

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

Minutes

June 10, 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, Chair/Supervisor, Community Planning
Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst
Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner
Dylan Myers, Acting Emergency Support Services (ESS) Chief Deputy
Mike Antoniali, Acting ESS Operations Coordinator
Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

PRESENT (via Teleconference):

Staff:

Shelley Cole, Bylaw Officer, Tenant Support Coordinator
Paolo Zenone, Recreation Leader, Youth Services
Diana McDaniel, Inspector, New Westminster Police Department
Camille Oliveira, Constable, New Westminster Police Department
Ramona Manzer, Program Coordinator, Centennial Community Centre
Karen Campbell, Policy Planner
Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst

Organizational Representatives:

Shannon Patrick, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
Linda Fletcher-Gordon, Lower Mainland Purpose Society
Edith Tazumi, Union Gospel Mission
Courtney Pankratz, Lower Mainland Purpose Society
Betina Wheeler, New West Homelessness Coalition Society
Shamina Kallu, Lookout Housing and Health Society
Melody Monro, Fraser Health
Ingrid Timmermans, Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice
Melita Caissie, Fraserside Community Services Society
Rick Bloudell, School District #40
Fay Duxbury, New West Family Place
Richard Leggett, Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral
Lorrie Wasyliw, Monarch Place (WINGS)

The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m.

1. Introductions

Task Force members introduced themselves.

2. Review of Draft Minutes

Lorrie Wasyliw, Monarch Place (WINGS), advised that as she joined the last meeting late, she was not included in the list of attendees. Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk, will update the minutes accordingly.

3. Update on Actions Taken Since Meeting of May 27, 2020

Task Force Web Portal Updates

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Analyst, advised members to check the webpage regularly as it is continuously updated. He noted that the List of Financial Supports will be updated every two weeks.

Youth Services

Paolo Zenone, Recreation Leader, Youth Services, provided the following updates:

- The resource poster is being updated for accuracy and will be disseminated by the end of the week;
- The summer activity plan is currently being reviewed by management; and,
- Staff continue working with schools to maintain contact with at-risk youth and also reach out to youth at parks, etc.

Task Force members were asked to send youth resource information to Mr. Mehdic for dissemination to the group.

4. Food Security Plans Update

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, Courtney Pankratz, Lower Mainland Purpose Society, and Betina Wheeler, New West Homelessness Coalition Society (NWHCS), shared food security plan updates including:

- Betina Wheeler of the NWHCS will be working with staff until the end of November to facilitate continuation of current food support programs and implementation of new ones;
- Staff are working on implementing a hamper program in Queensborough in addition to the program in Sapperton;
- Ms. Wheeler will be supporting St. Aidan's Presbyterian Church with their application to the United Way COVID-19 Community Response Fund to develop a

food hub to support other food program sites in order to increase food program capacity and long-term sustainability through partnerships;

- Staff continue to research funding opportunities, determine where aid is needed, and develop a pilot food securities strategy proposal to submit to senior government;
- The Food Resources Calendar will be updated to be listed by neighbourhood; however, feedback will be sought from Task Force members prior to finalization;
- The Tipperary Park Food Bank will move to the Moody Park Arena to avoid the summer heat;
- The Lookout and Purpose Society Sandwich Program, currently funded by the City, sees approximately 70 sandwiches handed out per day, with less handed out on the weekend as people access other food programs; and,
- The Purpose Society Hamper Program will continue until the end of June, at which time it will be re-assessed.

Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst, advised of the Provincial Government's June 5th announcement regarding funding to support the BC Farmer's Market Nutrition Coupon Program which provides coupons for lower-income households to purchase food at BC farmers markets, including the New West Farmers Market.

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

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, advised that in the fall of 2019 the City forged a partnership with the BCPRC for Community Action Network Training Sessions which would include up to 15 people with lived experience taking part in six to seven training sessions where they will learn about public speaking, civic committee structure, advocacy, etc. Participants will receive bus passes, meals, etc., for taking part and it is hoped that graduates will have the opportunity to utilize their newly acquired skills by sitting on a city committee. Additionally, the training session will help educate staff and inform an engagement guide and tool kit.

