



Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

COVID-19: SENIORS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TASK FORCE

**April 23, 2020 at 1:00 p.m.
Committee Room 2, City Hall**

Minutes

(Due to precautionary health measures, only City staff are permitted to personally attend meetings)

PRESENT (In Person):

Rob Dick, Assistant Deputy Fire Chief/Chair
Dylan Myers, Acting Emergency Support Services Deputy Chief
Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst
Mike Antoniali, Acting ESS Operations Coordinator
Paolo Zenone, Recreation Leader
Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

PRESENT (via Teleconference):

Staff and Consultants

John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning
Christine Edward, Transportation Planner
Jim Luu, Assistant Manager, Queens Park Concessions
Nazanin Esmaeili, Planning Assistant
Liz Twaites, Volunteer Coordinator
Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator
Mariam Larson, Consultant, Mariam Larson Inc.

Organizational Representatives

Carole Wylie, Century House Association
Tim Hicks, Century House
Ingrid Timmermans, Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice
Kay Johnson, New West Hospice Society
Jules Wilson, Ministry of Children and Family Development
Daisy Au, MOSIAC Seniors
Sharon Ennis, Royal City Legion Manor
Alison Silgado, Seniors Services Society
Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC
Sukhdeep Jassar, Fraser Health Authority
Asifa Lalji, Sustainable Transportation Committee
Janice Barr, Community Living Society

The meeting convened at 1:00 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 April 9, 2020

Friendly Caller Program

Mariam Larson, Consultant, and Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator, provided the following update on the Friendly Caller Program:

- The Program currently has 32 people registered to receive calls (25 women and 7 men), with some calls lasting up to 45 minutes discussing meals, groceries, mental health, etc.;
- The number of caller volunteers has increased to 17; however, as some have already reached their capacity for clients, more volunteers are being brought on board; and,
- At this morning's weekly volunteer meeting, it was clarified that it is not the role of the volunteers to deliver food but rather inform the registrant of food resources.

Discussion ensued regarding those with chronic health and stress issues and who could call Home Health/Fraser Health on their behalf if they cannot do it themselves. Sukhdeep Jassar of the Fraser Health Authority advised that while it would be preferable if a family member calls on behalf of the person in need, it was noted that some may not have an emergency contact listed for that purpose; therefore, she will come back to the Task Force with clarification on this issue.

Ms. Jassar reported that she will provide more information for those who are experiencing lack of or cancelled in-home care which will be sent out in the meeting's follow up email, and that she has taken the suggestion of the provision of the Lifeline program to those at home without necessary assistance to the Fraser Health Authority and will provide an update at a future meeting.

With respect to the discussion at the last meeting regarding people being stuck in bed (or elsewhere) for extended time periods due to caregiver(s) not showing up to aid them, Assistant Deputy Chief Rob Dick stressed the importance of having real information as

opposed to anecdotal information, adding that individual cases need to be addressed rather than trying to address the issue on such a broad spectrum.

A Task Force member suggested the possible implementation of a mobile help unit to assist those who require help filling out forms, composing letters, etc.

Further discussion ensued regarding the promotion of the Friendly Caller Program and the following suggestions were provided:

- Posters can be placed at venues that people regularly walk to, such as restaurants or stores, even if the venue is closed, as people will still walk there as part of their daily exercise routine; and,
- Posters can be placed near the social distancing signs that have been put up throughout the City, in long-term care homes, target neighbourhoods identified by the Fire Department, and possibly laundromats.

Sharon Ennis of the Royal City Legion Manor announced that she had sent the poster to all 108 Legion Manor residents and will post one in the lobby for people entering and exiting the building.

Grocery and Meal Programs

Due to technical issues during the virtual meeting, Alison Silgado of the Seniors Services Society will submit her update for the meeting's follow up email.

Food Hamper Program

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, informed members that the hamper program facilitated by the City and the Greater Vancouver Food Bank started on April 15th and continues to assist those who usually attend the food bank but are unable to do so during the pandemic. Additional details will be provided in the meeting's follow up email.

Financial Supports

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, advised that since many organizations have cancelled their free tax filing services due to the pandemic, staff are working to implement a program for low-income residents to drop off their taxes to be done by volunteers or organizations.

Mr. Mehdic also advised of the *Reaching Home Designated Community COVID-19 Economic Response Plan Funding* initiative for housing, prevention and shelter

diversion, health and medical, data collection, etc., adding that more information would be included in the meeting's follow up email.

Mr. Mehdic urged Task Force members to continue sharing the resource information promoted on the City's website with their networks, noting that while staff are always looking at ways to share information, word of mouth through the Task Force is an important and key way to promote these services and resources.

4. Task Force Ideas and Suggestions to Assist Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

Discussion ensued and members provided the following comments:

- Daisy Au of MOSIAC Seniors advised of a program in Vancouver for isolated seniors in low-income residential buildings which sees volunteers providing some meals for residents. She will provide more information to staff as this may be something that New Westminster can do;
- Sharon Ennis of the Royal City Legion Manor suggested the addition of bulletin boards in building lobbies with information specifically pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic and noted that she is working on putting one up in her building; and,
- Due to technical issues, Alison Silgado of the Seniors Services Society will forward information regarding the 211 Mental Health number to Mr. Mehdic for inclusion in the meeting's follow up email.

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, announced that the City is working with BC Housing and Fraser Health to identify a civic facility that can be used for temporary housing for the City's street entrenched population. He also advised that staff have reached out to hotels in order to secure rooms for women and children, noting that The Elizabeth Fry Society has a block of rooms at the Inn at the Quay and that if members knew of a senior in need of housing, they should contact staff. An update will be provided at the meeting next week.

5. Identification of Other Issues

No other issues were identified.

6. Member Updates

- Tim Hicks, Century House, advised of attending the SFU technology webinar and will share a link to their online guides with Task Force members;

- The Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice has opened a clinic in New Westminster which is currently accepting patients looking for in-person, non COVID-19 related care. Further information will be sent to Task Force members;
- Jules Wilson, Ministry of Children and Family Development, will continue sharing resources brought forward to his various networks; and,
- The New West Hospice Society continues to receive referrals through the palliative care team and started an online bereavement support program last night. Those interested can connect through newwesthospice.ca.

7. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 30, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 1:51 p.m.

Original Signed
Asst. Deputy Fire Chief Rob Dick
Chair

Original Signed
Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk