



SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 11 AND 14, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Council of the City of Vancouver was held on Friday, September 11, 2020, at 1:01 pm, in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, City Hall, for the purpose of discussing options for emergency COVID-19 relief for unsheltered Vancouver residents. Subsequently, the meeting reconvened on Monday, September 14, 2020, at 3:33 pm. This Special Council meeting was convened by electronic means as authorized under Part 14 of the *Procedure By-law* and the *Vancouver Charter* and the Order of the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General of the Province of British Columbia – *Emergency Program Act*, Ministerial Order No. M192.

PRESENT:

Mayor Kennedy Stewart
Councillor Rebecca Bligh
Councillor Christine Boyle
Councillor Adriane Carr
Councillor Melissa De Genova*
Councillor Lisa Dominato
Councillor Pete Fry
Councillor Colleen Hardwick
Councillor Sarah Kirby-Yung
Councillor Jean Swanson
Councillor Michael Wiebe

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Irina Dragnea, Meeting Coordinator

* Denotes absence for a portion of the meeting.

WELCOME

The Mayor acknowledged we are on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and we thank them for having cared for this land and look forward to working with them in partnership as we continue to build this great city together.

The Mayor also recognized the immense contributions of the City of Vancouver's staff who work hard every day to help make our city an incredible place to live, work, and play.

Before the start of Item 1, Mayor Stewart relinquished the Chair to Deputy Mayor Carr, in order to participate in discussion and resumed as Chair when completed.

1. Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents

Sadhu Johnston, City Manager, together with staff from Arts, Culture and Community Services, staff from the Parks Board, and staff from the Vancouver Police Department, responded to questions.

Council heard from two speakers in support, four speakers addressing other aspects, and 16 speakers opposed to the recommendations wanting a more long-term housing solution.

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At 4:52 pm, it was

*MOVED by Mayor Stewart
SECONDED by Councillor De Genova*

*THAT Council recess the special meeting and reconvene Monday, September 14, 2020,
at 3:30 pm.*

*CARRIED
(Councillors Bligh, Fry and Wiebe opposed)
(Councillor Boyle abstained from the vote)*

*On September 11, 2020, Council recessed at 4:55 pm and reconvened on September 14, 2020,
at 3:33 pm.*

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*MOVED by Mayor Stewart
SECONDED by Councillor Wiebe*

WHEREAS

1. Caring for all community residents during the COVID-19 public health emergency is a joint responsibility of all levels of government;
2. The 2020 Metro Vancouver preliminary homeless count found in Vancouver 547 people living unsheltered on the City's streets, with 1,548 people with no fixed address living in sheltered locations;
3. Many unsheltered residents are vulnerable people with underlying health issues such as mental illness and addiction;
4. A disproportionately high number of unsheltered residents are Indigenous people - many of whom are survivors of residential schools and other deplorable vestiges of our colonial past;

5. The policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic such as physical distancing and other measures have left many marginalized people in precarious living conditions;
6. The recent spike in COVID-19 cases, a toxic illicit drug supply escalating overdoses, and the coming colder weather require urgent action to provide unsheltered residents safer short- and long-term shelter options and improved access to sanitation, health, and social services; and
7. The estimated 300 residents living unsheltered in Strathcona Park are at increasing risk in terms of health and violence and the current encampment does not have the facilities or services to accommodate long-term habitation.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT City staff report back to Council by or before October 2, 2020, on the feasibility and costs of the following three options to accelerate the creation of emergency housing for homeless Vancouver residents:
 - Option 1: Leasing or purchasing housing units including hotels, single-room occupancy residences, and other available housing stock;
 - Option 2: Establishing a temporary emergency relief encampment on vacant public or private land; and
 - Option 3: Temporarily converting City-owned buildings into emergency housing or shelter space.
- B. THAT City of Vancouver staff work with other partner agencies to outline supportive services for each option including overdose prevention, access to safer supply, other health services such as COVID-19 testing facilities, as well as culturally-appropriate services with emphasis on Indigenous traditions of healing and wellness.
- C. THAT once approved by Council, City staff work with BC Housing and other government and non-profit agencies to invite unsheltered residents to move into housing units or shelter spaces, then to more permanent housing, as it becomes available.
- D. THAT staff also work with BC Housing and other government departments and agencies to secure long-term housing options for unsheltered residents, including and purchasing and refurbishing single-room occupancy residences or other available housing stock.
- E. THAT staff work to expedite the necessary planning approval of the 450 modular housing units recently and jointly announced with the Province.
- F. THAT staff work with the Province to expedite the newly announced navigation centre.

