

MOTION

11. Inquiry and Future Planning for Extreme Cold Weather and Snow Removal

At the Regular Council meeting on January 24, 2017, Vancouver City Council referred this matter to the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on January 25, 2017, to hear from speakers.

MOVED by Councillor De Genova

SECONDED by Councillor Affleck

WHEREAS

1. Making public spaces, including streets and public sidewalks accessible and free of hazards during extreme weather is a responsibility of the City of Vancouver;
2. During a portion of December 2016 and January 2017 many streets and roads in Vancouver were not cleared of snow. Due to extreme cold weather, ice formed on roadways and sidewalks creating a hazardous environment for pedestrians, cyclists, motor vehicles, transit buses and especially persons with disabilities and senior citizens;
3. In December, Vision proposed and approved a 3.4% in property tax, with the addition of a 0.5% tax to combat the Fentanyl crisis. Including fee increases, on average, property owners will be paying over 5% per household in taxes;
4. In December 2016 and January 2017 the supply of road salt in the lower mainland was low and in high demand. It has been reported by the media that Vancouver may be paying a premium and increased price than previous years for road salt this season;
5. In reaction to the cold weather, the City of Vancouver led a campaign, offering road salt to residents of Vancouver. Hundreds of people waited in cold temperatures at Fire Halls to secure road salt. Several people that lined up never received road salt. In some cases, the crowd was disorderly and people were angry and irate. A live media report showed how in five minutes over a ton of road salt vanished as people attacked the pile to secure road salt;
6. On January 6, 2017, the Vancouver Park Board resorted to a plea on social media asking for beaches to be respected, as people were removing sand from English Bay in an attempt to secure their properties;
7. The City of Vancouver continually prepares and provides funding for programs available to the public, including "Free Emergency Preparedness Workshops". Vancouver.ca states that these workshops will help "you learn steps to prepare for, respond to, and recover from earthquakes, tsunamis, heat waves and other disasters.";
8. In response to December 2008 snow and ice event, Mayor Gregor Robertson stated: "You know, it's been a challenging and long snow challenge for all of us, and people have been patient. People have worked hard within their neighbourhoods to keep the sidewalks clear. And we've learned a lot from it, and hopefully we don't have a repeat circumstance. This is hopefully once in fifty years.";

9. In January 2013, in response to the December 2012 snow and ice weather event in Vancouver, Councillor Affleck introduced a motion entitled "Snow Removal Plan" which carried unanimously at the January 15, 2013 Regular Council Meeting. Councillor Affleck's January 2013 "Snow Removal Plan" motion called for the following:
 - a. THAT staff report back on the existing Snow Removal Plan for the City of Vancouver, with priority routes identified.
 - b. THAT staff report back on the existing snow removal resources and their deployment on December 19, 2012.
 - c. THAT staff recommend options to further increase the priority on snow clearing, sanding and salting of bus routes.
 - d. THAT the report should outline key bus routes, pedestrian paths, bicycle routes, arterials and other transportation networks and the resources allocated for these services in the City of Vancouver's Snow Removal;
10. On April 9, 2013, Council received a staff report in response to Councillor Affleck's January 15, 2013, motion outlining the City's snow removal plan, priority routes, and details regarding the City's response to the snow and ice weather event which occurred on December 19, 2012;
11. On December 29, 2015, an earthquake measuring between 4.3-4.8 in magnitude was felt throughout British Columbia's south coast, including in the city of Vancouver;
12. The December 2016-January 2017 snowfall is the third time in eight years that the City has experienced extreme cold weather and been caught unprepared for such a weather event;
13. It was noted by the media that several Metro Vancouver municipalities faced greater amounts of snow than the city of Vancouver and were more readily prepared and had greater success in ploughing, salting and de-icing public roads, spaces and sidewalks;
14. There were several calls on the Mayor to speak with the media; however, the Mayor, the Acting Mayor and the Deputy Mayor did not respond in a timely manner regarding the extreme weather and the Mayor was unavailable for immediate comment.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Vancouver City Council initiate an independent third-party review of the City of Vancouver's strategy for winter snow and ice removal including a review of the City's current Snow Removal Plan.
- B. THAT staff report back within 60 days as to how the budgeted \$750,000 for Snow Removal was allocated, including any increase or premium costs Vancouver incurred in purchasing road salt.

- C. THAT staff investigate and report back within 60 days as to a property tax rebate or credit for property owners who did not receive recycling or garbage removal due to this extreme cold weather;

FURTHER THAT staff report back on the ability of MMBC and City of Vancouver to provide sufficient removal of garbage and recycling during extreme cold weather.

- D. THAT staff report back on how extreme cold weather planning can be incorporated into the "Free emergency preparedness workshops" offered to the public.

- E. THAT the staff provide a memo to Council outlining the duties and responsibilities of the Acting Mayor and Deputy Mayor, including a schedule of their additional pay to act on the Mayor's behalf and report as to how the Acting and/or Deputy Mayors acted during the extreme weather, while the Mayor was away out of country.

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