MINUTES

SPECIAL HEALTH AND HOUSING TASK FORCE MEETING
BOARDROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE,
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC
TUESDAY, 2020-APR-07, AT 3:00 P.M.

Present: Councillor D. Bonner, Chair
Councillor E. Hemmens (joined electronically)
H. Hartman (joined electronically)
J. Harrison (joined electronically)
A. LaHue (joined electronically)
S. Madden (joined electronically)
J. McCormick (joined electronically)
K. Smythe (joined electronically at 3:07 p.m.)
L. McHaffie (joined electronically)
L. Murphy (joined electronically)

Absent: K. Glynn
E. Manson
M. McNaughton

Staff: J. Rudolph, Chief Administrative Officer (arrived 3:26 p.m., vacated 4:00 p.m.)
D. Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services
Supt. C. Miller, OIC, Nanaimo Detachment RCMP (joined electronically)
L. Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning
K. Kronstal, Social Planner (joined electronically)
D. Stewart, Social Planner (joined electronically)
D. Blackwood, Client Support Specialist (vacated 3:15 p.m.)
S. Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services
K. Gerard, Recording Secretary

1. CALL THE SPECIAL HEALTH AND HOUSING TASK FORCE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Special Health and Housing Task Force Meeting was called to order at 3:04 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

K. Smythe joined the meeting electronically at 3:07 p.m.

3. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Health and Housing Task Force Meeting held in the Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Wednesday, 2020-FEB-19, at 3:00 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

4. REPORTS:

(a) COVID-19 Response - Homeless/Vulnerable Population, Motion for Discussion

Introduced by Lisa Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning.

Task Force discussion took place regarding the following motion passed at the Special Council Meeting 2020-APR-01:

"It was moved and seconded that Council:

- Endorse the plan to provide additional temporary washrooms and hand sanitizing facilities in the downtown
- Exempt the Health and Housing Task Force from the current suspension of committees in order to assist in the facilitation of planning for the vulnerable populations during the pandemic, and to make further recommendations to Council as necessary."

Task force discussion took place regarding the following:

- BC Housing is in the process of securing housing and resources for the homeless population and ensuring isolation locations are available
- Emergency Management BC (EMBC) is a good resource for agencies, resource providers and the public
- Island Health and BC Housing are the leads on any COVID-19 initiatives and are currently working on a plan to assist the vulnerable/homeless population
- Shelter and resource providers will soon be provided clarity regarding isolation, where to send vulnerable people if they have COVID-19 and when they can accept people back into shelters who have recovered from COVID-19
- BC Housing will soon send communication to all service providers to clarify the process and completion date of the plan to help the vulnerable/homeless population

J. Rudolph entered the Boardroom at 3:26 p.m.

- BC Housing has secured 40 – 50 rooms in Nanaimo and is in the process of determining priority groups to be housed in these spaces
- Additional shelter options, once locations are secured, will be funded and staffed by BC Housing
- BC Housing has secured many hotel rooms all over Vancouver Island for victims of domestic violence

(b) COVID-19 Response - Homeless Vulnerable Population, Motion for Discussion

Introduced by Councillor Bonner.

Task Force discussion took place regarding the following motion passed at the Special Council Meeting 2020-APR-01:

"It was moved and seconded that Council direct the Health and Housing Task Force to develop a food security plan; including funding, procurement and distribution options to provide safe and consistent meals for individuals experiencing homelessness and the vulnerable population."

