

## MOTION ON NOTICE

### 4. Helping Campers in Oppenheimer Park

Submitted by: Councillor Swanson

#### WHEREAS

1. There are currently 80-100 people camping in Oppenheimer Park in below freezing temperatures;
2. Most are living with makeshift shelters, with insufficient bedding, lack of proper nutrition and no formal source of heat;
3. The elderly and vulnerable are more susceptible to illnesses exacerbated by cold, and may be already living with chronic illnesses;
4. There are reports of pneumonia in the park already;
5. Campers cannot safely leave their belongs to go to shelters, emergency response shelters or warming centres or to the hospital for fear of having their belongings thrown away;
6. Shelters are too often full or not able to meet the needs of campers with partners, pets or belongings;
7. Campers have had belongings destroyed or taken by City staff;
8. Park washrooms are only open until 5 pm;
9. It is costly to pay City engineering and rangers to take down tents and clean up garbage;
10. While most people agree that tent cities are not a good way to live, when there is no housing or shelter available people can be safer in a tent city than being alone on the street.

#### THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to work with BC Housing to rent a hotel or motel to house the Oppenheimer Park patrons.
- B. THAT in the interim, Council direct staff to acquire or implement a warming station in Oppenheimer Park with large heated tents, staffed with Peer Workers to help ensure safety and cleanliness.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to provide storage for belongings and washroom facilities for park patrons.

- D. THAT Council direct staff to ensure there is a way for campers to keep and/or retrieve their possessions.
- E. THAT Council direct staff to talk to Oppenheimer Park staff and patrons about other possible solutions to humanize being homeless when there is no housing to move to.

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