- G. THAT on behalf of Council, the Mayor request federal and provincial funding to cover all associated costs for implementation of any or all of the options City Council approves.

amended

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Swanson
SECONDED by Mayor Stewart

THAT A be amended by striking the word “three”;

FURTHER THAT A be amended by adding the following to the end:

Option 4: Establishing temporary tiny house villages on vacant public or private land; and

Option 5: Providing a serviced space or spaces for low income RV residents.

CARRIED (Vote No. 06288)
(Councillor De Genova opposed)

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Swanson
SECONDED by Councillor Boyle

THAT B be amended by adding the words “and the people who need housing” after the word “agencies”;

FURTHER THAT B be amended by adding the following phrase “with the intent of ensuring that options are available that make people with various gifts and needs feel welcome and safe”, at the end;

FURTHER THAT C be amended by striking the words “shelter spaces” and replacing with the words “other available options”;

AND FURTHER THAT the following be added as D:

THAT City staff consult meaningfully with campers at Strathcona Park and other people who don't have homes regarding what they would find most suitable, and work to offer choices to campers that best meet their circumstances, choices of different kinds of accommodation with different management styles, including indigenous led with peers involved.

amended

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Fry
SECONDED by Councillor Kirby-Yung

THAT the proposed D be amended by striking the phrase “campers at Strathcona Park and other people who don't have homes” and replaced with the words “unsheltered people”;

FURTHER THAT the proposed D be amended by striking the word “campers” and replaced with the words “unsheltered people”.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06289)

The amendment to the amendment having carried, the amendment as amended was put and CARRIED (Vote NO. 06290) with Councillor De Genova opposed.

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Bligh
SECONDED by Councillor Wiebe

THAT the following be added as A:

THAT Council recognizes that the Homelessness Emergency is a complex challenge requiring solutions from all orders of government, First Nations, businesses, community organizations and individuals; and temporary shelters for people experiencing homelessness are not the solution, but that the immediate concerns around public realm, safety and unsheltered individuals must be addressed by the City;

FURTHER THAT the original A be amended by striking the phrase “temporary emergency relief encampment on vacant public or private land”, and replacing with the phrase “Temporary Disaster Relief Shelter framework on a location or locations that may be vacant public or private land or structure; may be owned by the City of Vancouver; are not on designated or undesignated parkland (parks); are in general proximity to the Downtown Eastside; are serviceable for power, water, and related services; and can support appropriately physically distanced tents and services.”;

FURTHER THAT the following paragraph be added at the end of the original A:

FURTHER THAT staff consider how all of the above options could:

1. Facilitate decampments in Vancouver Parks, and specifically Strathcona Park, and other public spaces, such as sidewalks and alleys;
2. Be reviewed by Council within an appropriate time frame to determine how this temporary option can be wound down;
3. Facilitate work with BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health to develop an intake and referral process that addressed most critical unsheltered needs; rules and standards of operation; best practice maximum limit of individuals; and conditions of residence that ensure safety, security, respect and dignity for all;
4. Facilitate work between Engineering, VPD and other agencies to explore a 300 metre area to proactively reduce any ancillary camping, litter, disorder, criminal activity or other impacts to improve integration with adjacent businesses and residents;
5. Articulate the plan and process to adjacent businesses and residents, and develop a feedback mechanism and good neighbor agreement;

AND FURTHER THAT B be amended by adding the phrase “safe spaces for women, harm reduction supports for drug users, housing and health referral, access to water and

sanitation, security of person and property, adequate and frequent garbage removal, trauma-informed services, options for low barrier and sober living,” after the word “prevention,”.

amended

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Kirby-Yung
SECONDED by Councillor Dominato

THAT the proposed amendment to the original A be amended as follows:

- adding the words “the Province of British Columbia or the Federal Government” after the words “City of Vancouver”;
- adding the phrase “excluding community centres or childcare and daycare spaces”, after the word “buildings”;
- adding the phrase “in consultation with the Vancouver Park Board” after the word “Parks”.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06291)
(Councillor De Genova absent for the vote)

The amendment to the amendment having carried, the amended amendment was put and severed with FURTHER THAT 1. (“Facilitate decampments...”) having CARRIED (Vote No. 06292) with Councillors Boyle, Swanson and Mayor Stewart opposed and Councillor De Genova absent for the vote, and the rest of the amended amendment having CARRIED (Vote No. 06293) with Councillor Swanson opposed and Councillor De Genova absent for the vote.

