



SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 8, 2020

A Special Meeting of the Council of the City of Vancouver was held on Thursday, October 8, 2020, at 9:30 am, in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, City Hall, for the purpose of considering options requested by Council on emergency COVID-19 relief for unsheltered Vancouver residents. 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* (Leave of Absence – 10 am to 12 pm)
Councillor Michael Wiebe

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy 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.

1. Presentation: Response to Council Motion: Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents

Celine Mauboules, Acting Managing Director of Homelessness Services and Affordable Housing Programs, Arts, Culture and Community Services, provided a presentation. Sadhu

Johnston, City Manager, Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager, staff from Arts, Culture and Community Services, staff from Real Estate and Facilities Management, and staff from the Vancouver Police Department, responded to questions.

MOVED by Councillor De Genova
SECONDED by Councillor Hardwick

THAT Council ask a second round of questions to staff on agenda Item 1, after hearing from speakers on Item 2.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
(Councillor Swanson absent for the vote)

Before the start of Item 2, Mayor Stewart relinquished the Chair to Deputy Mayor Boyle, in order to participate in discussion and resumed as Chair when completed.

2. Council Member's Motion: Response to Options Requested by Council on Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents

Council heard from 16 speakers in support of the motion, who also stressed that action should be taken right away, and 13 speakers opposed to the motion.

* * * * *

During the hearing from speakers, Council recessed at 11:58 am and reconvened at 1:00 pm. Subsequently, Council recessed at 3:00 pm and reconvened at 3:15 pm.

Following Speaker 22, due to technical issues, Council recessed at 3:42 pm and reconvened at 5:30 pm.

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At 6:50 pm, after hearing from speakers, Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager, staff from Real Estate and Facilities Management, staff from Arts, Culture and Community Services, staff from the Vancouver Police Department, and staff from Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services, responded to questions.

MOVED by Mayor Stewart
SECONDED by Councillor Carr

WHEREAS

1. The impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic have magnified and disproportionately impacted vulnerable people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, and supportive social services and emergency shelters that serve these populations have had to reduce capacity due to COVID-19;

2. The impacts of COVID-19 now overlap with the overdose public health crisis, creating two ongoing and potentially fatal health crises within Vancouver's communities;
3. The Federal Government has announced two new streams of emergency housing funds: the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) and the expanded Reaching Home program;
4. The Provincial Government has committed to delivering 1,500 units of social housing in Vancouver, with accompanying operating services, and have moved unsheltered residents from Oppenheimer Park into provincial social housing units;
5. Despite these positive federal and provincial initiatives, no funding is immediately available to the City of Vancouver to provide emergency COVID-19 relief for unsheltered Vancouver residents;
6. Residents living in Strathcona, the West End, Yaletown, Crosstown, Gastown, Chinatown, the Downtown Eastside, Mount Pleasant, and Grandview Woodlands and other areas of the city are still experiencing higher-than-usual levels of street homelessness and are demanding solutions in the form of services and housing options for their vulnerable neighbours;
7. The staff memorandum to Council dated October 2, 2020, entitled "Response to Council Motion: Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents (RTS: 014069)", contains information and analysis on the feasibility of options for housing the estimated 750 unsheltered residents living in Vancouver, including cost, expediency, anticipated uptake, space attributes, likely partnership with senior government, and potential impacts on the health and housing outcomes; and
8. The staff memorandum determined the options that scored the highest across costs, expediency, uptake, space attributes, and likely partnerships with senior government were:
 - a. Vacant apartment buildings;
 - b. Vacant commercial hotels or other buildings; and/or,
 - c. Vacant single-room occupancy buildings.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT, to provide emergency COVID-19 relief for unsheltered Vancouver residents, Council will:

1. Subject to all relevant Council policies, the *Vancouver Charter* and by-law requirements, direct staff to lease or purchase housing units including those found in:
 - a. Vacant apartment buildings;
 - b. Vacant commercial hotels or other buildings; and/or
 - c. Vacant single-room occupancy buildings.
2. Allocate up to \$30 million to execute these actions and provide wraparound services;
3. Direct the Mayor to pursue senior government funding to support the work of City Council outlined above and to provide additional housing and wraparound services; and
4. Direct staff to provide regular progress reports.

amended

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Swanson
SECONDED by Mayor Stewart

THAT clause 1 be amended as follows:

- adding the words “as many” after the word “purchase”; and
- adding the phrase “as possible to offer to 750 unhoused Vancouver residents”;

FURTHER THAT the following be added as clause 2:

Pursue using the City-owned 2400 Motel and the Jericho Hostel for housing unhoused people as soon as possible;

FURTHER THAT the original clause 2 be amended by adding the words “To start,” to the beginning;

AND FURTHER THAT clause 4 be amended by adding the phrase “including a report back on how much additional funds will be needed to provide enough housing units for all 750 unhoused residents.” to the end.

amended

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

THAT clause 1 be amended by deleting the words “750 unhoused” and replacing them with the word “unsheltered”;

FURTHER THAT clause 4 be amended by deleting the words “all 750 unhoused” and

replacing them with the word “unsheltered”.

CARRIED (Vote No. 06469) (*reconsidered*)
(Councillors Boyle and Swanson opposed)

RECONSIDERATION MOVED by Councillor De Genova
SECONDED by Mayor Stewart

THAT Council reconsider Vote No. 06469.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND
BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY

The reconsideration having carried, the amendment to the amendment was put and CARRIED (Vote No. 06471) with Councillor Boyle, Swanson, Wiebe and Mayor Stewart opposed.

The amendment to the amendment having carried, the amendment as amended was put and CARRIED (Vote No. 06472) with Councillors Bligh, De Genova, Dominato, Hardwick and Kirby-Yung opposed.

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Bligh
SECONDED by Councillor Fry

THAT the following be added as clause 2:

Direct staff to secure location(s) and immediately activate temporary Pandemic Shelter(s), working with Vancouver Coastal Health to triage unsheltered people and explicitly facilitate supplanting unmanaged encampments including Strathcona Park, with carefully considered, safe, indoor facilities, where:

- a. Shelter(s) provide adequate security of persons and property for guests and adjacencies;
- b. Shelter(s) are enhanced, 24 hour, and low barrier as a navigation centre - styled transition toward permanent housing or hotels; and
- c. Shelter(s) location(s) consider appropriate proximities of 300 meters to sensitive adjacencies like schools, daycares, parks, playing fields, or community centres;

carried

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Swanson
SECONDED by Mayor Stewart

THAT Council strike the phrase “and explicitly facilitate supplanting unmanaged encampment including Strathcona Park”.

LOST (Vote No. 06473)
(Councillors Bligh, Carr, De Genova, Dominato, Fry, Hardwick, Kirby-Yung and Wiebe opposed)

The amendment to the amendment having lost, the amendment was put and CARRIED (Vote No. 06474) with Councillors De Genova and Swanson opposed.

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Dominato
SECONDED by Mayor Stewart

THAT the following be added at the end of clause 1:

and to report back on the source of funds and leverage opportunities for such acquisitions including:

- i. Approved 2019-2022 Capital Plan, specifically the remaining ~\$30 million allocated for acquisitions for affordable housing;
- ii. Application to the Government of Canada *Rapid Housing Initiative*, which has committed \$1 billion for municipalities to purchase hotels and motels to serve vulnerable populations such as women fleeing domestic violence or people at immediate risk of becoming homeless; and
- iii. Application to the Government of Canada's expanded *Reaching Home* program dedicated to emergency response related to COVID-19;

Further that Council direct staff to develop a neighbourhood transition and engagement plan for transitions into hotels and/or apartments acquired by the City;

Further that Council direct staff to identify potential site options where homeless youth and women can be accommodated, as they have unique needs;

FURTHER THAT the following be added as a new clause:

Further that Council direct the Mayor to write the Premier-elect specifically requesting the Province expedite the promised Navigation Centre for Vancouver, which is a low barrier shelter with full wraparound services to support people to access permanent housing and health care supports.

amended

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

THAT the following be added as (iv):

Application to the Provincial Government for operating funds and capital funds.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06475)

The amendment to the amendment having carried, the amendment as amended was put and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06477).

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor De Genova
SECONDED by Councillor Kirby-Yung

THAT the following be added as B:

THAT Council direct staff to eliminate the Chinatown Parkade at 108 Keefer Street from any potential response options to address COVID-19 relief for unsheltered Vancouver residents;

FURTHER THAT, prior to any consideration for locating response options, in Chinatown, Council direct staff to:

1. Undertake robust consultation with stakeholders, and including businesses in Chinatown, and the community in Chinatown, and report back to Council with the results; and
2. Consider, examine and report back to Council with any impacts on the City's efforts and goals to obtain UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

not put

After consulting with legal staff, Deputy Mayor Boyle ruled the amendment out of order as it is not germane to the motion.

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor De Genova
SECONDED by Councillor Kirby-Yung

THAT the following be added as B:

THAT, prior to any consideration for locating response options in Chinatown, Council direct staff to:

1. Undertake robust consultation with stakeholders, and including businesses in Chinatown, and the community in Chinatown, and report back to Council with the results;
2. Consider, examine and report back to Council with any impacts on the City's efforts and goals to obtain UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06478)

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

- A. THAT, to provide emergency COVID-19 relief for unsheltered Vancouver residents, Council will:
 1. Subject to all relevant Council policies, *Vancouver Charter* and by-law requirements, direct staff to lease or purchase as many housing units as possible to offer to unsheltered Vancouver residents, including those found in:

- a. Vacant apartment buildings;
- b. Vacant commercial hotels or other buildings; and/or,
- c. Vacant single-room occupancy buildings;

CARRIED (Vote No. 06479)
(Councillor De Genova and Hardwick opposed)

and to report back on the source of funds and leverage opportunities for such acquisitions including:

- i. Approved 2019-2022 Capital Plan, specifically the remaining ~\$30 million allocated for acquisitions for affordable housing;
- ii. Application to the Government of Canada *Rapid Housing Initiative*, which has committed \$1 billion for municipalities to purchase hotels and motels to serve vulnerable populations such as women fleeing domestic violence or people at immediate risk of becoming homeless;
- iii. Application to the Government of Canada's expanded *Reaching Home* program dedicated to emergency response related to COVID-19; and
- iv. Application to the Provincial Government for operating funds and capital funds;

Further that Council direct staff to develop a neighbourhood transition and engagement plan for transitions into hotels and/or apartments acquired by the City;

Further that Council direct staff to identify potential site options where homeless youth and women can be accommodated, as they have unique needs;

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06483)

- 2. Direct staff to secure location(s) and immediately activate temporary Pandemic Shelter(s), working with Vancouver Coastal Health to triage unsheltered people and explicitly facilitate supplanting unmanaged encampments including Strathcona Park, with carefully considered, safe, indoor facilities, where:
 - a. Shelter(s) provide adequate security of persons and property for guests and adjacencies;
 - b. Shelter(s) are enhanced, 24 hour, and low barrier as a navigation centre-styled transition toward permanent housing or hotels; and
 - c. Shelter(s) location(s) consider appropriate proximities of 300 meters to sensitive adjacencies like schools, daycares, parks, playing fields, or community centres;

CARRIED (Vote No. 06468)
(Councillors De Genova and Swanson opposed)

3. Pursue using the City-owned 2400 Motel and the Jericho Hostel for housing unhoused people as soon as possible;

CARRIED (Vote No. 06481)
(Councillors De Genova opposed)
(Councillor Kirby-Yung abstained from the vote)

4. To start, allocate up to \$30 million to execute these actions and provide wraparound services;
 5. Direct the Mayor to pursue senior government funding to support the work of City Council outlined above and to provide additional housing and wraparound services;
 6. Direct staff to provide regular progress reports, including a report back on how much additional funds will be needed to provide enough housing units for unsheltered residents; and
 7. Further that Council direct the Mayor to write the Premier-elect specifically requesting the Province expedite the promised Navigation Centre for Vancouver, which is a low barrier shelter with full wraparound services to support people to access permanent housing and health care supports.
- B. THAT, prior to any consideration for locating response options in Chinatown, Council direct staff to:
1. Undertake robust consultation with stakeholders, and including businesses in Chinatown, and the community in Chinatown, and report back to Council with the results; and
 2. Consider, examine and report back to Council with any impacts on the City's efforts and goals to obtain UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 06483)

