



CITY OF VANCOUVER
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 6, 2007

A Special Meeting of the Council of the City of Vancouver was held on Wednesday, June 6, 2007, at 7:30 p.m., in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, City Hall, for the purpose of hearing from speakers on the Revised Supportive Housing Strategy for Vancouver Coastal Health's "Mental Health & Addictions Supported Housing Framework".

PRESENT: Mayor Sam Sullivan
 Councillor Suzanne Anton
 *Councillor Elizabeth Ball
 Councillor David Cadman
 Councillor Kim Capri
 Councillor George Chow
 Councillor Heather Deal
 *Councillor Peter Ladner
 Councillor B.C. Lee
 Councillor Raymond Louie

ABSENT: Councillor Tim Stevenson

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Lori Isfeld, Meeting Coordinator

*Denotes absence for a portion of the meeting.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MOVED by Councillor Cadman
 SECONDED by Councillor Capri

THAT this Council resolve itself into Committee of the Whole, Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
 (Councillors Ball and Ladner absent for the vote)

1. **Revised Supportive Housing Strategy for Vancouver Coastal Health's "Mental Health & Addictions Supported Housing Framework"**
 (VanRIMS No.: 11-2400-11)

Vancouver City Council had before it a Policy Report dated May 22, 2007, in which the Director of the Housing Centre summarized public feedback on the draft Supportive Housing Strategy, identified changes to the draft Strategy, and recommended approval of the revised Strategy and additional actions as part of its implementation. The General Manager of Community Services recommended approval.

Jill Davidson, Senior Housing Planner, provided a presentation that included an overview of the Strategy, the public process undertaken, and the themes and analysis of public input received. Ms. Davidson, along with Cameron Gray, Director of the Housing Centre, Linda Thomas, Director, Housing Services, Vancouver Coastal Health, and Allyson Muir, Manger, Mental Health and Addictions Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health, responded to questions regarding:

- involvement of aboriginal communities in planning;
- a regional approach to zoning that allows for more supportive housing;
- the need for provincial and federal funding; and
- the status of Riverview Hospital.

The following speakers expressed support for increasing supportive housing and the draft Strategy in general, and offered additional comments:

Marge Johnson
The Raging Grannies
Dick Doerksen
Michael Goehring, Turning Point Recovery Society
Ron Warbrick
Joan Nazif
Barbara Forster-Rickard
Randy Pruder
Rob Ruttan
Sister Elizabeth Kelliher, Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement
David Tupper
Sarah Troffe, Vancouver Family Preservation

Comments provided by the foregoing speakers included the following:

- upon completion of a rehabilitation program, supportive housing is required to increase the chance at successful recovery;
- people recovering from mental health crisis or addiction need a variety of levels and forms of support; a continuum of care without any gaps is required;
- those who recover and integrate back into society are able to provide support for the recovery of others;
- investment in supportive housing is a sound use of taxpayer dollars because successful recovery results in benefits to the community and reduced costs; it is a win-win strategy;
- several speakers shared personal experiences about supportive housing and how it was critical to successful recovery;
- waiting lists for supportive housing are far too long; delays can result in returning to addition and/or death;
- recently vacated facilities such as Riverview Hospital should be used as an interim facility to get people off the streets;
- the strategy demonstrates leadership and vision by the City and Vancouver Coastal Health;

- supportive housing staff are able to engage clients on a daily basis; it is important that people recovering are acknowledged instead of being isolated and shunned from society;
- federal and provincial funding is critical because municipal funds alone cannot increase supportive housing;
- staff assistance and a supportive environment enables people to learn to manage symptoms and medication, personal care, life skills such as cooking etc., which prepares them for independent living;
- thrusting after-care and support on to families is often too much for families to bear;
- we must support the recovery of these people for the safety of the community and for the safety and security of our most vulnerable citizens; and
- the perception that addictions housing negatively impacts neighbourhoods is untrue because facilities such as "The Turning Point" have received zero complaints.

Audrey Laferriere spoke in opposition to the strategy because it is based on outdated research and because the treatment model is expensive and is not proven to result in high success rates. She added that Council should not approve a policy when financial commitment and success rate information is unclear.

Richard Ballantyne spoke in opposition to utilizing the site at 16th and Dunbar for addictions housing and noted the report does not provide enough assurance with regard to potential negative impacts on the community. Mr. Ballantyne added that addictions housing increases drug related activity and crime and compromises the safety of a neighbourhood and that increased seniors housing is more appropriate in the Dunbar community so that seniors are able stay in the community they've lived in all their lives.

MOVED by Councillor Louie

- A. THAT the "Revised Supportive Housing Strategy for Vancouver Coastal Health's *'Mental Health & Addictions Supportive Housing Framework,'* dated June 2007, which includes the following recommendations, be adopted:
1. The City work with VCH and BC Housing to balance geographically new supportive housing across the city in zones where apartments are permitted;
 2. The City assist by buying appropriate sites as they become available, recognizing that acquisition costs will be higher in some locations;
 3. The City purchase one or two sites appropriate for supportive housing in 2007, providing funding and suitable sites are available;
 4. The City acknowledge the primary responsibility of the provincial and federal governments for funding supportive housing and that the City urge the Provincial and Federal governments to provide funding for supportive housing projects as described in this Strategy;
 5. The City work in partnership with VCH to secure new Provincial funding to provide support services for the supportive housing projects in this Strategy, and ensure that the related community health services are available;
 6. The City assist VCH in providing public information related to mental illness and addictions in general, and supportive housing in particular;

7. The City work with BC Housing, VCH and neighbourhoods to provide information about project planning, program and operations, and identify and address project concerns once sites have been purchased and project funding is available;
 8. The City to monitor implementation of this Strategy and, with input from VCH and BC Housing, report back every three years.
- B. THAT the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, write to the Premier, Government of British Columbia, the appropriate Ministers and Vancouver MLAs urging the Province to increase funding for supportive housing projects and supportive services as described in this Strategy, and to ensure that the related community health services are available, and advising the Government of British Columbia that the City is willing to work in partnership with the Province in providing sites for these projects.
- C. THAT the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, write to the Prime Minister of Canada, the Ministers responsible for Human Resources and Social Development Canada and CMHC, and Vancouver MPs urging the Federal Government to expand the social housing programs for supportive housing and provide stable multi-year funding to the Provinces.
- D. THAT the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, send the Supportive Housing Strategy to the GVRD, its member municipalities, and the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness urging, in partnership with Vancouver Coastal and Fraser Valley Health Authorities, development of a regional supportive housing strategy and encouraging GVRD municipalities to develop local supportive housing strategies.
- E. THAT the following motion be submitted to UBCM for 2007 annual convention:
- “WHEREAS mental illness and addiction are health conditions which can affect people of all socio-economic backgrounds in all communities and neighbourhoods;
- AND WHEREAS supportive housing is affordable housing that helps people stabilize their lives and re-establish connections with the community:
- THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UBCM urge the Province to
1. increase funding to develop more supportive housing across the province, to provide funding for the related supportive services and to ensure related community health services are available.
 2. consider linking municipal infrastructure funds with putting in place zoning which encourages supportive housing.”

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

RISE FROM COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MOVED by Councillor Capri

THAT the Committee of the Whole rise and report.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

ADOPT REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

MOVED by Councillor Anton
SECONDED by Councillor Ball

THAT the report of the Committee of the Whole be adopted.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The Special Council adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

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