



Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

COVID-19: SENIORS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TASK FORCE

**June 18, 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
Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst
Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

PRESENT (via Teleconference):

Staff and Consultants

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning
Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner
Shelly Schnee, Seniors Program Coordinator
Mariam Larson, Consultant, Mariam Larson Inc.
Jim Luu, Assistant Manager, Queens Park Concessions

Organizational Representatives

Calvin Donnelly, Sapperton Old Age Pensioners' Association
Sharon Ennis, Royal City Legion Manor
Tim Hicks, Century House
Kay Johnson, New West Hospice Society
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 4, 2020

Friendly Caller Program

Mariam Larson, Consultant, advised that the Friendly Caller Program now has 49 people registered to receive calls, with 261 calls being made to date and over 4600 minutes of call time logged.

As this will be Ms. Larson's last Task Force meeting, members thanked her for her contribution to the Task Force, adding that they looked forward to working with her again in the future.

Grocery, Meal, and Food Programs

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, shared food security plan updates including:

- The City and Greater Vancouver Food Bank's Wednesday Hamper Program has been extended until the end of July, and it was noted that, in order to accommodate Canada Day on July 1st, hampers will be provided on July 2nd and July 9th;
- St. Aidan's Presbyterian Church will be applying for funding through the United Way COVID-19 Community Response Fund to develop a food hub that will support other food program sites in order to increase food program capacity and long-term sustainability through partnerships. Upon approval of the application, the first project will be to establish a hamper program in Queensborough; and,
- The Tipperary Park Food Bank will move to the Moody Park Arena to avoid the summer heat.

Task Force Web Portal

Claudia Freire, Housing and Social Planner, reminded members that the Task Force and Community Resources web portals are continuously updated and urged them to visit the sites frequently in order to have the most up-to-date information. Members were encouraged to share the web portal information with their networks.

Financial Programs

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, advised that the List of Financial Supports located on the City website will be updated every two weeks, adding that some new resource options have been recently added.

4. COVID-19 and Mental Health

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, reminded members of the mental health resources available through the Provincial and Federal Governments, as well as the Canadian Mental Health Association. He also noted that the Century House Good Cheer Facebook Group and online Coffee Break with Shelly continue to raise spirits during this trying time. Members were asked to advise Mr. Mehdic of any additional mental health resources they may know of to be added to the list.

5. Extreme Heat Cooling Centre Update

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, informed members of past extreme heat events, in particular the 2009 event which resulted in a number of fatalities in New Westminster. In order to address future extreme heat events, the City plans to open a cooling centre at Century House which would be activated upon the Provincial Government's extreme heat advisory declaration. Various rooms throughout Century House would accommodate those seeking refuge from the heat, with screening and physical distancing in place, and activities being provided. Further, New Westminster Fire and Rescue Services (NWFRS) will provide extreme heat information via CitiPage, etc., such as symptoms of heatstroke, how to stay cool, etc.

In response to a Task Force member's request for statistics regarding the 2009 heat wave, Mr. Stark advised that he will provide Fraser Health's follow up information with Mr. Medic to share with members. In addition, he stated that those impacted the most during that time were older seniors who lived alone in three story walk up buildings and that, in order to provide respite from future extreme heat events, staff are seeking funding for or donations of portable air conditioners from organizations/corporations for vulnerable seniors to use in their homes, since cooling centers are only open during the day. This would also allow those that need to self-isolate, to do so more safely and comfortably.

Mr. Stark will work with Assistant Deputy Fire Chief Rob Dick on the information to be provided during a heatwave, which will be able to post in their buildings, and look into securing portable air conditioners for low-income individuals to purchase.

A Task Force member suggested that residential buildings could use their common rooms as mini cooling centres.

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

Ingrid Timmermans, Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice, announced that their assessment unit is now running out of Port Coquitlam; however, clients can still go through their website for assessments and virtual appointments.

7. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

Jacklyn Altamura, Recreation Supervisor, Century House, announced that over the summer month, the Task Force will meet once a month, assuring members that staff will remain available to them during this time. Next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 16, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 1:28 p.m.

Original Signed
Jacklyn Altamura
Chair

Original Signed
Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk