

Present:

Councillor Elford – Chairperson
Councillor Annis
Councillor Guerra
A. Heinrich
K. Macdonald
R. Prasad

Absent:**Staff Present:**

R. Costanzo, General Manager, Corporate Services
T. Waterhouse, General Manager, Policing Transition
J. Arason, Director, Strategic Initiatives & Corporate Reporting
A. Murphy, Senior Social Planner
L. Blake, Legislative Services

A. ADOPTIONS**1. Adoption of the Agenda**

It was Moved by Councillor Guerra
Seconded by Councillor Annis
That the Community Services Committee
meeting agenda of January 26, 2022, be adopted.
Carried

2. Adoption of the Minutes

It was Moved by Councillor Guerra
Seconded by Councillor Annis
That the Community Services Committee
meeting minutes of November 24, 2021, be adopted as presented.
Carried

B. NEW BUSINESS/PRESENTATIONS**1. Recovery Homes**

Jeff Arason, Director, Strategic Initiatives and Corporate Reporting, provided a presentation regarding recovery homes. The following information was highlighted:

- Recovery homes provide care and supervision for adults who require low to moderate support such as structured activities, group work and peer monitoring for recovery from substance use before they move back to an independent setting. Recovery homes are privately run facilities that operate from residential homes. Supportive recovery homes are regulated by the Province through the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and operators are required to be registered by the Assisted Living Registrar through the Ministry of Health.

- Updates to the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* in 2016 enhanced the powers of the Assisted Living Registrar to provide greater oversight and new regulations implemented in 2019 provided increased requirements for operators to ensure quality care.
- There are three Supportive Recovery Home funding models: private pay, publicly subsidized or a mix of private pay and publicly subsidized services. The majority of supportive recovery homes in Surrey are publicly subsidized by the Province through a \$35.90 per diem per person.
- Surrey currently has 47 supportive recovery homes on the Assisted Living Registrar, which accounts for approximately 60% of the supportive recovery homes in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley. In 2016, Council introduced a business license requirement for all supportive recovery homes with a maximum of 55 supportive recovery home business licenses permitted at any time in an effort to better regulate supportive recovery homes in advance of Provincial regulations. There are currently 54 business licenses issued for recovery homes in Surrey, with one additional license pending. The City requires that a recovery home located in a duplex building have two business licenses while the Province only requires a single registration.
- In 2021, through Corporate Report Ro26, Council implemented the requirement that supportive recovery homes enter into a Housing Agreement between the City, operator and registered property owner. The Housing Agreement requires that the facility be operated in accordance with the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and the *Assisted Living Regulation*. Prior to the Housing Agreement requirement, the City did not have any opportunities to take action against a poor quality operator.
- There are currently 17 completed Housing Agreements for supportive recovery homes in Surrey, with an additional 38 operators that will be required to complete Housing Agreements prior to renewing their business license. Along with the Housing Agreement, operators will be required to provide data to help the City better understand their clients and the home's effectiveness. In addition, staff will complete business license inspections to ensure compliance with the residency agreement, personal service plans and transition plan.
- In 2021, the Province conducted 90 inspections of recovery homes in the province, resulting in the cancellation of two registrations in Surrey that were replaced with two quality operators. It is unclear how many of the inspections occurred in Surrey, or if the inspections were planned or in response to complaints. The Province has also started maintaining a list of unregistered homes and working with these operators to help bring them into compliance. There are a few unregistered homes in Surrey and staff are working with the Province and operators on registration; however, Surrey is at its business license maximum, so staff are working on alternative housing solutions for those clients.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Arason provided the following information:

- Staff maintain an informal list of potential new operators and notify them when an existing license is cancelled.
- There is no clear reason why Surrey has more recovery homes compared to the rest of the region. Surrey is more affordable and allows supportive homes in residential land uses, whereas other cities preclude them as an option. Surrey also has additional support services and transit services.
- The data request from current recovery homes is minimal, consisting of 8 - 10 questions per resident. Staff will report back to the Committee and Council on the initial findings of the study.
- The per diem rate is set by the Province and was last increased in Fall 2019, when it was increased by approximately \$5. There are financial challenges related to providing quality care and many operators have indicated that they are reliant on fundraising. The per diem is provided to the operator in lieu of other financial support the client would otherwise receive.
- Detox centres are outside of the scope of recovery homes and are under the jurisdiction of Fraser Health Authority. Staff can investigate the current capacity of detox centres in Surrey and report back to the Committee.
- Staff are aware of illegal recovery homes and are working to address the issue. Homeowners have been included in the Housing Agreement as not all operators are transparent during the lease process. It is anticipated that this will help landlords with due diligence and reduce the number of illegal recovery homes.

The Committee commended Council and staff for their actions to address the issues related to recovery homes. The Committee noted that recovery homes have to operate on less funding compared to supportive housing or shelters but are required to provide more services for clients.

2. **Emergency Weather Response**

Aileen Murphy, Senior Social Planner, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding Emergency Weather Response (EWR) shelters and highlighted the following information:

- The EWR program typically runs from November 1 – March 31; however, earlier this fall, BC Housing announced that this year, it could start in October if the need arose due to weather conditions and shelters were ready to open. An EWR shelter is a temporary shelter that opens overnight during extreme weather alerts and provides a mat, bedding and snack to guests. EWR shelters do not provide connections to services. The official Surrey/White Rock EWR Plan identifies the criteria for when an EWR alert will be called. The alert may vary from area to area, as it is based on the local weather forecast and conditions.

- Funding for the EWR program is provided by BC Housing to communities where the number of unhoused residents exceeds the number of shelter spaces available. The Homelessness Services Association of British Columbia (HSABC) is contracted to manage the EWR program in Vancouver and Surrey. The EWR program funding covers the program coordinator, overnight shelter staff, a snack for clients, cleaning, first aid supplies and transportation to the shelters, as needed. Funding is not provided for rent, so shelter spaces are sought for free from community organizations.
- Surrey currently has 91 EWR mats in six locations. A new shelter space was opened on December 24, 2021, at the Emergency Response Centre (the former North Surrey Recreation Centre). This location provides an additional 30 co-ed mats. A church in Whalley has also expressed interest in hosting a shelter and is working with the HSABC on the logistics. Four shelters allow pets: Pacific Church, Atira Shimai House, the Emergency Response Centre and Mount Olive Lutheran Church. EWR shelters have been activated 77 nights to date.
- Overall, Surrey had an average of 84% occupancy. It is common for occupancy to be low at the start of the EWR season. Occupancy rates generally increase as the weather becomes more extreme and residents become more aware of the shelters. Most shelters, except for the youth centre, are operating at or beyond capacity most nights they are open.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms. Murphy and Terry Waterhouse, General Manager, Police Transition, provided the following information:

- Youth are most likely be amongst the hidden homeless, seeking shelter with friends or couch surfing. Surrey also does not currently have homeless shelter services specifically for youth; however, the new youth modular housing project that is under development will provide 30 supportive units for youth who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.
- All residents are welcome in City facilities during their opening hours. The Chuck Bailey Recreation Centre extended its hours to provide a warm space for unhoused residents during the day over the holidays. “Nourish Surrey” is a pandemic response project being funded by the UBCM and will provide a place for unhoused residents during the day.

3. Unpermitted & Illegal Construction Update

Rob Costanzo, General Manager, Corporate Services, provided the following update regarding unpermitted and illegal construction:

- At the September 13, 2021 Regular Council – Public Hearing meeting, Council directed staff to provide a report regarding illegal and unauthorized construction, with a recommended course of action that includes enhanced enforcement, prosecution and public awareness that can be implemented to mitigate loss of life, destruction of property, and further compliance of the existing and new bylaws.

- Unpermitted and illegal construction is increasing throughout the Lower Mainland due to rising construction costs, availability of real estate and income from secondary suites. Unpermitted and illegal construction can have multiple potential impacts on homeowners, including poor workmanship and faulty construction, insurers refusing to pay claims, future sale of home and risks to life and safety of occupants and adjacent properties.
- The current response to unpermitted and illegal construction is insufficient to deter or reduce the problem. Key challenges include balancing complaints and investigation while still providing proper service to those who follow proper permitting practices, updating zoning and building enforcement bylaws and lack of education and public awareness.
- An Advisory Team with representation from Bylaw Services, Legal Services, Information Technology and Building Divisions convened to review and make recommendations on the best course of action to reduce unpermitted and illegal construction, which were presented to Council for consideration at the January 17, 2022 Regular Council – Public Hearing meeting in Corporate Report R011. The actions include:
 - Bylaw amendments: increasing existing bylaw fees and creating new bylaws and administration fees. The proposed new bylaws will address a Stop Work Order not being properly displayed, allow for daily issuance of fines for ignoring posted orders and allow the City to recover fees for staff time related to repeated site visits.
 - Creation of a public education and awareness campaign: updating materials on the City's website for permitting and reporting potential violations.
 - Creation of an "Unpermitted and Illegal Construction Enforcement Team": creating a dedicated cross-departmental team that will address Stop Work Orders at priority properties, facilitate complaints and responses, streamline illegal construction charge process, improve education tools, bylaws and information, and continuously monitor performance and implement improvements.
 - Creation of a Building Adjudication Process: The adjudication process will be expanded to include building disputes with a monthly review of ticket disputes by a Provincially-appointed judge. This will be an effective measure to address violations without involving the Courts.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

This section had no items.

D. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

This section had no items.

E. CORRESPONDENCE

This section had no items.

F. INFORMATION ITEMS

This section had no items.

G. OTHER BUSINESS

This section had no items.

H. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Community Services Committee is scheduled for February 23, 2022.

I. ADJOURNMENT

It was

meeting do now adjourn.

Moved by Councillor Guerra
Seconded by Councillor Annis
That the Community Services Committee

Carried

The Community Services Committee meeting adjourned at 6:34 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Councillor Elford, Chairperson