



Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

COVID-19: SENIORS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TASK FORCE

**October 8, 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
Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk

PRESENT (via Teleconference):

Staff and Consultants

John Stark, Supervisory, Community Planning
Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst
Alison Ching, Recreation Leader

Organizational Representatives

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
Asifa Lalji, Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee
Kyoko Takahashi, Seniors Services Society
Meaghan Taylor-Reid, Ministry for Children and Family Development

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 September 24, 2020

Friendly Caller Program

Alison Ching, Recreation Leader, shared that the Friendly Caller Program now consists of 14 volunteers and 27 clients with two new clients on the waitlist to be matched with volunteers, three clients having left the Program and two volunteers retiring. She advised that from September 22, 2020 to October 5, 2020, a total of 20 calls were made over 407 minutes, averaging 20 minutes per call. Ms. Ching announced that they are currently seeking Program volunteers noted that a peer counselor is now attending the weekly volunteer support meetings.

Grocery, Meal, and Food Programs

John Stark, Supervisor, Community planning, and Jacklyn Altamura, Recreation Supervisor, Century House, provided the following updates:

- The City continues working with faith and nonprofit organizations on concerns such as Vancouver Foundation, etc., funding which will run out at the end of the year, as the need for food security increases. As such, staff continues to work on a food security pilot program for which the City hopes to receive foundational or governmental support to sustain food programs for 18 to 24 months;
- The Greater Vancouver Food Bank Program continues to operate at Olivet Baptist Church; however, an appropriate indoor space is being sought for the Program;
- The City's hamper program, which is housed at Century House, will be moving to Holy Trinity Cathedral at which the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society is providing a fridge and freezer for non-perishable food items and which the City is grateful for; and,
- Century House's Tuesday and Thursday takeout meal program continues to run and is now selling out meals as the number of patrons has increased from what was seen over the summer months.

Task Force Web Portal

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, advised that staff continue to update the Task Force Web Portal which is a central one stop shop for resource information and includes key documents such as the Food Resources Calendar, the Survival Resources Guide, Key Information and Resources for Tenants, the List of Financial Resources, etc. Mr. Mehdic reminded Task Force members that the weekly follow up email also contains all the various resource information and noted that the New Normal Staff Committee will be approached with respect to having a poster made to further share where this resource information can be found.

Financial Programs

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, shared that Tristan Johnson, Senior Planning Analyst, updates the List of Financial Resources on a biweekly basis and will attend meetings to provide updates when there have been significant updates. Mr. Mehdic advised that while the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) has ended, the Federal Government is now offering three new benefits including the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB), the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB), and the Canada Recovery Caregiver Benefit (CRCB).

Key Information and Resources for Tenants

Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, advised that there have been no significant updates since the last meeting and reminded members that the BC Temporary Rental Supplement ended on August 31, 2020 and that in 2021, rental increases will not be allowed to exceed 1.4 percent.

4. Shelter and Temporary Housing Update

John Stark, Supervisor, Community Planning, informed members that the City continues working with BC Housing and may have identified an appropriate supportive housing site for the unsheltered and those who may be precariously housed; however, that is yet to be confirmed.

Mr. Stark also shared that the Federal Government has announced the Rapid Housing Initiative from which funding may be used to retrofit or refurbish existing facilities, such as hotels, older rental buildings, etc., into new non-market or supportive housing units. He advised that three possible sites have been identified and are currently being vetted and may include land acquisition, refurbishing, and would include provisions for seniors and those living with a disability (i.e. wider hallways, etc.).

Vivian Garcia, Spinal Cord Injury BC/Lived Experience, suggested that, if possible, all supportive housing washrooms be converted into shower rooms, ensuring they are accessible for all.

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

On behalf of Kyoko Takahashi, Senior Services Society, Anur Mehdic, Housing and Child Care Planning Analyst, announced a new service being provided by Westminster House which offers web-based addiction counseling for seniors, noting that additional information will be included in the meeting's follow up email.

6. Next Steps and Meeting Schedule

A discussion ensued regarding the frequency of meetings and members agreed to continue meeting on a bi-weekly basis.

Jacklyn Altamura, Recreation Supervisor, Seniors Services, thanked everyone for their time and reminded members that the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 22, 2020.

The meeting adjourned at 1:23 p.m.

Original Signed

Jacklyn Altamura
Chair

Original Signed

Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk