



Report to Council

From the Office of Councillor Amy Lubik

Date: January 15, 2020
Subject: Request for Council Support to Explore Warming Shelters in Port Moody

Purpose

To Request that Council direct staff to liaise with the Coordinator of the Tri-Cities Homelessness and Housing Task Force and potentially BC Housing to understand what would be needed to provide a warming shelter at a Port Moody Civic Facility, and report back to council with options. If this is feasible the intent would be to create a policy by which the city could make a welcoming space available to those experiencing homelessness during extreme weather events. The intent is to explore if we may be able to support if there is another with extreme weather event in 2020, with hope that we may be able to establish a procedure/ policy for winter 2020-2021.

Recommendation

THAT staff be directed to liaise with the Coordinator of the Tri-Cities Homelessness and Housing Task Force and potentially BC Housing to understand what would be needed to provide a warming shelter at a Port Moody Civic Facility, and report back to council with options **as recommended in the report dated January 15, 2020 from the Cllr. Lubik regarding Request for Council Support to Explore Warming Shelters in Port Moody.**

Background

Metro Vancouver is generally thought to be a mild climate; however, on occasion we do see extreme cold weather. Those extremes of temperature and potential for more severe precipitation and snow come with our changing climate (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/climate-change-snowfall-1.3974782>).

Snow falls such as were experienced in the TriCities the week of January 13th left many people stuck at home, but for those who do not have a fixed address, the weather can be extremely harsh if they are nowhere to go that is warm, welcoming, and low barrier (<https://www.vancouverisawesome.com/vancouver-news/vancouver-homeless-extreme-cold-donations-needed-2021670>). Homelessness is also on the rise in Metro Vancouver and the Tri-Cities (<https://www.tricitynews.com/news/modular-housing-needed-for-tri-city-homeless-group-says-1.23977810>).

Tri-Cities Homelessness and Housing Partners suggested there are ways to help when the weather is this severe: “A warming center would be ideal for folks outside as even if they use the mat programs they are displaced from 7 am til 10 pm. [People experiencing homelessness] have made mention that they have no where to go, and hanging out at the mall or Tim Horton’s is not ideal as they will be asked to leave. They just need somewhere warm to be with out judgment while waiting for the programs to re-open. Even somewhere to get a hot drink would be nice for them.” [pers com, January 2020]

Discussion

Port Moody is currently looking for spaces to host transition, supportive, youth, refugee and/or low barrier housing through BC Housing. As we currently do not have these services, and there do not appear to be many opportunities for warming during the day in the Tri-Cities, one option is to explore what civic facilities may be appropriate for a low-barrier warming shelter during the day when people do not have mat programs available to them. This report requests council to support to direct staff to liaise with BC Housing and the Coordinator of the Tri-Cities Homelessness and Housing Task Force to understand what would be needed to provide a warming shelter at a Port Moody civic facility, and report back to council with options. If a pilot were to be successful, a policy could be set up through the city such that when temperatures reach a certain threshold, space is made available to those experiencing homelessness. This is an opportunity to show leadership and compassion.

Other Option(s)

That the report date January 15th, 2020, from Cllr. Lubik regarding Request for Council Support to Explore Warming Shelters in Port Moody be received for information.

Financial Implications

Unknown – estimated forgone facilities rental costs.

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Provide information on internal and external communication and civic engagement initiatives.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

- Climate Change Preparedness
- Community Health
- Reducing Inequities