanitizer;
- The New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society received a request from MP Peter Julian’s office to participate in an online town hall meeting. Also of note is that Key West Ford has offered the use of cars for local service providers;
- The Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice continues holding virtual clinics for those without a family doctor and are seeking PPE for members; and,
- Fraser Health is still offering immunizations for children by appointment only. They continue working on a process for regional testing and have an operational strategy for testing our vulnerable populations.

John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning/Chair, advised that the City’s Second Wave Task Force, could look into the City possibly initiating a clean drug supply program to assist the Lower Mainland Purpose Society with its clients.

## 7. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

Rob Dick, Assistant Deputy Fire Chief, urged members to complete the Resource Request Form, which will be sent to them via email in the next day or two.

John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning/Chair, asked members to contact staff if they had any additions to upcoming Agendas.

The meeting adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Original Signed  
**John Stark**  
**Chair**

Original Signed  
**Carilyn Cook**  
**Committee Clerk**