- Agencies are starting to cut down on services, food distribution is becoming a critical issue and farmers are having issues getting their food to market
- Developing a food plan will bring organizations and service providers together to assist low income and the homeless population
- Staff are connecting with the larger emergency food providers, tracking how these resources are handling an increase in need and if they require additional food and volunteers
- An update was provided regarding the local food providers and how they are handling meeting the demands of the community including the Salvation Army, 7-10 Club, Loaves and Fishes and FoodShare
- Funding from the Province and Federal Government and how best to spend the funding once it comes into the community
- Looking at short and long term impacts on the community and solutions to help low income, seniors and homeless populations in Nanaimo
- United Way and the Nanaimo Foundation have received funding from the Federal Government for low income seniors who may lose their homes and the Indigenous community
- Long-term economic impacts on the community and short and long-term planning for assistance to those in need
- Nanaimo Family Life Association is delivering food services for seniors and the Nanaimo/Ladysmith Foundation is providing weekly food hampers to approximately 1000 families of school age children
- Suggested that members or Staff contact closed restaurants to see if they would be willing to supply food and additional resources to a secure food program
- Suggestion of creating a working group to design a food security plan for the vulnerable/homeless population which would consist of Staff and members of the Health and Housing Task Force (HHTF)
- This working group could invite food service providers to speak at the working group meetings to state their ideas and suggestions for a secure food program

Sheila Gurrie, Director, Legislative Services, stated that a working group must not reach a quorum of the HHTF, (which means no more than 5 members of the HHTF could participate). Any recommendations made by the working group must first be discussed and approved by the HHTF before going to Council.

J. Rudolph vacated the Boardroom at 4:00 p.m.

Councillor Hemmens, Jason Harrison, Signy Madden, and John McCormick volunteered to be part of the working group.

(c) COVID-19 Response Update for Vulnerable Population - Discussion

Introduced by Lisa Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning.

Dale Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services, advised that the drinking fountains around downtown have not been turned on but there is a fountain near the cenotaph where water bottles can be filled up as needed. Water will also be available at Diana Krall Plaza and near the waterfront. EMBC has stated that they will reimburse the City of Nanaimo for the cost of three new portable washrooms with hand sanitizing stations in the downtown area.

Task Force discussion took place regarding the following:

- Access to washrooms and water around Beban Park
- The City has extended the hours of the shower program from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
- BC Housing willing to work with resource providers and faith groups and fund any parties willing to provide housing
- Faith groups in Nanaimo have been contacted regarding providing shelter to the vulnerable/homeless population
- Staffing and social distancing are major concerns for shelter operations
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and the John Howard Society are willing to share staff with resource providers who may need assistance
- Staff and Dr. Alina Turner are researching ways to continue the design labs and accelerate the systems mapping

(d) Organizational Roles during COVID-19 - Discussion

Introduced by Lisa Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning.

Task Force discussion took place regarding the following:

- Clarified with BC Housing that housing preferences include an actual indoor building not an encampment
- Additional beds need to be provided to the most vulnerable population first including elderly, people with respiratory issues and those with immune deficiencies

5. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) Nanaimo's Vulnerable Population Overview and COVID-19 Planning

Dr. Alina Turner provided a presentation, which included the following information:

- The second set of design labs have been suspended
- Recommendation is to press pause on the process until COVID-19 is under control
- The needs of the vulnerable/homeless population are now different but core issues remain the same

(b) Systems Mapping Consultation Update and COVID-19 Adaptations

Dr. Alina Turner provided a presentation as follows:

- Mental health and addictions concerns have shifted as drug supply has decreased which has resulted in an increase in alcohol use, stress and anxiety but an decrease in opioid use
- Poverty among low income and seniors may increase which will add to stress and anxiety for many families
- Community well being statistics have decreased and there is an increase in victims of domestic violence needing assistance
- Priorities include food security, basic needs including hygiene products, clothing and prescriptions, housing, mental health, abuse and addictions
- Abbotsford created a three tier approach to COVID-19 which includes:
  - Tier 1
    - Shelter for vulnerable individuals to build immunity
    - Access to food, sleep and resources
    - Creation of an isolation site
  - Tier 2
    - Mobilized access for assessment and testing of individuals
  - Tier 3
    - Hotel accommodations secured for individuals and families who have positive COVID-19 symptoms
- BC Housing can secure legal agreements for site and operating agreement with a non-profit
- There is potential for the Ministry of Social Development to provide an integration worker to shelters
- Provided an update of the City of Abbotsford's role in the COVID-19 pandemic including communication access, food systems access, care packs, transportation initiative and communication with Indigenous community partners

6. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 5:05 p.m. that the meeting terminate. The motion carried unanimously.

_____
C H A I R

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

_____
CORPORATE OFFICER