

Nanaimo Homeless Coalition

Let's Talk About
Homelessness in Nanaimo



Nanaimo Coalition Meeting Minutes – December 6, 2018

In attendance: Andrew Thornton (JHS), John Horn (CoN), Gord Fuller (7- 10 Club), John McCormick (NRJHS), Glen Sexsmith (Men's Centre), Dennis Creighton and Bonnie Jordan (Harewood Neighbourhood Assoc.), Dave LaBerge (CoN), Sharon MacDonald (Pacifica), Grace Kerr (Service Canada), Lisa Bhopalsingh (CoN), Lois Peterson (FUFON), Karin Kronstal (CoN), Jeannine Bousquet (MSDPR), Jill Smith (AVI Health), Deborah Hollins (NFLA), Angela McKinnon (NWC), Sharon MacDonald(Pacifica), Signy Madden (UWCNVI), Taryn O'Flanagan (VIMHS), Inga Cooper (TL), Jennifer Fowler (CUIMS), James Bowen(VIU Student Union), Tylar Turnbull (JHS), Kim Smyth (Nanaimo Chamber), Emily Sorensen (UWCNVI)

Regrets: Heidi Hartman (BC Housing)

Meeting Chair: Jeannine Bousquet and John Horn

1. Housing Hub Feasibility Study report back and discussion

Andrew Thornton (JHS)

- Andrew gave some history, there was a call for applications for Social Development grants from the City of Nanaimo in 2017 and an application by Pacifica Housing to conduct a "Housing Hub feasibility study" was approved by Nanaimo City Council in February of 2018.
- JHS and the Justice Research centre conducted that study
- This information was gathered previous to tent city and the new shelters opening
- What is a housing hub – the idea was to test the appetite or desire of a one stop shop for accessing housing support systems in Nanaimo
- It would have shared assessment and referral mechanisms as well as administrative and social supports to people accessing social supported housing in Nanaimo
- The report is intended to be a working document to inform a process of change, putting the everyday knowledge of service providers and users to work in finding best practice solutions

Key themes – a centralized system, lack of system capacity, bring the system up to code, navigate the BC housing registry, enhancing inter-agency communications – we are all in the same sandbox

Centralized system:

- Organize a group to meet and share referrals, with consent attached to every referral, like a shared assessment consent

- There would be a coordinating body, and they would keep a database of names to track people
- There would be a drop in place to refer people and it would be communicated out as to where that site is

Bring the system up to code:

- a system was cobbled together but is not built to code so some more fulsome work needs to be done if we are going to do things well

Indigenous people have a different relationship with housing and family which will need to be addressed:

- for indigenous people, it is always about relationships – who are you, where are you from, who is your family that anchors indigenous clients, not just questions from a sheet

Enhancing interagency communication:

- The coalition is great but we need something much bigger like a housing provided without funders sitting there – a more central place
- Client coordinator and an intake team would be formed from a collaborative of agency staff
- System coordinator working with homeless support agencies
- A housing hub would serve as a physical and admin site of a structured intake process coordinated by hub staff
- Assist the development of coordinated access and assessment
- Common process and form with simplified information to be able to track people as they move through the system in a more formalized process
- Coordinated data, support and feedback loop for service providers - Not a short process but already in stream

Action Plan:

- Organize an all agency meeting to assess who is willing to be involved in the Nanaimo Housing Hub
- Develop a single intake form as a driver to link up coordination of referrals and intake, and develop a tracking mechanism
- Identify potential physical locations with existing agency
- Engage people with lived experience of homelessness in development and design of the hub
- Examine and define the relationship between the housing hub and the forthcoming CAA
- Arrange VAT training for staff in consultations with BC housing as soon as possible

Signy Madden (UWCNVI) mentioned coordinated access and federal funding for this community coming in 2019. Provincial funding still in the works.

This process exists in other communities so we can use that mapped out process and emulate it. We do not have to reinvent the wheel to get this up and running.

Grace Kerr (Service Canada) added that coordinated access is a big piece of Reaching Home, and there is a meeting on Tuesday with the province. There will be 3 years in which to implement a system (by March 31, 2022) with funding from Ottawa to support research, development and

implementation. Communities will each decide who will manage it and how the system will be run.

