

UB1. Short Term Actions to Preserve and Expand Access to Mental Health Resources and Housing in Grandview-Woodlands

At the Council meeting on September 15, 2020, Council referred the following motion to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on September 16, 2020, in order to hear from speakers. Subsequently, due to time constraints, the meeting reconvened on September 29, 2020, and again on September 30, 2020. Following hearing from speakers on September 30, Council referred debate and decision on the motion to the Council meeting on October 6, 2020, as Unfinished Business.

Submitted by: Councillor De Genova

WHEREAS

1. The Kettle Friendship Society¹, is a non-profit organization, established approximately 40 years ago. The organization provides many resources and services, including a drop-in centre and supportive housing to individuals who experience mental health challenges and addiction. Indigenous people, seniors and homeless individuals are among the vulnerable and marginalized people served by this organization;
2. The Kettle Friendship Society has been operating at capacity for over a decade. The society partnered with Boffo Properties; a family-owned property development company long established in Grandview-Woodlands. With BC Housing included as a partner, the most recent proposal for the project was able to secure funding to provide fifty (50) non-market and affordable housing units, owned by The Kettle Society, a funding commitment rarely made by BC Housing at such an early stage of a project. The proposed 15-storey development also enabled an expanded drop-in centre for the Kettle Society;
3. Public consultation for the “Boffo Kettle Project” originally began in 2012. The Grandview Woodlands Citizens’ Assembly formally supported this project in their Final Report;
4. Vancouver City Council adopted The Grandview Woodlands Plan, on July 28, 2016. The development proposed by The Kettle Boffo Plan is referenced numerous times, including:

Subsection “Places: Commercial Drive”:

“Kettle Friendship Centre Society is a key community asset that has offered accessible social services, including key mental health supports, to residents living with mental illness for over 35 years. Given increasing demands for services, Kettle’s future plan is to redevelop their existing site, perhaps together with adjacent privately- and City-owned sites towards a larger facility to better meet the community needs. Where possible, the City aims to support this plan to increase access to low-barrier services.

For the purposes of this plan, this special site is defined as the area bounded by Venables Street, the Commercial Diversion, and Commercial Drive. This represents an overall area of about 0.3 hectares (0.75 acres). It is recognized that future redevelopment of this overall site could occur in a consolidated manner that incorporates several properties (and could possibly include the City-owned land) or it could occur through a number of independent developments. The intent reflected in the plan policies is to ensure that this special site delivers - as a minimum -- space for the expanded services of the Kettle Friendship Society, as well as 30 units of non-market, supportive housing”ⁱⁱ

Section 7.1.2 of the plan titled “Housing” also states in the “Policies” subsection, a further subsection “Support efforts to eliminate homelessness”, including: *“Enable the development of additional supportive housing in Grandview Woodland. Ensure financial viability through senior government funding and/ or provision of additional density subject to fit with neighbourhood context (e.g. proposed redevelopment of the Kettle Friendship Society Centre at 1725 Venables Street),”ⁱⁱⁱ*

5. June 2018, the applicant withdrew the project that was in the Rezoning Pre-Application stage. In a letter from The Kettle Society to Mayor and Council, Executive Director Nancy Keough stated, “we were unable to reach an agreement with the City on a path forward in terms of the City’s financial requirements;”^{iv}
6. July 25, 2018, Council unanimously passed the motion titled “Support for the Kettle Society and the City of Vancouver’s commitment to Resources for Mental Health, Ending Homelessness and Supportive Housing”^v, with direction to staff as follows:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

A. THAT Council affirm support for The Kettle Society as a non-profit organization that serves thousands of people annually and provides resources to individuals and families facing mental health issues and homelessness in the City of Vancouver.

B. THAT Council direct staff to work with The Kettle Society to consider potential opportunities for The Kettle Society to move forward with their longstanding plans to develop an expanded drop-in centre and at least 30 units of community integrated supportive housing for individuals struggling with mental health issues and homelessness in Vancouver;

7. Vancouver faces a homelessness and housing crisis and is in the midst of an overdose crisis. On the frontlines for both, The Kettle Friendship Society provides critical resources to some of the most vulnerable and marginalized people in the city;
8. Vancouver City Council received a letter from The Kettle Society on July 6, 2020, with an updated request. The letter also states, “The Kettle is a trusted partner of

B.C. Housing and because of that can bring 50 new, core income homes to the city of Vancouver.” (Attached as Appendix A); and

9. Vancouver City Council unanimously supported recommendations by staff, in a report^{vi}, dated June 5, 2020, to award Community Housing Incentive Program (CHIP) Grants for the year 2020, organizations and amounts listed below:
 - Finnish Canadian Rest Home Association “Finnish Care Home” - **\$890,000**;
 - Lee’s Benevolent Association of Canada “Lee’s Seniors’ Housing” **\$655,000**;
 - The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada “Salvation Army” **\$910,000**;
 - Aboriginal Land Trust Society “ALT” “Lu’ma Aboriginal Housing Society” **\$6,255,000**.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to approach, prioritize and work with The Kettle Society, and their partners, to revisit their most recent and desired proposal, planned for development at Venables Street and Commercial Drive, including an expanded drop-in mental health centre and 50 units of non-market housing to be owned by The Kettle Friendship Society, with funding from BC Housing, in the interest of moving forward.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to identify and allocate CHIP grants and/or any other option available, to meet the financial needs of the project and satisfy any financial contributions, the City of Vancouver requires for this project to proceed.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to provide monthly updates to Council on progress staff have made with The Kettle Friendship Society in the interest of moving forward on an application led by this non-profit organizations and their funding and development partners.

REFERENCES:

ⁱ The Kettle Society, *Who We Are/ History*. www.thekettle.ca/who-we-are/history/

ⁱⁱ City of Vancouver. July 2016. *Grandview Woodland Community Plan*. page 50.

www.vancouver.ca/files/cov/grandview-woodland-community-plan.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ City of Vancouver. July 2016. *Grandview Woodland Community Plan*. page 130.

www.vancouver.ca/files/cov/grandview-woodland-community-plan.pdf

^{iv} Keough, Nancy. 2018. *Letter to Vancouver City Council*. The Kettle Society and Kettle Boffo.

www.kettleboffo.com/letter-to-council/

^v De Genova, M. 2018. *Support for the Kettle Society and the City of Vancouver’s Commitment to Resources for Mental Health, Ending Homelessness and Supportive Housing*. Motion referred to Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities Meeting Date July 25, 2018.

www.council.vancouver.ca/20180725/documents/pspc16.pdf

^{vi} City of Vancouver. June 5, 2020. “Community Housing Program Incentive Grants” Report and Recommendations to Council. www.council.vancouver.ca/20200707/documents/r8.pdf