

**COVID-19: SENIORS &  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES  
TASK FORCE**

**Minutes**

**April 9, 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):**

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):**

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning  
Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner  
Christine Edward, Transportation Planner  
Alison Ching, Recreation Leader  
Jim Luu, Assistant Manager, Queens Park Concessions  
Liz Twaites, Volunteer Coordinator  
Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator  
Calvin Donnelly, Sapperton Old Age Pensioners' Association  
Earl Marshall, Sapperton Seniors Hall  
Daisy Au, MOSIAC Seniors  
Ingrid Timmermans, Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice  
Janice Barr, Community Living Society  
Alison Silgado, Seniors Services Society  
Mariam Larson, Consultant, Mariam Larson Inc.  
Sharon Ennis, Royal City Legion Manor  
Tim Hicks, Century House  
Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC  
Val Macdonald, Community Member – Lived Experience  
Heidi Clarkson, IMPACT Parkinson's  
Sukhdeep Jassar, Fraser Health  
Jules Wilson, Ministry of Children and Family Development

The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m.

## **1. Introductions**

Task Force members introduced themselves.

## **2. Review of Draft Minutes**

In response to a member's enquiry of the previous meeting's minutes and her request to include the wheelchair accessibility logo on the various resources guides so that those using chairs will be aware of which venues are accessible to them, John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning, advised that all resource documents would include the logo.

## **3. Update on Actions Taken Since Meeting of April 2, 2020**

### *Friendly Caller Program*

Mariam Larson, Consultant, and Liz Twaites, Volunteer Coordinator, provided the following information regarding the Friendly Caller Program:

- The Program, which is now running, currently has 14 volunteers and 12 people registered to receive calls and, while registration was expected to be higher, it is anticipated to grow as word gets around; and,
- The new poster will include three phone numbers for people to call to register for the Program.

With respect to promotion of the Program through Greens & Beans Deli, Assistant Deputy Rob Dick shared that when Fire Department crews deliver soup and sandwiches donated by the Deli to those identified, they will be registering those interested in the Friendly Caller Program at the same time.

Discussion ensued and members provided the following comments:

- IMPACT Parkinson's Society has emailed clients about the Friendly Caller Program although it was noted that many people may already have support systems in place. Task Force members were encouraged to share information about the Society with anyone they know who may be affected by the disease;
- Promotion could include a big, bold ad in the Record and putting the poster up in popular spots that people may still walk to, even if the venue is closed;

- Seniors Services Society has expanded calls to clients, with some receiving calls twice a week; and,
- MOSIAC is available to assist with those that speak languages other than English.

In response to questions from Task Force members, staff and Ms. Larson provided the following comments:

- While staff have targeted the general population, more effort can be made to connect with younger family members about the Program as elderly people may not register for it as they may be suspicious of the intent of the calls;
- The Program poster has been provided to all high-rise buildings and sent to the Business Improvement Associations, the Residents' Associations, and School District #40 for dissemination;
- It would be prudent to contact other organizations to see how they keep in touch with their patrons;
- Volunteers were polled to determine languages spoken and it may be possible to enlist the assistance of the some of the City's multilingual staff as well;
- If the Program is promoted in different languages, the registration process will need to be adjusted to accommodate that; and,
- Staff will speak after the meeting with Jules Wilson of the MCFD to determine if the Program would be appropriate for those with developmental disabilities.

Assistant Deputy Rob Dick urged Task Force members to complete the Resource Request Form including who it's for, why it's required and for how long, as this will assist the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) receive funding from the Province to fill the requests.

### *Grocery Pick-up and Drop Off*

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, announced the City's partnership with the Greater Vancouver Food Bank which will commence next week for the duration of the pandemic. She shared that the initiative, which will be run out of Century House, will involve City staff picking up food parcels every Wednesday and distributing them to those identified by the Seniors Services Society.

