



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: March 22, 2016
Contact: Abi Bond
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Meeting Date: April 19, 2016

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Chief Housing Officer
SUBJECT: Grant Request - Atira Women's Resource Society - 561 East Hastings Street

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve a grant of \$38,000 to Atira Women's Resource Society to manage and operate 39 rooms at the Patrick Anthony Residence, located at 561 East Hastings Street for a period of one year.
- B. THAT the grant noted in A above be subject to the execution of agreements with the Owner of the Patrick Anthony Residence securing Atira Property Management Inc. (Atira's wholly owned property management arm) as the operator and securing the use of the 39 rooms for these purposes for one year, on terms approved by the Chief Housing Officer and the Director of Legal Services; source of funds to be the 2016 Operating Budget for Interim Housing.

Council approval of grant recommendations requires eight affirmative votes.

REPORT SUMMARY

In response to the Oppenheimer encampment in the summer of 2014, the City of Vancouver leased the vacant Quality Inn at 1335 Howe Street (157 rooms) for a period of two years to serve as interim housing for the homeless.

The lease expires November 5th, 2016, as the site is being demolished and redeveloped, and the City is actively identifying relocation options for the existing tenants at the Quality Inn. The City has identified the Patrick Anthony Residence, located at 561 E Hastings, as one feasible housing option for some of the residents of the Quality Inn, as it has 39 vacant rooms available for immediate tenancy at \$375/month rents. The owner has agreed to a one year contract with Atira Women's Resource Society's property management arm to manage the building which will provide much needed interim housing. The recommended grant of \$38,000 will provide for additional staffing required to manage and maintain a fully tenanted building.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

On July 28, 2011 Council endorsed the Housing & Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 which includes three strategic directions:

1. Increase the supply of affordable housing;
2. Encourage a housing mix across all neighborhoods that enhances quality of life; and,
3. Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability.

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The Chief Housing Officer recommends approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

In November, 2014, the City of Vancouver responded to the homeless encampment at Oppenheimer Park through the addition of 157 units of interim housing at the vacant Quality Inn Hotel at 1335 Howe Street. The City entered into a two-year lease with the owners of the site, which was slated for redevelopment, in order to house 171 homeless and at-risk individuals. All of the tenants currently housed at the Quality Inn are low-income adults and some require support services to maintain successful tenancies. The Quality Inn is operated by Community Builders Group and provides 24 hour staffing and supports, including referrals to health and other services. The rooms are single or double occupancy and furnished with a bed and full bathroom, microwave and fridge.

The temporary lease arrangement was clearly communicated with residents as they moved in to the Quality Inn and the City made concerted efforts during this time frame to find more permanent solutions for tenants. Over the last two years, approximately 60 tenants were moved from the Quality Inn into long-term housing, providing vacancies for other homeless individuals to move in.

The lease between the City and the owners of the site expires on November 5th, 2016, as the site is being demolished and redeveloped into secured market rental housing. Community Builders stopped accepting new tenants at the Quality Inn as of mid-March, 2016. Over the last year, City staff have been assessing various relocation options for the tenants at the Quality Inn in order to continue to provide them with the appropriate housing and any necessary supports. Due to the large number of residents that need to be moved, it is anticipated that tenants will be relocated across a number of buildings. The City's Carnegie Outreach Team has been working with Community Builders to assess tenants to ensure appropriate relocation options. Tenant relocation has begun where opportunities exist and all tenants will be moved by the end of October.

Strategic Analysis

The Patrick Anthony Residence, located at 561 E Hastings, has been identified by staff as one feasible housing option for residents being moved from the Quality Inn. The building has a total of 67 newly renovated rooms, 39 of which are vacant and can be made available immediately to tenants from the Quality Inn and potentially other tenants from city owned sites.

Atira Women's Resource Society's property management arm has negotiated a one year contract with the owner meaning that they would be responsible for managing and tenanting the building, as well as collecting rent. All of the rents will be at the shelter component of income assistance, currently set at \$375/month for a single person. The recommended \$38,000 grant will offset the additional staffing costs required to adequately manage a fully tenanted building.

The property management contract will be in place for a minimum of one year. During this time period, Atira will be exploring other funding opportunities in an effort to secure the long term sustainability of the housing arrangement. Staff will examine all potential options, including approaching BC Housing to see if they would support a longer-term funding arrangement beyond the City's initial investment.

The rooms at the Patrick Anthony will provide a much needed interim housing option for some of the 171 residents being moved from the Quality Inn. Currently, staff are in the process of securing additional housing options for the remainder of the tenants, which will be brought forward to Council over the next few months. The City's financial contribution will enable up to 39 tenants to access adequate, affordable housing while preventing them from falling back into homelessness. Therefore, this report recommends approval of a grant of \$38,000 to Atira Women's Resource Society to contract their property management arm to take over the maintenance and management of the Patrick Anthony Residence.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)

Financial

The funding source for the \$38,000 grant is the 2016 Operating Budget for Interim Housing.

CONCLUSION

The 39 vacant rooms at the Patrick Anthony Residence will provide much needed housing for some of the tenants who will need to be relocated from their current residence at the Quality Inn due to redevelopment of the site. Staff recommend approval of a grant of \$38,000 to Atira Women's Resource Society towards operating costs of the Patrick Anthony Residence for a period of one year.

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