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Kirby-Yung
SECONDED by Councillor Boyle

THAT the following be added as J:

THAT the Mayor write to the Federal Government, Prime Minister and appropriate Ministers affirming Vancouver City Council’s support for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) urgent call to pursue a federal initiative and partnership to rapidly repurpose on-sale private buildings as permanent, non-profit housing for vulnerable Canadians, by helping non-profit community housing providers rapidly acquire, renovate and retrofit two kinds of buildings (buildings to convert to deeply affordable and supportive housing and existing moderate-rent residential buildings) to create additional permanent supportive housing to replace costly temporary shelters.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06294)

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Dominato
SECONDED by Councillor Kirby-Yung

THAT the following be added to the end of the original A:

AND FURTHER THAT in reporting back to Council regarding the aforementioned options, the staff report include confirmation of provincial and federal funding available to cover capital infrastructure investments and operating costs.

amended

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Boyle
SECONDED by Councillor Fry

THAT the word "confirmation" be struck and replaced with the word "possibilities".

CARRIED (Vote No. 06295)
(Councillors De Genova, Dominato, Hardwick and Kirby-Yung opposed)

The amendment to the amendment having carried, the amendment as amended was put and CARRIED (Vote No. 06296) with Councillor De Genova opposed.

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor De Genova
SECONDED by Mayor Stewart

THAT the following be added as K:

THAT Council direct staff to explore and report back with recommendations for actions the City of Vancouver may consider leading or participating in, to support regional solutions to provide relief, shelter and support for people experiencing homelessness;

FURTHER THAT Council request the Mayor engage with the Metro Vancouver Mayors' Committee, on a developing regional strategy to address homelessness in the Metro Vancouver region.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06297)

The amendments having carried, the motion was put and severed as follows (note due to the amendments above the original lettering has changed):

- A. THAT Council recognizes that the Homelessness Emergency is a complex challenge requiring solutions from all orders of government, First Nations, businesses, community organizations and individuals; and temporary shelters for people experiencing homelessness are not the solution, but that the immediate concerns around public realm, safety and unsheltered individuals must be addressed by the City.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06307)

- B. THAT City staff report back to Council by or before October 2, 2020, on the feasibility and costs of the following options to accelerate the creation of emergency housing for homeless Vancouver residents:

- Option 1: Leasing or purchasing housing units including hotels, single-room occupancy residences, and other available housing stock;
Option 2: Establishing a Temporary Disaster Relief Shelter framework on a location or locations that may be vacant public or private land or structure; may be owned by the City of Vancouver; the Province of British Columbia or the Federal Government; are not on designated or undesignated parkland (parks); are in general proximity to the Downtown Eastside; are serviceable for power, water, and related services; and can support appropriately physically distanced tents and services;
Option 3: Temporarily converting City-owned buildings excluding community centres or childcare and daycare into emergency housing or shelter space;
Option 4: Establishing temporary tiny house villages on vacant public or private land;
Option 5: Providing a serviced space or spaces for low income RV residents;

CARRIED (Vote No. 06298)
(Councillor De Genova opposed)

FURTHER THAT staff consider how all of the above options could:

1. Facilitate decampments in Vancouver Parks in consultation with the Vancouver Park Board, and specifically Strathcona Park, and other public spaces, such as sidewalks and alleys;

CARRIED (Vote No. 06299)
(Councillors Boyle, Swanson and Mayor Stewart opposed)

2. Be reviewed by Council within an appropriate time frame to determine how this temporary option can be wound down;
3. Facilitate work with BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health to develop an intake and referral process that addressed most critical unsheltered needs; rules and standards of operation; best practice maximum limit of individuals; and conditions of residence that ensure safety, security, respect and dignity for all;

CARRIED (Vote No. 06302)
(Councillor De Genova opposed)

4. Facilitate work between Engineering, VPD and other agencies to explore a 300 metre area to proactively reduce any ancillary camping, litter, disorder, criminal activity or other impacts to improve integration with adjacent businesses and residents;

CARRIED (Vote No. 06301)
(Councillors De Genova, Swanson and Mayor Stewart opposed)
(Councillor Boyle abstained from the vote)

5. Articulate the plan and process to adjacent businesses and residents, and develop a feedback mechanism and good neighbor agreement;

AND FURTHER THAT in reporting back to Council regarding the aforementioned options, the staff report include possibilities of provincial and federal funding available to cover capital infrastructure investments and operating costs.