Discussion ensued and members provided the following comments:

- Currently, the Seniors Services Society provides groceries to 50 people and that number is expected to triple; and,
- The Rotaract Club of New Westminster is also providing a free grocery delivery relief service for seniors and those that are immunocompromised; and,

Dylan Myers, Acting Emergency Support Services Deputy Chief, shared that with respect to the Seniors Services Society's need for additional volunteers, he would submit the request on their behalf.

Paolo Zenone, Recreation Leader, advised that he would get in touch with his contacts at the Rotaract Club and connect them with Alison Silgado of the Seniors Services Society so that they can work together.

#### *Task Force Web Portal*

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, informed members that both the Seniors and Peoples with Disabilities Task Force and the At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations Task Force now have webpages on the City's website. She also shared that the Food Resources Guide and the Survival Resources Guide will be sent out via the Extreme Weather Response distribution list, noting that both documents would be updated and sent out on a regular basis. Task Force members were encouraged to let her know of any changes, errors or omissions in the documents in order to keep them as current as possible.

#### *Resource Request Form*

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst advised that the a link to the electronic and interactive Resource Request Form had been sent out to members and stated that if requests are not received, it would be assumed that organizations are adequately resourced.

#### *Food Calendar*

Mr. Mehdic requested that members assist in keeping the document up to date by submitting any updates/changes to staff.

#### *Key Contacts List*

Mr. Mehdic, reminded members to let him know of any changes to the document in order to keep it current.

#### *New Financial Supports Resource Update*

Mr. Mehdic advised of the new Financial Supports table which has been added to the City's website, and members were asked to contact Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning

Analyst, if there are any inaccuracies on the table. Mr. Mehdic shared that a link regarding resources in different languages will also be sent out.

### **3. Task Force Ideas and Suggestions to Assist Seniors and Persons with Disabilities**

Alison Silgado of the Seniors Services Society advised that a donor is providing hot meals for seniors for one month and that has been going well. She noted that the Society has six spots available on Tuesdays and Fridays for those who may need three hot meals on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Assistant Deputy Chief Rob Dick urged members to complete a Resource Request Form for anyone they know who may need food so that the EOC can send it to the Seniors Services Society.

### **4. Identification of Other Issues**

Heidi Clarkson of IMPACT Parkinson's Society clarified that, while the majority of their cliental are seniors, some clients in the 20s to 50s have young onset Parkinson's disease and queried if support could be provided for them as well. In response, Assistant Deputy Rob Dick suggested that a Resource Request Form be completed on their behalf so that assistance can be provided to them, reminding members that in order to receive funding from the Provincial Government, requests need to be tied to the pandemic and will be via the Resource Request Form.

Ms. Clarkson also queried how other non-profit organizations are managing expenses such as leases, etc., during the pandemic and suggested that many may not survive this crises as they rely on donations to run. John Stark, Supervisor of Community shared that Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst, will be engaged to look at funding options for non-profits in the interim.

Mr. Stark also advised that Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, is coordinating an assessment of pre-pandemic services and processes and working with the City's Culture and Economic Development Task Force on the development of a recovery plan.

### **5. Member Updates**

- Century House has launched the Good Cheer initiative as well as organizing small neighbourhood grants to fund things such as gift bags for seniors, which could include with craft stuff, etc.;
- Many appointments have been cancelled as a result of the pandemic so there may not be a big need for transportation; however, it is noted that HandyDART is currently running free of charge; and,

- Jules Wilson of the MCFD advised that he would ensure that resource materials coming from the Task Force is sent to the appropriate contacts at the Ministry.

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

- Staff will contact Vivian Garcia of the Spinal Cord Injury BC directly to get more specifics in regards to possibly adding a link to the Province's BC211 service to the City's website; and,
- Staff to look into possibly receiving donated tablets, etc., and offering online training to those that are housebound in order to keep them in touch with family and friends.

## **6. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule**

Task Force members were invited to submit agenda items for upcoming meetings.

Next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 16, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 2:07 p.m.

Original Signed

**Asst. Deputy Fire Chief Rob Dick  
Chair**

Original Signed

**Carilyn Cook  
Committee Clerk**