

MOTION

7. Helping Campers in Oppenheimer Park

On February 26, 2019, Vancouver City Council referred this motion to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on March 13, 2019, in order to hear from speakers.

MOVED 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; and
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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