CARRIED (Vote No. 06302)
(Councillor De Genova opposed)

- C. THAT City of Vancouver staff work with other partner agencies and the people who need housing to outline supportive services for each option including overdose prevention, safe spaces for women, harm reduction supports for drug users, housing and health referral, access to water and sanitation, security of person and property, adequate and frequent garbage removal, trauma-informed services, options for low barrier and sober living, access to safer supply, other health services such as COVID-19 testing facilities, as well as culturally-appropriate services with emphasis on Indigenous traditions of healing and wellness, with the intent of ensuring that options are available that make people with various gifts and needs feel welcome and safe.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06304)
(Councillors De Genova and Hardwick abstained from the vote)

- D. THAT, once approved by Council, City staff work with BC Housing and other government and non-profit agencies to invite unsheltered residents to move into housing units or other available options, then to more permanent housing, as it becomes available.
- E. THAT City staff consult meaningfully with unsheltered people regarding what they would find most suitable, and work to offer choices to unsheltered people that best meet their circumstances, choices of different kinds of accommodation with different management styles, including indigenous led with peers involved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06307)

- F. THAT staff also work with BC Housing and other government departments and agencies to secure long-term housing options for unsheltered residents, including and purchasing and refurbishing single-room occupancy residences or other available housing stock.

CARRIED (Vote No. 06305)
(Councillors De Genova and Hardwick opposed)

- G. THAT staff work to expedite the necessary planning approval of the 450 modular housing units recently and jointly announced with the Province.
- H. THAT staff work with the Province to expedite the newly announced navigation centre.

- I. THAT, on behalf of Council, the Mayor request federal and provincial funding to cover all associated costs for implementation of any or all of the options City Council approves.

- J. THAT the Mayor write to the Federal Government, Prime Minister and appropriate Ministers affirming Vancouver City Council's support for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) urgent call to pursue a federal initiative and partnership to rapidly repurpose on-sale private buildings as permanent, non-profit housing for vulnerable Canadians, by helping non-profit community housing providers rapidly acquire, renovate and retrofit two kinds of buildings (buildings to convert to deeply affordable and supportive housing and existing moderate-rent residential buildings) to create additional permanent supportive housing to replace costly temporary shelters.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06307)

- K. THAT Council direct staff to explore and report back with recommendations for actions the City of Vancouver may consider leading or participating in, to support regional solutions to provide relief, shelter and support for people experiencing homelessness;

FURTHER THAT Council request the Mayor engage with the Metro Vancouver Mayors' Committee, on a developing regional strategy to address homelessness in the Metro Vancouver region.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06306)

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Bligh
SECONDED by Councillor Wiebe

THAT the WHEREAS be amended by adding the following paragraph as number 8:

The City should respond to the concurrent homeless emergency, overdose crisis, and pandemic health emergency informed by the Emergency Management Framework for Canada (2011, Second Edition) which defines a disaster as: "a social phenomenon that results when a hazard intersects with a vulnerable community in a way that exceeds or overwhelms the community's ability to cope and may cause serious harm to the safety, health, welfare, property or environment of people."; and the City of Vancouver's Emergency Response which states: "In case of a disaster the City will open reception and group lodging centres to look after people who have to leave their homes;"

CARRIED (Vote No. 06308)
(Councillor Kirby-Yung opposed)
(Councillor Swanson abstained from the vote)

Following the vote on the WHEREAS, the motion as amended was put and carried with the same results as above.

FINAL MOTION AS APPROVED

WHEREAS

1. Caring for all community residents during the COVID-19 public health emergency is a joint responsibility of all levels of government;
2. The 2020 Metro Vancouver preliminary homeless count found in Vancouver 547 people living unsheltered on the City's streets, with 1,548 people with no fixed address living in sheltered locations;
3. Many unsheltered residents are vulnerable people with underlying health issues such as mental illness and addiction;
4. A disproportionately high number of unsheltered residents are Indigenous people - many of whom are survivors of residential schools and other deplorable vestiges of our colonial past;
5. The policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic such as physical distancing and other measures have left many marginalized people in precarious living conditions;
6. The recent spike in COVID-19 cases, a toxic illicit drug supply escalating overdoses, and the coming colder weather require urgent action to provide unsheltered residents safer short- and long-term shelter options and improved access to sanitation, health, and social services;
7. The estimated 300 residents living unsheltered in Strathcona Park are at increasing risk in terms of health and violence and the current encampment does not have the facilities or services to accommodate long-term habitation; and
8. The City should respond to the concurrent homeless emergency, overdose crisis, and pandemic health emergency informed by the Emergency Management Framework for Canada (2011, Second Edition) which defines a disaster as: "a social phenomenon that results when a hazard intersects with a vulnerable community in a way that exceeds or overwhelms the community's ability to cope and may cause serious harm to the safety, health, welfare, property or environment of people."; and the City of Vancouver's Emergency Response which states: "In case of a disaster the City will open reception and group lodging centres to look after people who have to leave their homes".

