

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE (CSI)

**September 3, 2019 – 5:30 p.m.
Committee Room 2, City Hall**

MINUTES

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillor Jaimie McEvoy	- Co-Chair, Council Member
Councillor Nadine Nakagawa	- Co-Chair, Council Member
Norah Andrew	- Community Member
Wesley Everaars	- Community Member
Halim Habibi	- Community Member
Sukhdeep Jassar	- Fraser Health Representative
Savannah Mak	- Community Member
Sebastien Muncaster	- Community Member
Vanessa Woznow	- Community Member

VOTING MEMBERS REGRETS:

Kevin Chan	- Community Member
Quirina Gamblen	- SD40 Representative
Elaine Su	- Community Member
Delaney Sullivan	- Community Member

GUESTS:

Dr. Aamir Bharmal	- Medical Health Officer, Fraser Health Authority
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STAFF PRESENT:

John Stark	- Supervisor of Community Planning
Carilyn Cook	- Committee Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

1.0 ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Item 5.1 – Committee Review Update was added to the Agenda by Councillor Nakagawa.

2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of May 7, 2019

MOVED AND SECONDED

THAT the May 7, 2019 Community and Social Issues Committee meeting minutes be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED.

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

3.0 PRESENTATION

3.1 Opioid Epidemic

– Dr. Aamir Bharmal, Medical Health Officer, Fraser Health Authority

After briefly introducing himself, Dr. Bharmal commenced with his presentation.

Procedural note: Wesley Everaars, Community Member, arrived at 5:35 p.m.

In response to questions from the Committee, Dr. Bharmal provided the following comments:

- Although it may appear that there was a sudden increase in drug use, the fact is that there are just more contaminated drugs circulating. It is speculated that the drop in overdoses is related to less contaminated drugs being used;
- While overdose numbers come from the amount of calls made to 911, it is hard to determine how many deaths were avoided;

Procedural note: Halim Habibi, Community Member, arrived at 6:00 p.m.

- Complications of an overdose include the risk of brain damage; although, determining the overall impact of overdoses is still evolving;
- Men have the highest incidence of overdose as they tend to use drugs as a self-medicating coping mechanism and generally use alone, in a private residence, which makes receiving help less likely;
- The overdose crises has put a magnifying glass on mental health and substance use conditions. It is a challenge to determine which should be dealt with first;
- Emergency departments now implement a referral process to substance abuse services; however, work is needed on matters that are not covered by insurance such as counselling, etc., as primary care doctors often wind up taking on the role of counsellor to their patients;
- While no overdoses have occurred at safe use sites, there are hotspots in the City, such as around the SkyTrain Stations, Sixth Street and Sixth Avenue, where clusters of overdoses are seen;

- People will travel up to 500 meters to a safe consumption site so they are most efficient being located near where people are already using drugs; however, there will always be those that will not use the site.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee provided the following comments:

- Stigma and fear continue to be big, challenging issues that need work;
- Some businesses do not want to keep a Naloxone kit on site as they believe it may draw “undesirable” people to their businesses. How things are perceived from a business perspective needs to be addressed; and,
- Part of public outreach includes people sharing lived experience around drug use, e.g. why they did drugs, etc.

4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

4.1 Engaging People with Lived/Living Experience in the City Engagement Process – John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning (On-Table Handout)

Mr. Stark advised the Committee that in 2016 Council endorsed the City’s Community Poverty Reduction Plan which contains approximately 30 actions, one of which is to engage those with lived experience, in this case poverty.

He shared that earlier in the year a lunch and learn was held for the Community Poverty Reduction Committee. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition attended the session and discussed their program called the “Community Action Network (CAN)” which is a leadership training program that teaches people to self advocate, speak up, etc., and a graduate from the program shared his lived experiences with the group. It was noted that while the training is very valuable, real world situations for graduates to practice what they have learned is very limited.

Members were informed that the City has the potential to partnership with the CAN program which is comprised of two components, the first of which being to train up to 15 individuals with lived and living experience. The second aspect involves developing principles and resources to include those with lived and living experiences. A third component, which the City may incorporate, could be to encourage and facilitate graduates applying to sit on city committees.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Stark provided the following comments:

- Childminding, transit passes, catering, etc., will be provided to training participants, along with an honourarium for their time and feedback;

- Staff will explore how the City can continue to provide honourariums to graduates of the program that move on and sit on a city committee;
- The City will also be participating in an ethics engagement project; and,
- It can be difficult to accommodate needs after the fact (e.g. after a city facility is built) so it is important to engage people before the City makes decisions.

Mr. Stark will send the leadership program evaluation information to Ms. Cook, Committee Clerk, to forward to Committee members.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee provided the following comments:

- Hiring a peer coordinator may be an option for the City as it is beneficial to have someone who is paid and working and has lived experience;
- Trust is very important since, typically, it is hard for those from vulnerable situations to speak up when someone with more power is in the room. The process takes a long time and can be painful for people to go through;
- The initiative to make the City inclusive is wonderful and the Lookout Housing + Health Society has policies and procedures around inclusivity can be shared with City staff; and,
- The New Westminster Homeless Coalition Society should be included as well.

4.2 Hey Neighbour Collective (see Item 6.1) – John Stark Supervisor of Community Planning

Mr. Stark reminded Committee members that the Hey Neighbour Collective (HNC) looks at existing and under construction purpose built housing to address social connectedness as studies show lower levels of neighbourly connections in multifamily residential buildings, particularly in high rises. The HNC works to facilitate and improve neighbour relations through having a coordinator organize social activities such as movie nights, pot lucks, etc., which encourages neighbours to spend time with each other.

On December 4, 2018, the Committee endorsed a resolution that was adopted by Council and the initiative is now moving forward with at least one site, possibly two, being located in New Westminster. HNC will fund a coordinator and take the learnings from the building to determine how things could be expanded and included in rental buildings under constructed. The initiative will commence in the fall and the Committee will receive an update presentation in January.

4.3 Committee Recommendation to Council re New West Hospice Society Update – John Stark, Supervisor of Community Planning

Mr. Stark advised that the recommendation stemming from the New West Hospice Society's May 7th presentation to the Committee involves a number of city departments and must be considered from a staffing and resource perspective to

fully inform the Council report. The report is anticipated to go to Council on September 30th.

5.0 NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Committee Review Update – Councillor Nakagawa

Councillor Nakagawa reminded Committee members that the City has been reviewing the advisory committees and working to align them with the City’s strategic priorities in order to focus engagement and use staff time more efficiently. She shared that a report providing an update on the process will be going to Council soon and that some committees may be going through a transition next year.

6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION

There were no items.

7.0 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items.

8.0 NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, November 5, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. – Committee Room 2, City Hall

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION, the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Certified Correct,

Original Signed _____
Councillor Nadine Nakagawa
Co-Chair

Original Signed _____
Carilyn Cook
Committee Clerk