

# Nanaimo Homeless Coalition

Let's Talk About  
**Homelessness** in Nanaimo



## Nanaimo Coalition Meeting Minutes – February 14, 2019

**In attendance:** John Horn (CoN), Jeannine Bousquet (MSDPR), Dave LaBerge (CoN), John McCormick (NRJHS), Lisa Bhopalsingh (CoN), Signy Madden (UWCNVI), Dale Lindsay (CoN), Melaina Patenaude (UWCNVI), Dennis Creighton (Harewood Neighbourhood Assoc.), Gord Fuller (7- 10 Club), Grace Kerr (Service Canada), Lois Peterson (FUFON), Violet Hayes (ICC), Shelly Maunula (Haven Society), Jason Harrison (CMHA Mid-island), Mike Kirby (Island Health), Kevin Flood (Nanaimo RCMP-Bike Unit), Angela McKinnon (NWRS), Chantale Roelens (NWRS), Andrew Thornton (JHS), Andrew Ferguson (JHS), Tylar Turnbull (JHS), Emily Sorensen (UWCNVI), Ben Geselbracht (CoN), Heather Ambo (Nikao CAC Chair), Heidi Hartman (BC Housing)

**Regrets:** Taryn O’Flanagan (VIMHS), Kim Smythe (CoC)

**Meeting Co-Chairs:** Jeannine Bousquet and John Horn

Lisa Bhopalsingh acknowledged that we are on the First Nations Territory and introduced the City’s Director of Community Development, Dale Lindsay, who gave a brief talk on Tent City, a big part of our reality these days. A big thanks to everyone for their efforts on this important work. This is something that we will be dealing with for some time to come.

### **1. Report back to Coalition about Feb 11 Council Meeting (Signy/City staff)**

- Lisa Bhopalsingh - Thanks to those who came to the meeting.
- We had 6 speakers at the meeting:
  - Karin Kronstal - affordable housing
  - John Horn – Homelessness
  - Signy Madden - Homeless Coalition
  - Lisa Bhopalsingh - Update on the 2 modular housing projects; tent city closing and these 2 sites opening; how they are a temporary hybrid to the housing issues
  - Dave LaBerge - Parking bylaws
  - Officer Cam Miller - crime and safety in the community – Homelessness is not a crime
- This helps council have a range of information to make best informed decisions
- Next on March 4, 2019 going to council to talk about issues related to homelessness and will bring a report to council on the Allocation Committee meeting information, as well as other options regarding a drop in centre and, also a third report on further needs for downtown ie: needle pick up, showers, etc.
- Signy Madden gave a recap including the pit count numbers; tent city; request to the city for political representation around the plan that had been created and approved.

- If we are going to move this forward we need a city presence to help drive the plans. From the coalition side, if we are going to move the dial, there has to be a real coherent strategy to see what is feasible to actually do. The city can go away and think about what roll they want to play and how to play it. We are helping to provide the information around what is our strategy and what role will the coalition play in securing maximum resources and making the 2 plans come to fruition. Senior folks at island health and BC housing have chatted and we need to elevate conversation outside of this room as well as inside.
- Thanks to those who pulled off the PIT count.
- In Victoria, the mayor sitting on the coalition (as co-chair) there to help move things along and stay informed.
- We as Coalition members will want to be involved in what is next steps of the plan that was created and adopted – what do we know, what is missing what can we do next.
- Jason Harrison – We need to take pieces and make that actionable with timelines and strategies as it is pretty general right now.
- John Horn – There are increasingly competitive environment for funding, so we will need to keep up or fall behind on these opportunities, in order to maximize the investment in our communities.
- John McCormick – Is there a sense that we need to be regionalizing our housing strategy – Ladysmith, Lantzville, etc. John Horn responded that may be a possibility place to look at.
- Ben Geselbracht – Knows the collaboration conversation is happening with a look towards a more regional collaboration at the RDN level
- Lisa Bhopalsingh – RDN affordable housing website – has some information on it. The RDN has looked at other forms of housing in the rural village centres as well – but would need to consider the transportation piece involved in that as well
- Signy Madden – many of us are funding across more than one region already so it would be great to be more coordinated and supported. We should probably confer with other coalitions on the island as well.