HIFS – Government case management system

2. Tent City update

I. Sharon MacDonald (Pacifica)

- NIKAO is the new name for the Labieux Road site, and means endurance and overcoming
- As of last night we have 66 folks on site with the remainder arriving today or tomorrow
- There are 86 spaces in total
- It is paved but no we do not have a kitchen yet, so we have been barbequing all week
- The Terminal Road site will begin moving people in today
- All people are coming from tent city and that are so happy and grateful to be there
- There are some couples' suites at Nikao site and both sites are pet friendly

II. Dave LaBerge (CoN)

- The injunction deadline was last Friday and was extended to December 4, 2018, to help facilitate moving people to the sites
- Water and electrical issues caused delays
- We met with BC housing late yesterday and will be moving everyone in the next few days and once that is done, tent city services will be shut down and ready for clean up.
- Anyone that didn't get into the sites will be given space in one of the shelters – roughly 90 people

III. Discussion

- John McCormick (NRJHS) – what about the people that didn't go to tent city, like women who didn't feel safe there, is there a plan for them to be housed
- John Horn (CoN) – not currently
- Dave LaBerge (CoN) – there are still many homeless camps throughout the city, not just downtown but in the north end as well
- LOIS Peterson (FUFON)– how did it become only people from tent city that were housed? It was not communicated and was not the original communication
- John Horn(CoN) – BC Housing developed the process by which individuals were identified as being eligible to move into the modular housing units at Labieux and Terminal
- Dave LaBerge (CoN) – We asked BC housing regarding communication to people that signed up for housing and didn't get it. People are upset and the frontline staff is getting the brunt of it as it was not communicated out well. BC housing acknowledges that there is more work to be done but they must focus on their mandate to get some people housed as soon as possible
- In hind site we ended up with the largest tent city in our province and we will likely end up with another one next year. We need to sit down with city council and regional level and decide what to do next time to have a plan in place to handle it better when it happens, not if it happens. Do we break it down to smaller camps and do we add in services sooner
- Jeannine Bousquet (MSDPR) - The Minister has a strategy for change

Shelter updates:**St. Peters Church – Gord Fuller (7- 10 Club)**

- The Shelter had 18 people last night but will hold upwards of 35
- Tent city is guaranteed 15 spaces – but we haven't had direct names given as of yet
- Staffing has been a bit of an issue
- This is a Winter shelter running until March 31, with check in at 6pm and exiting by 7am

John Horn (CoN) – Our hope is BC housing will continue to fund the St. Peters Church Shelter. Currently we have a 1 year frame and are looking for a 2 year frame work for the shelter. This shelter is a partnership between the Nanaimo Women's Centre and Nanaimo Citizen Advocacy, and Gord offered his services to help run it.

Unitarian Church – Lois Peterson

- We are at capacity with 30 beds and have been operating since March
- We have some expanded hours, open at 5 on weekdays and 7 on weekends and are trying to provide more activities to engage people with a bit of extra money from BC housing

Our Place Victoria – John Horn

- A couple of months ago, we visited the day time drop in space at Our Place Victoria regarding logistics, rules, staffing and budgets, etc. Their operation provides a sense of hope and belonging to people in need.
- This visit was in response to downtown Nanaimo needing some relief from homeless people, including a need for more washrooms and needle deposit places.
- What is really needed is a daytime drop in place for homeless people to go to. We have \$100,000 from council per annum, but will need more funding.
- Our Place Victoria contacted us recently and are interested in being a support to Nanaimo. We invited Linda, the Program Director to come down and look to see if there is a receptivity for them to come and assist in Nanaimo. They have a relationship with BC housing and a wealth of experience in Victoria. Linda will be coming December 18 and we will tour her around to some of the current places available
- We would be looking to have a smaller reduced scale, daytime drop in place to start with and then build from there
- Gord Fuller suggested that 285 Prideaux might be a potential location for a daytime drop in
- Signy Madden – Banks and Libraries should be part of the communications around homelessness as spokes people to help form a strategy
- John Horn - Solid (Society of Living Intravenous Drug users) to have a presence in Nanaimo in the next few months to do some peer based work on preventing overdoses

3. HPS investments for next fiscal**Signy Madden (UWCNVI)**

- Melaina is going to Ottawa in January and will collect more details regarding Reaching Home
- We need to negotiate our contract

- We applied for additional funding for CAEH training sessions, so please come if you can or send your staff

Grace Kerr (Service Canada) – in the new Reaching Home plan, there hasn't been a mention of point in time count but the data would come from coordinated access presumably

4. Agency roundtable

Inga Cooper (TL)

- The Neutral Zone had a big fire and it has really affected our work. We had a youth programs with no gang colours on Franklin street – and served meals from there as well. This was the only safe place to go for the 60 kids that we service
- We are mobile right now, with no where to go, and we are devastated with not being able to serve Christmas dinner or hampers this year.
- Everything is up in the air. We can't get space in schools directly, as things are caught up in red tape. The building is owned by the school district.

Dennis (Harewood Neighbourhood Assoc)

- We are looking to educate people better about the needs in the community and better communicate information out to the community, and we will have some suggestions in the new year

Gord Fuller (7-10 Club) – the 7-10 Club will have 2 Christmas dinners with the big one at Generations again

5. Next meeting – January 24 at 10:00am