

MINUTES
HEALTH AND HOUSING TASK FORCE MEETING
BOARDROOM, SERVICE AND RESOURCE CENTRE,
411 DUNSMUIR STREET, NANAIMO, BC
THURSDAY, 2020-OCT-01, AT 3:02 P.M.

Present: Councillor Bonner, Chair
Councillor Hemmens (joined electronically)
Jan Fix, Director Program Delivery, Service Canada (joined electronically 3:35 p.m.)
Jason Harrison, Executive Director, Canadian Mental Health Association (joined electronically)
John McCormick, Executive Director, Nanaimo Region John Howard Society (joined electronically)
Kim Smythe, CEO, Chamber of Commerce (joined electronically)
Lisa McHaffie, Service Manager, Service Canada (joined electronically)
Lisa Murphy, Director, Medical Health Services Unit, Island Health (joined electronically)
Marina White, Health Director, Snuneymuxw First Nation (joined electronically 3:25 p.m.)
Terra Kaethler, Impact Officer, United Way (joined electronically 3:07 p.m.)

Absent: Anita LaHue, A/Director Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives Strategic Services Branch, Service Delivery Division, Ministry of Social Dev and Poverty Reduction
Malcolm McNaughton, BC Housing
Signy Madden, Executive Director, United Way

Staff: D. Lindsay, General Manager, Development Services
Insp. L. Fletcher, Nanaimo Detachment RCMP (joined electronically)
B. Corsan, Director, Community Development
F. Farrokhi, Manager, Communications (joined electronically)
L. Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning
D. Stewart, Social Planner
K. Kronstal, Social Planner
S. Snelgrove, Deputy Corporate Officer
J. Vanderhoef, Recording Secretary

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

The Health and Housing Task Force Meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS:

(a) Remove Agenda Items:

- 5(a) Heidi Hartman, Regional Director, Vancouver Island, BC Housing, re: Coordinated Access and Assessment Nanaimo Community Priorities
- 5(c) Signy Madden, Executive Director, United Way, Verbal Update re: Additional Reaching Home COVID Funding

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

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

4. 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-SEP-16, at 3:02 p.m. be adopted as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

5. PRESENTATIONS:

(a) Dr. Alina Turner, CEO HelpSeeker, Verbal Update re: Update on Process

Dr. Alina Turner, CEO HelpSeeker, provided a verbal presentation. Highlights included:

- Proposed next two Task Force meetings be used for governance workshop discussions
- Plan for first workshop would be to discuss the pros and cons of each governance option and then at the second workshop decide on perspectives and review feedback
- Dr. Turner would prepare a draft plan to present to the Task Force for the action plan moving forward

T. Kaethler joined at the meeting electronically at 3:07 p.m.

- Provincial election is hindering this process as some of the organizations involved are not able to participate during the election period

Lisa Bhopalsingh, Manager, Community Planning, noted that the next two scheduled Health and Housing Task Force Meetings are 2020-OCT-14 and 2020-OCT-27.

Task Force discussion took place regarding the following:

- Clarification on what kind of homework the members will be asked to do before and during the workshops – Members will be asked to consider identified roles and then assess those roles as a self assessment of whether they can, want to, or cannot, act in that role
- Players involved in the governance discussion may not be involved in the funding of services and need to identify what organization would be the best backbone entity to lead the operation
- Funding table would be for different investors in the community to become integrated and more effective
- There is a longer path to get to an integrated funding model in this community than in other communities

- Options proposed during previous Health and Housing Task Force Meeting and potential to send an updated copy of that list to members to aid in homework assignment
- Not all members of the Task Force will necessarily be part of the each workshop/design lab
- Identifying members of each organization that are the best people to help work through the workshops/design labs
- Will request feedback on draft action plan in the future; however, Indigenous consultations are still ongoing at this point
- Next Health and Housing Task Force meeting would be scheduled for 2020-NOV-12 to present the Task Force with the draft document with one more meeting scheduled after that to finalize the document
- Potential to proceed with the workshops/design labs without some of the Task Force members due to the provincial election

M. White joined the meeting electronically at 3:25 p.m.

- Need to keep members who cannot currently participate (due to election period) informed and up-to-date so they can join in as soon as they are able

It was moved and seconded that the Health and Housing Task Force amend the agenda to include a verbal update re: Additional Reaching Home COVID Funding. The motion carried unanimously.