## **2. Reaching Home Updates (Grace/Melaina)**

- Melaina Patenaude - was in Ottawa in January for a two-day session with Community entities across country on Reaching Home which starts April 1 2019. There are still a lot of details to be worked out, so that will happen 2019-2020 and will be considered a transition year. We are finishing up this fiscal year and moving into this transitional year and they want us to extend all the current projects until they figure out all of the details. The Allocations Committee is discussing and moving forward on this investment stream but still haven't received the contracts from the federal government as of yet. That should happen relatively soon.
- There is a motion to be put to the coalition regarding extending all current projects.
- Within 3 years we need to develop a coordinated access system and there will be a new stream of funding to help support this initiative. As a community we will be able to determine what we want this to look like. There are meetings coming up with BC housing and Community entities in BC, as BC housing has already started rolling out coordinated access for their housing units.
- We will need to create a new HPS community plan based on the new program and all priorities will shift to outcome based, specific to our own communities, that we identify ourselves.
- The only outcome mandatory by federal government is 50% reduction in homelessness within the next 10 yrs.
- Starting next fiscal we don't have to invest 40% of funding to housing first – that deliverable has been removed.
- Current projects funded are:  
Nanaimo Aboriginal Stream (Indigenous Stream name change coming soon)

Tillicum Lelum programs – Young Mums program and the Indigenous Housing Navigator program  
Nanaimo designated – JHS Housing First and Support Services program (transitional supportive community housing for men coming out of prison)

Women’s centre – Tenancy Support program

Unitarian Shelter – funding for coordinator and rent for the summer months

- These are great investments in the community and there is great work happening here. The Allocation Committee is discussing funding these for the next fiscal year.
- Grace Kerr - from a federal perspective, it will be a continuation of existing programs, while the new program is rolled out. We looking for a motion for the intent to renew or not.
- Jeannine Bousquet – The Allocations Committee recommendation is that the current sub-projects get renewed contingent on the interest of each sub-project to continue and an assessment of their expected results from this fiscal. Also contingent on the CE having signed agreement with Canada.
- All current Programs are on board to continue.
- **MOTION:** To have current sub-projects get renewed contingent on the interest of each sub-project to continue and an assessment of their expected results from this fiscal. Also contingent on the CE having signed agreement with Canada.

John Horn first – Violet Hayes second    Vote: All in favour    **Motion passed**

- Signy Madden - One of our challenges around HPS contracting is that if we don’t flesh out our plan in the community, we end up just putting calls for proposal out without being aligned with the bigger plan and how we want the 2 plans to roll out in the community. So the more clarity we have on this, the better informed we will be to know where money is best spent strategically. This will also be helpful in working towards the coordinated access system and what it looks like for BC, using all the best resources that we have.
- Lisa Bhopalsingh – There is a need to revise the HPS community plan given the new information to get documents in sync. Updating the action plan will support what we have to file for the federal dollars.
- Signy Madden - If the action plan is revised then this group can discuss the opportunity as a community as to what is eligible to fund. We have an opportunity for us to choose a different direction in a thoughtful way.
- Grace Kerr - There will be a plan for 2019-2020 expected in the first quarter – there will be a new community plan – John Horn asked - for the 1 year renewal, would the priorities be the same? Grace responded that it will likely be very similar, but likely more priorities around coordinated access (by June).
- Grace Kerr – For clarity, the Housing First target of investment is being removed under Reaching Home, but it is still being very much endorsed, trying to allow communities to invest dollars as to their needs in implementing housing first with out too many restrictions.

### 3. Allocations Committee report back to Coalition (Jeannine/Signy)

#### a. HPS Recommendations for next fiscal – need a motion

- (see above information and Motion)

#### b. Coalition structure

- Signy Madden – We need to decide what kind of structure will be most effective. As we move forward we will be seeing some direction from the City side which will allow us to see what role the Coalition needs to play in terms of sharing information and what is happening on the ground and conversation around federal funding. We may be wanting to look at a more effective model

and link the HPS funding more as a community. We may need a smaller executive group to make decisions more effectively. We may need to define who are the most senior folks that we can get to work on actualizing what our plan is.

