

5. Motion to establish a Mental Health Advocate in the City of Vancouver

MOVER: Councillor Heather Deal

SECONDER: Councillor George Chow

WHEREAS there is a lack of community and consumer input around mental health services in the City of Vancouver;

WHEREAS there is an increasing number of homeless individuals with multiple service needs, and a gap in services for these individuals, in the City of Vancouver and the Lower Mainland;

WHEREAS Project Civil City, the city's primary program to deal with homelessness and addictions, operates in a framework focusing on public disorder and not on the root causes of these problems;

WHEREAS the City of Vancouver is at the forefront of pushing for new, progressive solutions to homelessness and drug addiction, yet has been reluctant to assertively engage in issues of mental health;

WHEREAS a recent report produced by the Vancouver Police Department stated that 31% of police incidents involved at least one mentally ill person;

WHEREAS there is an absence of information sharing among mental health resources within the City of Vancouver and the Lower Mainland;

WHEREAS there are estimates that up to 60-70% of the mentally ill treated at St. Paul's Hospital have multiple addictions;

AND WHEREAS there is a severe lack of public accountability with the delivery of mental health services in Vancouver;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The City of Vancouver establish a Mental Health Advocate, with the job of:

- reviewing quality of care issues around mental health services;
- ensuring public consultation and education on new facilities and programs dealing with mental health;
- coordinating the delivery of mental health services with other local, regional, provincial and advocacy organizations;
- developing an information base to inform policy development and planning in the area of mental health;
- advocating within the city and at senior levels of government for people dealing with all aspects of mental illness;
- reporting to council twice a year on the status of mental health services in the city, with a focus on service deficiencies and providing solutions and recommended courses of action.