

From: Myra Thomson
Sent: December 21, 2020 8:45 AM
To: Mayor and Council <mayor.council@nanaimo.ca>

Dear Nanaimo Mayor and Council,

Re: The homeless population displaced from Wesley Street encampment

We the undersigned urge our Nanaimo Council and City staff to take immediate action to ensure the most basic amenities are available to people who lost their homes when evicted from the Wesley Street encampment earlier this month due to fire.

The three most basic amenities that the City must ensure, for reasons of both human rights as well as community public health while in midst of a global pandemic, are:

- 1) Access to drinking water.
- 2) Access to toilets.
- 3) Access to dry shelter (encampment) for sleeping in winter.

Access to Drinking Water

The City must ensure that all public drinking fountains in the downtown and Bowen Park areas are repaired and turned on. If vandalism occurs, the fountains must be swiftly repaired at City expense. This is simply the cost of running a City in 2020. Vandalism committed by one is not a legitimate basis for voiding basic human rights of an entire population.

The City must also ensure that City staff do not remove drinking water or water containers brought to the homeless by community volunteers. Whatever the reason was for staff removing these donated water containers, it must stop.

Access to Toilets

All currently locked portapotties erected by the City in the downtown and Bowen Park areas must be unlocked and, if necessary, repaired and cleaned and emptied so they are usable. As with the public fountains, if a portapotty is tipped over or vandalized, it must be swiftly repaired and put back into service. Furthermore, more portapotties must be set up in these areas. Sanitation of our streets and parks and the people living outdoors is crucial during this global pandemic.

Access to Dry Shelter for Sleeping

The City must immediately designate an area where this displaced homeless population can erect tents and leave them up—not have to take them down each morning. This will, at minimum, provide reasonably dry sleeping, as well as some continuity and greater safety in the lives of the occupants.

We are all aware of the many problems and concerns and community complaints associated with homelessness and specifically homeless encampments.

However, we are also living in a unique time as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Sanitation is paramount right now. We are no longer talking merely about the human rights of the homeless members of our community. By ensuring that their most basic needs for water, toilets, and tents are met, we reduce Covid transmission for the entire community. These measures are all within the authority of Nanaimo City Council, and it is Council's responsibility to use these municipal measures to prevent the spread of Covid.

Signed,

Kim Goldberg
Myra Thomson
Dyane Brown
Fred Pattje
Eva Manly
Jim Manly
Holly Bright
Adrienne Dartnell
Rick Lennert
Jesse Birch
Rev. Frances Deverell
Rev. Peggy Jensen
Rev. Kris Jensen
Mary Ann Moore
Kevin Midbo
Antoinette Spoor
Kate Burns
Liza Potvin
June Ross
Robyn Kemp
Janet Hicks
Audrey West
Lynn Burrows
Kari Fetherston
Lavonne Garnet
Nick Dudink
Noelle Hanuse
Maria Gomes
Terre Flower
Leanne McIntosh

Kristin King
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Linda Stedfield
Catherine McKenzie
Christine Arcand
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Dee Fontans
Theresa Hood
Susan Garcia
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Karen Max
Sonja Billiard
Shelley Serebrin
Noel Lewis Watts
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Hugh McLeod
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Ann Ronald
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Linda Braid
Larry Whaley
Marilyn Huffman
Philip Huffman
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Anne Marie McDonell
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Myrna Broughton
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Dennis Lacusta
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Myra Thomson