

Presentation

Council of a Whole Meeting

October 28, 2019

Members of council, your worship thank you for the opportunity to bring you up to date on the efforts of our company to work with stakeholders in helping save lives for those who have an opioid use disorder.

Opioid addiction is a long-lasting (chronic) disease that can cause major health, social, and economic problems. Opioid addiction is characterized by a powerful, compulsive urge to use opioid drugs, even when they are no longer required medically.

In 2006 the city of Nanaimo came to me and asked if Crankshaw Holdings would take on the living room, a day use place where those homeless could do their laundry, see a nurse, use a computer or simply as a safe place to rest.

At the time the intended destination was the Salvation Army. It was temporarily placed in a smaller location on Nicol Street, but I understand, the owner wanted to turn the location into a coffee shop and asked the program contractor to find another place.

While we were hesitant about the program, we did move forward starting with a meeting with concerned citizens explaining that many of those who would use the Living room were already attending treatment at the building.

On May 1st, 2006 the Living room was opened on the Nicol Street side of our building on the lower floor.

Whatever concerns about this program was due in part to it being temporary.

Fast forward to today and our building at 55 Victoria Road sees about 500 patients a week with the youngest so far being twelve years old.

This building is home to seven doctors all trained in opioid replacement therapy using three clinics

One clinic is operated as a not-for-profit, one a doctor operated, and one operated by a businesswoman that hires doctors.

The patients of these clinics could be careless about the legal structure and are more concerned about the treatment they need from their doctor which borders on family practice.

I started operating downtown commercial property on behalf of Crankshaw Holdings in 2002 and throughout these years have seen myself advocating for the needs of downtown businesses and the disenfranchised alike.

If I was a fish, I would be scale less.

During this time, I have listened to the business community, especially those who have rented from us, and those who have found themselves with an opioid use disorder.

I consider myself in a unique and privileged position to see both sides.

On November 14th, 2017 I contacted staff about the use of this space as a possible youth centre and then followed that up with the plan I just mentioned. The response at that time was ... thanks for that, it's a good space which I think could be used in a number of ways

On January 25, 2018, John Horn, social planner toured the site. It is still available.

In conversations with some of our doctors, we also feel there needs to be a low barrier clinic for those who are not currently in treatment.

Both the new living room and clinic would allow us to intervene and work at encouraging people into treatment.

There needs to be a full Continuum of services.

That's why we are now rebranding this building into a single source of help for those who are suffering from an opioid dependence - to those parents and families who are looking for help for their loved ones.

We have called it Centre One.

Centre One will offer a single point of contact with a single website full of resource materials from drug use to helping people understand why drug users do what they do. It will

offer a single phone number with contact to the clinics and other partners.

Our proposal also calls for two ambassadors on mopeds responding to calls for people in doorways or to pick up needles. The ambassadors will also encourage those hanging around to come back to the living room.

Education being an important part of the solution is offered through the ambassadors for both the business and residential communities.

Over the last six months we have met with Nanaimo's MLA Sheila Malcolmson, Island Health, city staff and two city councillors, some of which have met with our Dr. Hunter and pharmacist.

We have contacted the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. We were told to contact Island Health and to have a nice day.

The general theme with our efforts appears to be that we are a round peg trying to fit in with a square system.

That we have for-profit clinics and therefore help will not be forthcoming.

Our doctors don't ask new patients which political parties they support, or whether they prefer to be seen by a doctor working in a for-profit or a not-for-profit clinic. I doubt the patients would care less.

Moving forward we are gathering like minded members of our community, having discussions with VI Solutions from the Vancouver Island University, and creating an advisory committee as we start the process of changing from that round peg into a square one with a new not-for-profit organization.

I am here today to offer our resources, an opportunity for leaders in our community to recognize a one stop solution in working to save lives, prevent addictions and to help those who now find themselves addicted on to a better life going forward.

5 min

Our overall vision as previously presented in its simplistic form to staff and other stakeholders calls for a continuum of services. For our NGO to operate drug housing and rehabilitation training aimed at getting those who have

lost their families home again, those who have lost their jobs, employed again.

I am reminded of a conversation with one of our clinics, one of many conversations I have with physicians and staff at all our clinics about two women who are now selling themselves to support their habits.

One of these two women was a friend of a staff member of a clinic where she would routinely visit with her children.

Due to pain medication and finding herself cut off, she now visits the clinic looking for help.

Whether its an lab technician sitting in our hall discussing the stigma around seeking help for an opioid addiction, or a registered nurse, or any other number of once employed, or still employed individuals – all come to our building looking for treatment with the hopes that one day they can get on with life.

Society want us to lock up drug addicts.

If a person has a shopping cart, then they must need to be locked up in a mental institution.

While some should be under constant mental health care, others, those who perhaps are committing a crime to support their habit would be better served by removing the need through management of their strong desire to get their drug of choice.

Have any of you seen a shopping cart strapped to the front of a bus where bicycles normal go?

No, neither have I.

As we know, those carts are home and contain what little possessions a person has.

I bring this all us because our current system in my own opinion, well, also supported by those I have conversations with is that our current system is divided and made up of silos.

In February of 2018 an open house was held in Chase River about a supportive housing proposal.

The venue was small. Residents were left out in the rain waiting for their turn to see what the project was all about.

The small venue was by design to limit the number of people inside.

If we are to have any hope to bring all of this together, we indeed require the community, not just government, not just special interests – but everyone.

I stand before you, providing information about what we, as a company, and what I as its operating officer are trying to do the make a difference.

We are here now to help.

We are looking for community and government partners to continue the conversation at our table to see how as a society, can sit down and work with our respective resources to better manage the problem.

I present you with Centre One.

The rest will be up to you.

Thank you for your time.