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council recognizes that the Homelessness Emergency is a complex challenge requiring solutions from all orders of government, First Nations, businesses, community organizations and individuals; and temporary shelters for people experiencing homelessness are not the solution, but that the immediate concerns around public realm, safety and unsheltered individuals must be addressed by the City.

- B. THAT City staff report back to Council by or before October 2, 2020, on the feasibility and costs of the following options to accelerate the creation of emergency housing for homeless Vancouver residents:

Option 1: Leasing or purchasing housing units including hotels, single-room occupancy residences, and other available housing stock;

Option 2: Establishing a Temporary Disaster Relief Shelter framework on a location or locations that may be vacant public or private land or structure; may be owned by the City of Vancouver; the Province of British Columbia or the Federal Government; are not on designated or undesignated parkland (parks); are in general proximity to the Downtown Eastside; are serviceable for power, water, and related services; and can support appropriately physically distanced tents and services;

Option 3: Temporarily converting City-owned buildings excluding community centres or childcare and daycare into emergency housing or shelter space;

Option 4: Establishing temporary tiny house villages on vacant public or private land;

Option 5: Providing a serviced space or spaces for low income RV residents;

FURTHER THAT staff consider how all of the above options could:

1. Facilitate decampments in Vancouver Parks in consultation with the Vancouver Park Board, and specifically Strathcona Park, and other public spaces, such as sidewalks and alleys;
2. Be reviewed by Council within an appropriate time frame to determine how this temporary option can be wound down;
3. Facilitate work with BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health to develop an intake and referral process that addressed most critical unsheltered needs; rules and standards of operation; best practice maximum limit of individuals; and conditions of residence that ensure safety, security, respect and dignity for all;
4. Facilitate work between Engineering, VPD and other agencies to explore a 300 metre area to proactively reduce any ancillary camping, litter, disorder, criminal activity or other impacts to improve integration with adjacent businesses and residents;
5. Articulate the plan and process to adjacent businesses and residents, and develop a feedback mechanism and good neighbor agreement;

AND FURTHER THAT in reporting back to Council regarding the aforementioned options, the staff report include possibilities of provincial and federal funding available to cover capital infrastructure investments and operating costs.

- C. THAT City of Vancouver staff work with other partner agencies and the people who need housing to outline supportive services for each option including overdose prevention, safe spaces for women, harm reduction supports for drug users, housing and health referral, access to water and sanitation, security of person and property, adequate and frequent garbage removal, trauma-informed services, options for low barrier and sober living, access to safer supply, other

health services such as COVID-19 testing facilities, as well as culturally-appropriate services with emphasis on Indigenous traditions of healing and wellness, with the intent of ensuring that options are available that make people with various gifts and needs feel welcome and safe.

- D. THAT, once approved by Council, City staff work with BC Housing and other government and non-profit agencies to invite unsheltered residents to move into housing units or other available options, then to more permanent housing, as it becomes available.
- E. THAT City staff consult meaningfully with unsheltered people regarding what they would find most suitable, and work to offer choices to unsheltered people that best meet their circumstances, choices of different kinds of accommodation with different management styles, including indigenous led with peers involved.
- F. THAT staff also work with BC Housing and other government departments and agencies to secure long-term housing options for unsheltered residents, including and purchasing and refurbishing single-room occupancy residences or other available housing stock.
- G. THAT staff work to expedite the necessary planning approval of the 450 modular housing units recently and jointly announced with the Province.
- H. THAT staff work with the Province to expedite the newly announced navigation centre.
- I. THAT, on behalf of Council, the Mayor request federal and provincial funding to cover all associated costs for implementation of any or all of the options City Council approves.
- J. THAT the Mayor write to the Federal Government, Prime Minister and appropriate Ministers affirming Vancouver City Council's support for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) urgent call to pursue a federal initiative and partnership to rapidly repurpose on-sale private buildings as permanent, non-profit housing for vulnerable Canadians, by helping non-profit community housing providers rapidly acquire, renovate and retrofit two kinds of buildings (buildings to convert to deeply affordable and supportive housing and existing moderate-rent residential buildings) to create additional permanent supportive housing to replace costly temporary shelters.
- K. THAT Council direct staff to explore and report back with recommendations for actions the City of Vancouver may consider leading or participating in, to support regional solutions to provide relief, shelter and support for people experiencing homelessness;

FURTHER THAT Council request the Mayor engage with the Metro Vancouver Mayors' Committee, on a developing regional strategy to address homelessness in the Metro Vancouver region.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillor Hardwick
SECONDED by Councillor De Genova

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

On September 14, 2020, the Special Council meeting adjourned at 6:11 pm.

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