



Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

COVID-19: SENIORS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TASK FORCE

**April 30, 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

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner
Christine Edward, Transportation Planner
Alison Ching, Recreation Leader
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
Daisy Au, MOSIAC Seniors
Sharon Ennis, Royal City Legion Manor
Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC also lived experience?
Sukhdeep Jassar, Fraser Health Authority
Asifa Lalji, Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee
Janice Barr, Community Living Society
Kyoko Takahashi, Seniors Services Society
Calvin Donnelly, Sapperton Old Age Pensioners Association

The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m.

Assistant Deputy Fire Chief Rob Dick announced that Item 6: Member Updates would be merged with Item 5: Identification of Other Issues, Suggestions to Assist Seniors and Persons with Disabilities.

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 updates on the Friendly Caller Program:

- The Program currently has 42 people registered to receive calls, with the average age of recipients being 77 years old;
- The total number of calls made thus far is 85 resulting in over 1,200 minutes of call time; and,
- There are 17 volunteer callers and, during their weekly meeting this morning, it was suggested that youth callers could be recruited to facilitate intergenerational relations.

Further discussion ensued regarding the possibility of volunteer youth callers and Task Force member provided the following comments:

- Volunteer requirements include a Criminal Record Check (CRC) and interview;
- Interviews could be conducted via Skype or FaceTime and CRC's completed through The United Way website; and
- Current youth volunteers will have already gone through the process and therefore may be more readily available to volunteer.

Staff provided the following comments:

- While there is no shortage of volunteer callers for the Program at this time, moving forward, this would be a great opportunity for both the youth and seniors;
- The City considers those from 13 to 18 years of age as “youth”; and,

- UBC students approached staff offering to volunteer; however, staff have not yet been able to move forward with screening, etc.

Grocery, Meal, and Food Programs

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, and Courtney Pankratz, Lower Mainland Purpose Society, shared food security plan updates including:

- This marked the second week of the hamper delivery program which the City is running in partnership with the Greater Vancouver Food Bank for seniors and those with disabilities who normally use the food bank but are currently unable to access it;
- St. Barnabas Anglican Church has started their Friday Grab and Go food program;
- St. Aidan's Presbyterian Church is working on implementing a food program that will run on Saturdays;
- Staff are reaching out to organizations to establish more food resources in the east end of the City; and,
- With the challenges faced sourcing food donations due to the current high demand across the region, staff are exploring funding opportunities which would allow people to purchase their own food. Staff will meet next week to discuss options that have not previously been considered including approaching various funding agencies for assistance.

Task Force Web Portal

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, informed members that the task force web portal is where information regarding the City's various COVID-19 task forces is kept and includes regularly updated information, such as resources for tenants, the food calendar, the survival guide, etc. Members were asked to let staff know of anything missing from the information provided.

Financial Programs

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, reminded members that resource documents, including the summary of financial supports, tax filing information, and FAQ sheet are frequently updated.

4. Proposal to Increase Digital Inclusion and Connection

Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator, shared that Century House (CH) staff have been phoning seniors who do not list an email address when registering for

programs as it is assumed that if they are not providing an email address, they are not online and may not have access to technology.

Assistant Deputy Fire Chief, Rob Dick will connect Ms. Schnee with Courtney Pankratz of the Lower Mainland Purpose Society who is currently working on the Digital Inclusion Initiative with Douglas College to supply technical resources to those who need it in order to keep them united with their support systems, resources, etc.

Acknowledging that some seniors simply do not want to use technology, Mr. Schnee advised that CH house staff are asking that question, of which the results will be added to their statistical compilation for future reference.

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, advised that the Douglas College Initiative is currently seeking items such as phones, tablets, laptops, etc., for donation and adding free software to them once they are received. He noted that TELUS has been contacted for portable hot spots and that they are exploring public Wi-Fi with the City, including where it is needed. Mr. Mehdic will provide an update on the Initiative at a future meeting.

5. Identification of Other Issues, Suggestions to Assist Seniors and Persons with Disabilities, and Member Updates

- Asifa Lalji, Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee, offered to contact those in her network who may be able to assist Ms. Ennis of the Royal City Legion Manor in obtaining a bulletin board and two hand sanitizer stations for the Manor's lobby;
- Upon Ms. Lalji's suggestion of a food drive for which she offered to prepare a press release and media pitching, Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, advised that staff will discuss the idea at their meeting next week;
- Regarding the issue of caregivers unable to be with a patient while they are ill and dying in the hospital, Ms. Lalji shared information about "Include Me" which consists of a timeline of events with respect to triage plans and care priorities. Ms. Lalji will share more information on the program with members after the meeting. Janice Barr, Community Living Society (CLS), advised that advocacy on this issue from the CLS has been strong and that the government is currently working on guidelines to address this issue;
- Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC, suggested the implementation of COVID-19 related video streams at various locations throughout the City;
- Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator, announced the launch of the virtual coffee break program which brings seniors together, virtually, to chat, noting that

22 people attended the first event. Two events will be held next week in order to keep the groups smaller;

- Daisy Au, MOSIAC, announced that the CCM Centre in Burnaby is currently giving out reusable face masks. She will send the information to Anur to be included in the follow up email;
- Sukhdeep Jassar, Fraser Health, shared that, with respect to community gardens and food security, Courtney Pankratz of the Lower Mainland Purpose Society contacted the New Westminster community gardens and they are currently following Covid protocol and there is no update on the Plant a Row-Grow a Row Program as this time; and,
- Ms. Jassar advised that she is still awaiting a response regarding the request to provide the Lifeline emergency response program as a complementary aid to those whose caregiver's are unable to accommodate home visits at this time.

Anur Mehdić, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, advised that the At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations Task Force spoke a lot of COVID-19 and mental health at their meeting yesterday and, noting that mental health is an important issue for this group as well, it will be added to next week's agenda for further discussion.

6. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 7, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 1:49 p.m.

Original Signed _____
Asst. Deputy Fire Chief Rob Dick
Chair

Original Signed _____
Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk