

Nanaimo Homeless Coalition

Let's Talk About
Homelessness in Nanaimo



Nanaimo Coalition Meeting Minutes – May 2, 2019

In attendance: Dave LaBerge (CoN), John McCormick (NRJHS), Lisa Bhopalsingh (CoN), Karin Kronstal (CoN), Grace Kerr (Service Canada), Lois Peterson (FUFON), Shelly Maunula (Haven Society), Mike Kirby (Island Health), Bill Bain (Nanaimo RCMP-Bike Unit), Angela McKinnon (NWRS), Chantale Roelens (NWRS), Andrew Thornton (JHS), Andrew Ferguson (JHS), Emily Sorensen (UWCNVI), Pascal Bilodeau (Citizen), Lois Gabitous (BC Housing), Heidi Hartman (BC Housing), Scott Henderson (Citizen), Kim Smythe (Chamber of Commerce), Yvonne Barrows (The Salvation Army), Kim Maandag (The Salvation Army), Susan Carlson (NCAA), Glen Sexsmith (The Men's Centre), Kix Citton (Nanaimo Brain Injury Society), Alexis Petersen (Harewood Neighbourhood House)

Regrets: Signy Madden (UWCNVI), Jeannine Bousquet (MSDPR), Melaina Patenaude (UWCNVI), Gord Fuller (7-10 Club)

Meeting Chair: John McCormick

1. City updates: Lisa Bhopalsingh (CoN)

Staff changes

- Please note that John Horn has moved over to the Cowichan Housing Association
- John's position will be posted next week
- Bill Bain is with us today to represent the RCMP

Modular housing update

- As you may have heard, there was a fire at the Terminal site, which impacted 22 residents. Thankfully nobody was hurt. We were able to rehouse about 12 residents onsite and the remaining have been sheltered offsite. Work is being done to restore the damaged building.
- There are still challenges at the sites, but with the support of the RCMP things are settling a little bit especial at the Nikao site on Labieaux Road.
- The City will look to quickly find more permanent solutions
- We will continue to have dialogues with the community around Homelessness through some of the Neighbourhood Associations, to help bridge community concerns and not deny that the issues are there. The City has been working with James Caspersen out of Victoria, from Building Homes not Barriers. We have been discussing safe injections sites, housing, supportive housing, etc.

- CMHA says there are about 50 homeless encampments around the city and we are actively trying to work with that challenge – Lisa mentioned Gord Fuller’s report about the high number of homeless that have attended the shelters.

Karin Kronstal(CoN)

- Sara Couper from United Way will be working with us at the City. Sara has a lot of great experience and will be a great resource for us moving forward. Sara worked with the City of Vancouver on this specific issue and is now living on the island.
- There seems to be a kind of a hovering awareness but not necessarily accurate info around the housing sites

Scott Henderson (Community Citizen) – in my experience, there are definitely misconceptions in the community and many concerns about being broken into as there have been several break-ins in the City

Heidi Hartman (BC Housing) There are Community Advisory Committees (CAC) for each site that meet on a monthly basis to discuss the issues. The Committees are made up of the organizations involved and community members.

2. Coalition structure discussion: who, why, what (City)

Karin Kronstal(CoN)

- There has been some discussion about moving things forward particularly on the part of the City. We have been looking at different models – task forces, standing committees, etc.
- Signy Madden gave a presentation to the city around this and the City has been deciding on how to move forward. We would like to thank Signy for her assistance and breadth of knowledge as to what may be most effect.
- The plan for a Task Force will be brought forward at the May 13 Council meeting. We will send a link once it is published. The Task Force is meant to be complimentary and in sync to the work of the Coalition and will report back to the Coalition.
- It will be called the Health and Housing Task Force and will work on Homelessness, Poverty, Mental Health issues.
- Council has been very receptive to the idea of a Task Force
- The City would like to acknowledge the United Way for all of their administrative support that has come with being the Community Entity and we are hopefully this task force will help alleviate some of their work load.

John McCormick (NRJHS) posed the question: What is the sense of the role of the Coalition versus the Task Force?

- **Yvonne Barrows (The Salvation Army)** – is the Task force the City or the Coalition? Karin responded that the City adopted the action plan that the Coalition created, and that there will be a back and forth relationship.
Lisa added that the task force will meet frequently and move forward some of the actions of the coalition and will have a regular dialogue coming into the coalition with actions and results
- **Heidi Hartman (BC Housing)** – this model is very consistent around the province. It keeps everyone’s work very action oriented and it helps to have the Council members present and have their buy in. BC Housing is very excited about the new model and honouring the work, and this may be able to make some things move faster in terms of resources.

- **Lisa Bhopalsingh(CoN)** - Signy's presentation to City Council was to raise the profile of the Coalition in addressing the communities' challenges. The time frame for Task Force is for one year and then it will be reevaluated. They are there to achieve very specific goals and will start in June or July.
- **John McCormick (NRJHS)** – will there be a formal representative from the Coalition in addition to the CE? Lisa answered that it will likely be a Community Entity and 2 non-profits that will attend.
- **Kim Smythe (Chamber of Commerce)** – do you know if the terms of reference will be included in the staff report and the City responded, YES. Karin will send Melaina a link to the agenda the Friday before the meeting and all are welcome to attend the council meeting if you like. If anyone wants to send an email to the Mayor in support of anything on the agenda, they are welcome to do so. KIM asked if it would be appropriate for the Coalition to submit a letter of support and Karin said absolutely. **JOHN and KIM** will see about getting that done.

3. **BC Housing Coordinated Access Presentation (Lois Gabitous/Heidi Hartman)**

- Lois and Heidi went through the Coordinated Assessment and Access(CAA) Process, Supportive Housing. Please refer to the sent document for full details.
- There was some discussion around – BC Housing and Supportive Housing. Currently there are 5 Supportive Housing sites in Nanaimo (Uplands, Westley and Boundary sites as well as Nikao and Terminal)
- Applying for BC Housing is different than applying for Supportive Housing
- The Goal is to appropriately match homeless people to the correct support needed. CAA Goals are to have a single application, single point of access, appropriate matching to support and facilitate timely access to supportive housing.
- Right now there are several hundred applications in Nanaimo. We will be going to having provincial data instead of each community having individual data. It will be a very comprehensive review as to the needs in the priority communities – improve transparency and fairness – improve collaboration and coordination – leverage community based resources.
- This Provincial model that has been rolled out in many communities and will eliminate multiple individual lists
- **VAT – Vulnerability Assessment Tool** – is common assessment tool that will be used to assess participants. People with the most challenges will score higher with this tool.
- Supportive housing services provided include – financial, non-clinical and/or clinical staff support, safe and secure self-contained studios, meals on site, 24/7 staff support and connection and referral to local health and community services.
- **Karin Kronstal(CoN)** asked if we should we be calling our sites supportive housing or crisis or emergency shelters – for clarity. They do pay rent and are not shelters and they do not move every night. Lois explained that Provincially these are the parameters however many of the detail can change from region to region.
- **Yvonne Barrows (The Salvation Army)** – I operate a shelter and there are case workers and then don't have to move every night – so I struggle to with these terminologies because the definition is so broad. Heidi agreed and said that she honours all of the knowledge in the room and will do their best to be on the same page with messaging in Nanaimo. There is a regional model but we do really regionalize it to the needs of each community. Heidi can share some photos of different types of Supportive housing around the province as per Lisa's request, as there are many different models therefore finding the correct terminology can be difficult.
- **Lois Gabitous (BC Housing)** on May 22, some people have been invited to sit down and discuss the vacancies and come up with some guidelines as to what is important to this community: is it,

citizens that are 50+, is it those with a connection to the community over 3year, or those that are 5 yrs plus on the street? In Nanaimo, we are bringing together The City, the Police, Ministry of Social Development, John Howard Society, Island Health, Tillicum Lelum and the 5 Modular Housing site providers to establish community priorities, determine measurable outcomes, assess service efficacy against measurable outcomes, review and adjust as needed.

- The process will be to establish community priorities get the VAT assessments and then manage vacancies accordingly.
- BC Housing will share updates to the Coalition on the process.
- Lois asked if there is there a key point person as to who can speak to this locally? Feel free to advise us as to the information that you know – PiT count, Community Plan recommendations. 300-400 ppl currently have submitted applications.
- We want to imbed best practices and keep the conversation going so that we can move people on to affordable housing with a subsidy if necessary. There is a tremendous opportunity to formalize the process.

****Karin and Signy would be point people to bridge the conversation and outcomes to the Coalition**

****MELAINA – send out the question to the Coalition - IF there is any one VAT trained please let LOIS know so she has you on her list.**

4. Reaching Home Updates (Grace Kerr)

- Acknowledgement and recognition for the work that has been done by the Coalition and the impact it has had on the community
- Designated Homelessness \$2,307,702 invested from 2014-2019
- Results to the 3rd quarter of 2018-19
- 313 individuals housed in transitional or supportive housing
- 61 in regular/market housing
- 157 received housing loss prevention supports to retain housing
- 61 commenced employment
- 16 commenced a job training or education program

- Aboriginal Homelessness \$885,255 invested 2014-19
- Results to the 3rd quarter of 2018-19
- 108 individual (plus children) housed in transitional or supportive housing
- 58 in regular/market housing
- 65 received housing loss prevention to retain housing
- 54 commenced employment
- 75 commenced job training or education program
- Total results will roll up once 4th quarter is processed.

- Update on Reaching Home. As of April 1st re-design of the federal homelessness program. New name: Reaching Home Canada's Homelessness Strategy.
- goal to reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50% by 2027-28

- Key components: Outcomes based: Reaching Home Community plans will have clear outcomes with Community reporting on progress. Coordinated Access system by which homeless and at-risk of homelessness individuals are directed to community level access points where a common assessment tools is used to evaluate and prioritize for housing and match the individual to available housing interventions/ Includes centralized databases that collects and displays data and all avail housing and supports.
- Types of funding streams:
- Community Capacity and Innovation (Nationally)
- Designated Communities (being expanded to add 4-6 new communities nationally)
- Indigenous Homelessness
- Rural & Remote Homelessness
- Territorial Homelessness
- Package forwarded by Melaina, includes Frequently Asked Questions about Reaching Home, the Directives, information on Community Advisory Boards, Coalition's Terms of Reference and membership for reference purposes.
- Moving Forward
- Indigenous Homelessness \$217,925 invested in 2 sub-projects for 2019-20. All available funds invested. CE Agreement with the UWCNVI in place till Mar 31, 2019-20. Consultations with Indigenous communities expected mid-May to ensure best approach to serve clients within local areas.
- Designated Homelessness \$472,127 available for investment. \$419,828 invested in 3 sub-projects. \$52,299 remaining available. Reaching Home Community Plan documents are expected in May. CAB's will be required to complete and submit prior to investment of any available funds. Will forward documents as soon as available.
- Community Capacity Funds (CCI) to support communities with coordinated access. Tri-lateral meetings were held in March with BC Housing, ESDC and BC10 CE network. Roles and responsibilities are being established. Once solidified we should have more information on how and when the funds will roll out.
- Point-in-Time Count, expected in 2020
- Grace asked Melaina to send out a package to everyone around reaching home
- Karin asked about the community plan that we need to submit, how is it different from what we just did. Grace responded that it is very specific but you can use the community plan that you have to drive this information.
- Andrew asked what will be the synergies and supportive actions between Reaching Home and Supportive Access CAA system and the response was that theirs is for Supportive housing specifically and ours will be all housing in the community through Coordinated Access.

5. Agency Roundtable (All)

- **Glen Sexsmith (The Men's Centre)** The Men's Centre on solid ground. We had a community member give a \$20,000 grant. I have taken over the role as the ED of the centre.

- **Andrew Ferguson (JHS)** My previous role was as the Program Coordinator and I will now be the Housing Manager.
- **Andrew Thornton (JHS)** Following up on PiT. We are trying to get some support around the language around temporary supportive housing with an emphasis on **temporary**. We need to do some research around who has gotten housed and not gotten housed; has housing 170 people increased or decreased the load on the service providers; or where have the decreases been. We need to define what “things are better” means. We need to actually have more coherent focus to see what the actual situation is to potentially ease the mind of the public rather than relying on what is in the paper. More is better in terms of knowing what is going on. We are in stage 2 of funding to do this. From the Coalition perspective on a target approach to the research, it is a great opportunity to inform work down the road.
- **Yvonne Barrows (The Salvation Army)** The Salvation Army is entering a strategic planning process with 2 properties we are looking at developing. We will be coming back to the coalition with more information.
- **Lois Peterson (FUFON)** The Unitarian shelter now has funding to operate until March 31 2020. This provides continuous employment for people as well as meeting the needs of the homeless and that side is nice to acknowledge.
- **Kim Smyth (CoC)** The chamber did a survey of areas impacted by Terminal and Labieux modular housing sites and it was presented to BC housing, RCMP and the Coalition. We are doing another survey this week and will have results sent out next week.
- **Alexis Peterson (Harewood Neighbourhood House)** We have some community concerns around the new plaza on corner of 5th and Bruce and corner of Wakesiah plus one other site. We wish we had been consulted so that we could ask questions. Lisa responded that the Community engagement process hasn't started yet on the building site that Alexis is referring to - but it is an interesting and exciting project.

Also, Lesley from Women's Centre and I had previously had a discussion around those folks that didn't make it into the temporary supportive housing, and that perhaps a low barrier shelter should be the next step for those that can't be in rooms and prefer to be outside and free. We need to provide them with something for services or at least a safe place that they can meet and discuss next step with organizations.

- **Pascal Bilodeau (Citizen)** There is a problem with the housing application being too long with too many rules. Also, could you use rent payments as a pay to own system, like a down payment for a condo?
- **Kix Citton (Nanaimo Brain Injury Society)** Wanted to give a plug for Nanaimo Brain Injury Society. Brain injury is a large underlying piece when speaking about homelessness and needs to be included as part of the conversation when talking about supportive housing and I will be here at the table to represent that voice. There was nothing referring to this in the last PiT count and it should be included in the next one.

Mike Kirby (Island Health) I will be going back to front line for a year and there will be someone coming in to represent IH at the meetings.

6. **Next Meeting:** TBD