- Heather Ambo - Landlord engagement question and discussion  
Heather Ambo is the Chair of the Community Advisory Community for the Nikao or the Labieux road site.
- Lisa Bhopalsingh suggested that Heather could indeed network with groups present to see about support for Landlords

**c. Coalition co-chairs**

- We will defer this to next meeting as this is a moving target at the moment, however we may need to relook at structure. Do we need a political person or a senior person from the City.

**4. BC Housing Presentation:** Lois Gabitous, Coordinated Access and Assessment Manager (postponed to next meeting)

**\*\*Signy quick chat about Homelessness and Housing Comms**

- Given that the city doesn't have a Director of Communications at the moment, as it is a vacant position, we on the Coalition side have been managing communications – ie: elections, etc.. We have received some City funding for communications and Sara Couper, formerly from the City of Vancouver, will be working with us and the city regarding communications around short term communications and longer term communications. Sara is working on a short term plan and a key messaging document that we will be sharing around to the Coalition, which defines some terms – ie: what is Housing First, Coordinated Housing, etc.
- If you are being asked to talk to the media on any issues – I can connect you to Sara for coordinated communication piece in the short term until the city fills the spot. Direct service providers like Jason at CMHA, can contact Signy if you need assistance in sharing an accurate and consistent message.
- Lisa Bhopalsingh thanked Signy for her assistance. Service providers who would rather not be speaking to media directly can feel free to push it over to United Way or the Coalition for comments. Also please feel free to share with Sara if you have info that has key messages around things that work, success stories or public education pieces.
- Lisa Bhopalsingh - Neighbour session on drugs 101 is coming up and is part of our work at the City. It is to help giving clarity around info like when to call 911. We also want to asking the community what they need from us.

**\*\*John McCormick – info regarding Housing First**

- We will get close to the target numbers so that is good news. The team has done a great job and I would like to thank them all. In 2019/2020 sadly Tylar will be moving along and I would like to acknowledge her great work. Andrew Ferguson will be taking over.

**5. Agency Round table (if time permits)**

- Dennis Creighton - Harewood Neighbourhood Association – interested in addressing that our communities are safe. He went to a Country Club mall meeting and they say its been brutal since the Labieux site has been put in place. Terminal business have had small groups that have been going around and stealing. Are we providing beds for career criminals? We need to make sure they are good tenants within the 2 sites.
- Dave LaBerge - Most criminal behaviour comes from circumstances – housing, addiction, being poor – so helping these elements will help alleviate the problem. Those that are repeat offenders

will be dealt with accordingly. These housing projects are not a free pass on criminal activity and that conduct is not tolerated at either site. It will take 3-6 months to understand where the issues are.

- Lisa Bhopalsingh – Wants to validate neighbourhood concerns and impact. The city is working with the RCMP to see what issues are a result of the housing sites or what are due to other issues in the community. There are block watch and community programs and we are working with the 2 housing site operators to work on protocol agreements to address some challenges occurring at the sites. We are trying to deal empathetically with everyone in the community.
- Mike Kirby (Island Health) we are building the engagement piece at the sites but it will take time.
- Lois Peterson (FUFON) – Regarding the Shelter, we don't know yet if it is staying open for the summer. We are at capacity and the need is there and we have pushed the hours as long as we can.
- Gord Fuller (7- 10 Club), Regarding the Shelter at the Church – we are at more than capacity some night and we try not to turn anyone away. Sundays are the worst day as there is no morning meal program available for people to go to like the 7-10 club. Its been definitely been a challenge. Since tent city, the working poor seems to have increases so much and there is a great need.
- Heather Ambo (Nikao CAC Chair) – I hear so much arguing back and forth whether they are fore or against what is happening at the sites.
- Signy Madden (UWCNVI) – I have gotten many calls supporting what is being done in the city around supportive housing – many business owners have said that it hasn't gotten worse near the Terminal site. The Chamber has been going around and talking to business. Sadly, this is not unique to us and cities across Canada are dealing with these issues.
- Gord Fuller (7- 10 Club) - There needs to be a step back from the defensiveness around the issue – a lot of challenges on both sides

**6. Next Meeting:** March 7, 2019 from 10:00am-12:00pm