FINAL MOTION AS APPROVED

WHEREAS

1. The impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic have magnified and disproportionately impacted vulnerable people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, and supportive social services and emergency shelters that serve these populations have had to reduce capacity due to COVID-19;
2. The impacts of COVID-19 now overlap with the overdose public health crisis, creating two ongoing and potentially fatal health crises within Vancouver's communities;

3. The Federal Government has announced two new streams of emergency housing funds: the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) and the expanded Reaching Home program;
4. The Provincial Government has committed to delivering 1,500 units of social housing in Vancouver, with accompanying operating services, and have moved unsheltered residents from Oppenheimer Park into provincial social housing units;
5. Despite these positive federal and provincial initiatives, no funding is immediately available to the City of Vancouver to provide emergency COVID-19 relief for unsheltered Vancouver residents;
6. Residents living in Strathcona, the West End, Yaletown, Crosstown, Gastown, Chinatown, the Downtown Eastside, Mount Pleasant, and Grandview Woodlands and other areas of the city are still experiencing higher-than-usual levels of street homelessness and are demanding solutions in the form of services and housing options for their vulnerable neighbours;
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8. The staff memorandum determined the options that scored the highest across costs, expediency, uptake, space attributes, and likely partnerships with senior government were:
 - a. Vacant apartment buildings;
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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT, to provide emergency COVID-19 relief for unsheltered Vancouver residents, Council will:
 1. Subject to all relevant Council policies, *Vancouver Charter* and by-law requirements, direct staff to lease or purchase as many housing units as possible to offer to unsheltered Vancouver residents, including those found in:
 - a. Vacant apartment buildings;
 - b. Vacant commercial hotels or other buildings; and/or,

- c. Vacant single-room occupancy buildings;

and to report back on the source of funds and leverage opportunities for such acquisitions including:

- i. Approved 2019-2022 Capital Plan, specifically the remaining ~\$30 million allocated for acquisitions for affordable housing;
- ii. Application to the Government of Canada *Rapid Housing Initiative*, which has committed \$1 billion for municipalities to purchase hotels and motels to serve vulnerable populations such as women fleeing domestic violence or people at immediate risk of becoming homeless;
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- iv. Application to the Provincial Government for operating funds and capital funds;

Further that Council direct staff to develop a neighbourhood transition and engagement plan for transitions into hotels and/or apartments acquired by the City;

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- 2. Direct staff to secure location(s) and immediately activate temporary Pandemic Shelter(s), working with Vancouver Coastal Health to triage unsheltered people and explicitly facilitate supplanting unmanaged encampments including Strathcona Park, with carefully considered, safe, indoor facilities, where:
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 - c. Shelter(s) location(s) consider appropriate proximities of 300 meters to sensitive adjacencies like schools, daycares, parks, playing fields, or community centres;
- 3. Pursue using the City-owned 2400 Motel and the Jericho Hostel for housing unhoused people as soon as possible;
- 4. To start, allocate up to \$30 million to execute these actions and provide wraparound services;
- 5. Direct the Mayor to pursue senior government funding to support the work of City Council outlined above and to provide additional housing and wraparound services;

6. Direct staff to provide regular progress reports, including a report back on how much additional funds will be needed to provide enough housing units for unsheltered residents; and
 7. Further that Council direct the Mayor to write the Premier-elect specifically requesting the Province expedite the promised Navigation Centre for Vancouver, which is a low barrier shelter with full wraparound services to support people to access permanent housing and health care supports.
- B. THAT, prior to any consideration for locating response options in Chinatown, Council direct staff to:
1. Undertake robust consultation with stakeholders, and including businesses in Chinatown, and the community in Chinatown, and report back to Council with the results; and
 2. Consider, examine and report back to Council with any impacts on the City's efforts and goals to obtain UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillor Carr
SECONDED by Councillor Boyle

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

The Special Council meeting adjourned at 9:57 pm.

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