(b) Verbal Update re: Additional Reaching Home COVID Funding

Lisa McHaffie, Service Manager, Service Canada, provided a verbal update regarding additional Reaching Home COVID funding. Highlights included:

- 2020-SEP-21 the Federal Government announced an additional \$236.7 million for Reaching Home investments until 2021-MAR-31
- Recognizes that as winter approaches and the pandemic continues it puts increasing pressures on communities to effectively meet the need of their homeless population
- Communities are being encouraged to use the additional funds to extend their emergency COVID-19 measures, reduce shelter overcrowding, secure isolation facilities, invest in activities that promote housing stability, and to undertake activities that prevent future influx into homelessness
- Funding allocations should be known within the next few days and entities will be advised of their funding allocations
- Money expected to flow similar to the previous COVID-19 funding, directly to entities to mobilize quickly
- Communities will be asked to provide an investment plan to outline what they intend to do with the funding
- Not clear yet if there is potential for long term planning into the next fiscal year
- Some communities have spent their COVID-19 funding already and urgently await this additional funding while others have taken long term planning approaches
- Parameters for spending the additional Reaching Home COVID-19 funds

J. Fix joined the meeting electronically at 3:35 p.m.

- Breakdown and distribution of funding to different entities
- Nanaimo previously received just over \$400,000 with about \$200,000 of that allocated towards Indigenous homelessness
- Previous funding was allocated by the end of July 2020
- Breakdown of how previous funding was allocated to various entities, emergency funding and/or grants

6. REPORTS:

(a) Emergency Food and Nutrition Security Strategy

Introduced by Karin Kronstal, Social Planner.

Presentation:

1. Karin Kronstal, Social Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation. Highlights included:
 - Proposal put forward to create an emergency food group strategy with guidelines and goals
 - Two goals of this project would be to develop a nutritional food security strategy and to look at longer term issues
 - Ongoing involvement of the Parks and Recreation Department
 - Held 14 virtual meetings between April and August 2020 with attendance fluctuating between 8 – 20 attendees
 - Purpose of these meetings was to explore the emerging issues around providing food to vulnerable populations and to share ideas and information about how to strengthen food security in the longer term
 - Work being done by the Food Bank during the pandemic:
 - Distributing more food to agencies
 - Received more donations of food
 - Capacity of food bank has been critical to success of response
 - Distribution of the Good Food Box increased 400% including a new partnership with Nanaimo Aboriginal Centre
 - Good Food Box cost has gone from \$10 pre box to 50% free
 - Meal service at Salvation Army is up approximately 50% and they have stopped charging \$2 per meal
 - Nanaimo Ladysmith School District saw 50% increase in number of students receiving food hampers during COVID-19 school closure
 - Unique factors:
 - Unprecedented financial support from government entities
 - Infectious disease, crisis has longer term time horizon
 - Typical factors:
 - The importance of local food and impact of the global supply chain
 - Emergency has shown the ability of providers to collaborate and share resources

- Food is abundant but storage and dining spaces are limited
- The purchase of food does not fall within the City's mandate but the City can play a role in strengthening capacity and help people prepare, plan and support urban agriculture
- Five goals of the food strategy:
 - Meet basic food needs of vulnerable populations during emergencies
 - Education, support, and promotion in support of food literacy and empowerment
 - Growing, raising and harvesting more food in Nanaimo
 - Expanding local food infrastructure
 - Recognize and support Indigenous food sovereignty
- Nanaimo Food Policy Council would not be only about policy
- Aspects of this strategy would go into the REIMAGINE NANAIMO strategy
- Provided an overview of REIMAGINE NANAIMO
- Recommend moving forward on a Food Security Coalition or Food Policy Council to attempt to improve coordination and identify gaps

Task Force discussion took place regarding the following:

- If any gaps have been identified and if there is a sufficient amount of food to meet the need at this time
- Accessibility of meals is a larger issue than availability as food is being provided, but may not be in a location where people can readily access, or may not be in a state that is ready to consume
- Salvation Army, 7/10 Club and the Food Bank have noted that people receiving Canadian Emergency Response Benefit were not accessing services as often
- Mandate of the proposed Food Policy Council including emergency measures for people who are currently hungry and nutrition security
- Food Bank is like the shelter of the food world and in the long term the goal is for no one to need the Food Bank
- Size and contents of the Good Food Box
- Potential for the Food Policy Council to provide input on contents of the food provided and how it can be used more effectively
- Supportive Recovery Housing has found it is challenging to get people to eat nutritious food as they are used to fast food/processed food
- Including support for people to shop for their food
- Noting the growing number of people being housed who are gaining access to secure food in the overall review
- Support being provided for seniors in the community
- Food security is not just about emergency food, but stability of main stream systems for accessing nutritious food
- Opportunity to review food systems and how to store and use food
- Licenced facilities are required to provide meal standards to participants
- Rehabilitation program for mental health and substance use patients where they can learn cooking skills and prepare meals for sale

Karin Kronstal, Social Planner, continued her presentation. Highlights included:

- Next step would be for the proposed recommendation to go to Council potentially 2020-OCT-19
- Food Strategy/Policy would be included in the REIMAGINE NANAIMO review
- There would be a report prepared for Council regarding the steps and potential partnerships to move forward with the Food and Nutrition Strategy and Food Policy Council

It was moved and seconded that the Health and Housing Task Force recommend that Council:

1. endorse the Emergency Food and Nutrition Strategy as formal stakeholder input into the **REIMAGINE** NANAIMO process; and,
2. support the creation of a Nanaimo Food Policy Council as an independent, arms-length body that would continue collaborative work to strengthen the local food system and request that Staff bring forward a report on how the City can facilitate this work.

The motion carried unanimously.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved and seconded at 4:10 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

C H A I R

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

CORPORATE OFFICER