

MINUTES
PUBLIC SAFETY MEETING
BOARD ROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC
THURSDAY, 2017-NOV-02 AT 3:35 P.M.

PRESENT: Members: Councillor Armstrong, Chair
 David Holmes
 David Lemire
 Muir (Thomas) Meredith
 Bruce Parker
 Alexis Petersen
 Robert Whitton

Absent: Councillor Yoachim (Alternate)

Staff: K. Fry, Fire Chief, Nanaimo Fire Rescue Department
 K. Lindsay, Emergency Program Manager
 B. Anderson, Manager of Community and Cultural Planning (arrived
 3:48 p.m.)
 J. Horn, Social Planner
 S. Snelgrove, Recording Secretary/Deputy Corporate Officer

1. CALL THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Public Safety Meeting was called to order at 3:35 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

- (a) S. Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer, advised that the Minutes of the Public Safety Meeting held 2017-OCT-05 at 3:30 p.m. were distributed as a late item on the addendum.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

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

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Public Safety Committee held in the Board Room, Service and Resource Centre, Nanaimo, BC, on Thursday, 2017-OCT-05 at 3:30 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

5. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) Committee Procedures

Sky Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer, provided a presentation regarding committee procedures.

6. OTHER BUSINESS:

(a) Current Public Safety Concerns, Projects and Initiatives

John Horn, Social Planner, introduced the current Public Safety Concerns, Projects and City Initiatives and spoke regarding:

- Increase of homelessness in the community in the last 6-10 months,
- Burden placed on current service providers,
- Significant pressure on residents and business owners in the downtown core,
- A Public Hearing to allow the provision of a safe injection site/supervision injection site was held, site was denied,
- Community members advised they were feeling under siege by the impact homelessness having on their businesses and lives,
- Council decided to take a closer look and come back with short, medium and long term recommendations,
- Consultation process was held where the Social Planner and former Manager of Bylaw, Regulation and Security spoke to each business owner in the downtown core,
- Listened to their experiences and got a better understanding of the issues and what affects them in the downtown core,
- Next step was to go back to business owners and ask what could or should be done and if they can contribute to a solution,
- Three community forums were held, over 150 people participated and were asked to identify issues and potential solutions.

Bruce Anderson entered the Board Room at 3:48 p.m.

Committee discussion continued regarding the document "Response to Health, Social Safety and Security Issues":

- Personal safety was identified as the main concern of those living and working in the downtown core,
- People who have arrived in the community in the last 12 months are volatile, the drugs are harder and doing more damage to people,
- The harder drugs and increased opioid use are causing mild mental illnesses to become more extravagant,
- People arriving in Nanaimo are much less manageable than previously seen,
- Petty theft, open substance and alcohol use has increased,
- Increase of used needles and garbage,
- Several traumatic events have taken place at Diana Krall Plaza,

Responses/Initiatives:

- Review of how bylaw services works with homeless populations,
- Working with individuals from social planning and other external stakeholders to review social disorder issues,
- Reviewing the value of revitalization of the community policing and services office,
- Hired footprints security firm,
- Clean up service,
- Added sharps disposal boxes in public locations,
- Frequent RCMP patrols.

Housing:

- Lack of housing is the root of homelessness,
- BC Government can provide temporary, modular, pre built housing units as a short term response, which come with support dollars,
- Units would be placed on a City owned site,
- Methodology to use would be to move stable residents currently in supportive housing to modular units, then have homeless people in the highly supported units,
- Need to avoid the working poor getting “stuck” in social housing,
- Temporary camping options were preferred by some homeless people; however, they can become rapidly unmanageable,
- One of the City of Nanaimo’s priorities is affordable housing.

Education:

- Teaching students their responsibilities and rights as tenants is ongoing at alternate schools, needed in the regular school system,
- Curriculum regarding life skills is needed.

Health:

- City has partnered with Island Health
- Island Health is focussing on enhancing street outreach programs

Services:

- Services need to be distributed across the City of Nanaimo and not concentrated in one area,
- Realistically the homeless congregate downtown,
- Businesses need a “Who to Call” sheet and information they can provide to the homeless when they ask businesses for services,
- Downtown needs to attract visitors, development and investment,
- Day time drop-in centre needed,

Safety Security:

- Increase patrols downtown,
- Determine role of the Community Policing Services Building,
- Mobile safe injection/supervised consumption site is not allowed by Federal law.

General:

- Document is draft, service focussed and pragmatic, City is also thinking strategically, is the result of a comprehensive, multiparty approach,
- City has a coalition on homelessness,
- Need transitions for youth in care to adult life and transitions from shelter to market housing.

A roundtable discussion took place regarding each of the committee members top priorities. The top two priorities were identified as:

1. The provision of a short term supported housing solution, such as modular homes on city land; and,
2. Provision of temporary camping options for small numbers in various locations coupled with support and security services.

It was moved and seconded that the Public Safety Committee recommend to Council that Staff start working on the provision of a short term supported housing solution, such as modular homes on City land, and that Staff provide a progress report at the next Public Safety Meeting or via email. The motion carried unanimously.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 5:32 p.m. that the meeting terminate. The motion carried unanimously


CHAIR

CERTIFIED CORRECT:


CORPORATE OFFICER