



Corporation of the City of  
**NEW WESTMINSTER**

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

**July 16, 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):**

Jacklyn Altamura, Chair/Recreation Supervisor, Century House  
Michael Antoniali, Acting ESS Operations Coordinator  
Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

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

##### *Staff and Consultants*

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner  
Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator  
Jim Luu, Assistant Manager, Queens Park Concessions

##### *Organizational Representatives*

Daisy Au, MOSAIC Seniors  
Janice Barr, Community Living Society  
Erin Daly, Fraser Health Authority  
Calvin Donnelly, Sapperton Old Age Pensioners' Association  
Sharon Ennis, Royal City Legion Manor  
Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC/Lived Experience  
Kay Johnson, New West Hospice Society  
Asifa Lalji, Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee  
Ingrid Timmermans, Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice

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 June 18, 2020

#### *Friendly Caller Program*

Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator, advised that the Friendly Caller Program now has 34 active clients receiving calls from 15 volunteer callers. Ms. Schnee noted that over the course of the Program, 12 clients have left for a variety of reasons including feeling more comfortable with the current situation as businesses and facilities start to open up, as well as having more established support systems in place.

#### *Grocery, Meal, and Food Programs*

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, shared that a few of the programs set up by the City will continue to run until the end of August including Century House's supper program which happens every Tuesday and Thursday. As well, the City and Greater Vancouver Food Bank run hamper program will continue with some changes taking place as reassigned staff return to their regular positions with the City; therefore, she is, along with Betina Wheeler, Coordinator, New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society, are working on a plan to best use the hampers from the Program.

Ms. Freire advised Task Force members that she and Ms. Wheeler also continue their work on a proposal to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to explore longer term, sustainable food support options for the next 12 to 18 months, with the understanding that increased need for food supports will continue.

#### *Task Force Web Portal*

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, advised that staff strive to keep the web portal as up to date as possible and encouraged Task Force members to let staff know of any new information to add to the site or if they notice anything out of date.

#### *Financial Programs*

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, advised that the List of Financial Supports is also updated regularly and requested that Task Force members contact Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst, if anything should be added to or edited on the List. Ms. Freire noted the following recent financial updates:

- On June 16, 2020 the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) was extended from 16 weeks to 24 weeks for those meeting the criteria;
- On June 19, 2020 the Temporary Rental Supplement was extended to August 31, 2020;
- and,

- As of June 24, 2020, a number of tenancy laws have resumed including the Notice to End Tenancy and enforcement of Order of Possession Notices has resumed.

In response to a question from a Task Force member, Ms. Freire agreed to look into whether or not rental increases are back in effect and report back to the Task Force.

#### **4. COVID-19 and Mental Health**

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, reminded the Task Force that the post meeting email table includes a list of mental health resources such as HealthLink BC, the Canadian Mental Health Association – B.C. Division, Fraser Health, New Westminster Child and Youth Mental Health Services, and Century House which offers the Online Coffee Break with Shelly and the Good Cheer Facebook group. Members were urged to contact Anur Mehdiq, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, if they are aware of additional resources to be included in the table.

#### **5. Extreme Heat Cooling Centre Update**

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, advised that, in response to concerns about extreme heat effects on our at-risk, marginalized, and vulnerable populations, the City has designated Century House as a cooling centre for residents who are 50+ years of age. Visitors to the cooling centre will be screened by way of questions prior to entry, physical distancing measures will be adhered to, and various entertainment activities will be offered.

For the unsheltered population, staff will work with the faith and non-profit organizations to identify potential cooling centre sites, as well as to determine how to address hydration needs.

Ms. Freire reminded members that the Tipperary Park Food Bank has been relocated to the Moody Park Arena, an indoor facility which will protect clients from the sun.

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

- Various members noted that planning for the future is challenging when it is unclear what is going to happen next with respect to the pandemic; therefore, some organizations have postponed certain processes;
- Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC, shared that most of their programs have gone virtual resulting in people from all over the province now being able to participate in programs such as cooking and fitness classes;
- Ms. Garcia advised that the Neil Squire Society is still running and they have computers to offer through their Computer Comfort Program;

- Jacklyn Altamura, Recreation Supervisor, Century House, advised that Century House members have expressed their desire to see online options continue past the pandemic, and that the recent events have allowed staff to further develop the online process and reach out to a lot of different people;
- Kay Johnson, New West Hospice Society, shared that they have been conducting bereavement support online, adding that while some people prefer the intimacy of being in person, others feel that being online makes things less uncomfortable;
- Daisy Au, MOSIAC Seniors, announced that they are also running virtual groups for immigrant seniors which has pushed the seniors to learn how to use technology faster so that they can participate in the groups. She noted that donated desktop computers do not come with speakers or cameras which are vital for users to participate in online programs; and,
- Task Force members expressed gratitude for the informative follow up emails sent out by Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, after each meeting.

## 7. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

Jacklyn Altamura, Recreation Supervisor, Century House, advised that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 13, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 1:29 p.m.

Original Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
**Jacklyn Altamura**  
**Chair**

Original Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
**Carilyn Cook**  
**Committee Clerk**