Mr. Stark stated that information and orientation sessions for both faith and non-profit organizations, and participants, are expected to begin at the end of June with the training sessions anticipated to commence in the fall with physical distancing in place.

6. Shelter and Temporary Housing Update

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, advised that the ERC, which has been operational since May 11th and scheduled to run until July 11th, may be renewed for one month and that, as the new high school is currently not operational due to the pandemic and the old school is still being used, the ERC will be relocated to allow the school use of the Massey Theatre. A new ERC site should be secured in the next few weeks.

Further, Mr. Stark stated that individuals are screened prior to placement at the ERC and, if they test positive, will self-isolate in a hotel room in Burnaby due to the lack of hotel rooms in New Westminster, and that Fraser Health is currently determining if any of the patrons from the Burnaby Warming Centre who tested positive for the virus, patronized programs in New Westminster.

7. Social Inclusion Initiative

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, reminded members 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 population to keep them connected to resources and support systems, and that the City is looking to provide Wi-Fi hot spots.

Courtney Pankratz, Lower Mainland Purpose Society, advised that the Initiative consists of three phases including collecting donated devices, working with iCARE and the adult literacy program at Douglas College, and engagement. She added that work is being done to determine which grants could help support the Initiative, which is still in the development stage.

8. Identification of Other Issues

Staff noted that with the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) ending and deferred payments coming due, those experiencing hardship will increase, so it is important to continue assistance through food security resources, etc.

In response to a Task Force member's question regarding community garden access, staff will follow up with all Task Force members with information.

9. Member Updates

Staff Updates

- Ramona Manzer, Program Coordinator, Centennial Community Centre, shared that the resource and activity bags are ready to go to the food bank, the Lower Mainland Purpose Society, etc.; and,
- Camille Oliveira, Constable, New Westminster Police Department, announced that she and her partner, Constable Wendy Bowyer, are the new vulnerable persons liaison officers and that their goal is to get to know all of their clientele, throughout the community. She advised that they have made two referrals to the ERC.

In response to a Task Force member's query regarding a list of and the removal of portable washrooms, John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, advised that the washrooms, which were requested through calls and a petition, were initially funded

by the Pacific Region Emergency Operations Centre; however, the funding is now on a case by case basis. He noted that complaints were received regarding the washrooms and that maintenance was becoming a challenge. As such, and with the anticipated opening of civic facilities and businesses, it was decided to remove some portable washrooms; however, staff continue to work on fulfilling these needs within the community.

Dylan Meyers, Acting Emergency Support Services (ESS) Chief Deputy agreed to provide a map of portable washroom locations to members.

A member shared that although some churches are partially resuming activities, access to washrooms will remain closed at this time due to concerns that have been expressed.

Courtney Pankratz, Lower Mainland Purpose Society, suggested that if funding is available, some of their members could be contracted to assist with sharps disposals at washrooms where this has become an issue.

Member Updates

- Ms. Pankratz advised of an overdose memorial wherein those impacted by a loss due to drugs can submit photos, poetry, etc., to be incorporated in a mural for International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31st. Contributions can be dropped off at the Lower Mainland Purpose Society or with Ms. Pankratz; and,
- Linda Fletcher-Gordon, Lower Mainland Purpose Society, stated that they are interviewing for the housing case manager and support person positions, and that those hired are anticipated to start work within two weeks. She also advised that they preparing for the Rent Bank to get busier with the end of governmental financial supports, etc.

9. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

Mr. Stark advised that the Task Force would meet less during July and August but that staff would still be available to them during this time.

The next meeting of the Task Force will be at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 24, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 1:51 p.m.

Original Signed
John Stark
Chair

Original Signed
Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk