

From: CityClerk
Subject: FW: City Council General Purposes Committee October 3, 2016

From: De Whalen [mailto:de_whalen@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, 3 October 2016 17:40
To: CityClerk
Subject: Re: City Council General Purposes Committee October 3, 2016

City Council General Purposes Committee October 3, 2016

Staff Report entitled "Analysis of homeless situation and needs in Richmond."

My name is Deirdre Whalen and I live at 13631 Blundell Road in Richmond. I am speaking on behalf of the Richmond Poverty Response Committee (PRC) in response to the Staff Report entitled "Analysis of homeless situation and needs in Richmond." The PRC is pleased with the report, and want to thank City staff for responding so quickly to the concerns of the PRC and Chimo when we presented to Council on September 12th about our homeless and at-risk residents.

I understand the staff recommendations are: \$30,000 for a homeless liaison pilot contract and \$20,000 for the creation of centralized housing database. It is heartening to see the City putting substantial funds towards dealing with residents facing homelessness. The PRC supports the broad strokes of the staff report.

The report and its recommendations is a good start to a process we hope will continue and grow. However we note one major omission. There is no mention of creating, retrofitting or preserving affordable housing. That is the reason we requested a formal agreement with a housing provider. In any case, it is an excellent start! I would like to make some comments and ask questions about the particulars.

1. \$30,000 for a homeless liaison pilot contract: The request for proposals (RFP) for this contract should be open and transparent and application timelines should be sufficient for local non-profit societies to fully consider and respond to the RFP. I note that \$30,000, while it seems like a lot, is only a 15 hour/week job at \$20/hour, but part-time is better than none.

2. \$20,000 for the creation of centralized housing database: Just a point of information here. The Richmond Homelessness Coalition (RHC) has an ongoing project to develop a market-rental database. The RHC knows that BC Housing has a database for subsidized rental housing that covers BC Housing projects, Metro Vancouver Housing, all co-ops and all seniors' homes. But this project fills in the gap of information concerning market-rentals in Richmond. Atira Women's Housing Society has conduct of this RHC project and I believe they received some funding from the Richmond Community Foundation to complete a database. The PRC would suggest that City staff liaison to the RHC find out more about the project and the deliverables of the funding stream to ensure there is no duplication of efforts.

3. Advocate and work with senior levels of government: I would caution the committee in accepting an amendment to "include women's and men's shelters as a priority." Governments frequently change their priorities around housing and homelessness and I wouldn't want Richmond to lose out on funding opportunities. The PRC would suggest the pilot project develop terms to deal with immediate housing needs and

homelessness as well as building a base for short term and future needs, considering the fickle realities of provincial and federal government funding priorities.

I would like to close by making some suggestions in regards to the Affordable Housing Strategy Update. On Page GP-98 of the General Purposes report, it refers to "policies and strategies with respect to the City's role." As I said on another time before Council, perfectly good houses used as rentals are being torn down. Many of these homes housed two and sometimes three families. We know this because these are the at-risk families coming to local service agencies saying they have been evicted. I know the City has a policy on replacing rental units on a 1:1 basis. Does this apply to a single-family house that houses more than one family? If not, perhaps it is time to think about revising the replacement policy. Lastly, the PRC hopes the City will consider employing a number of policy tools that other cities are using, one of which is reducing or eliminating Development Cost Charges (DCC's) for purpose-built rental developments.

Thank you.

De Whalen
604.230.3158

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From: De Whalen <de_whalen@hotmail.com>
Sent: October 3, 2016 3:55 PM
To: David Weber
Subject: City Council General Purposes Committee October 3, 2016

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I understand the staff recommendations are: \$30,000 for a homeless liaison pilot contract, \$20,000 for the creation of centralized housing data base and a five year plan for \$50,000 towards a homeless liaison pilot

contract. It is heartening to see the City putting substantial funds towards dealing with residents facing homelessness. The PRC supports the broad strokes of the staff report, especially the front-end loading of the funding.

The report and its recommendations is a good start to a process we hope will continue and grow. However we note one major omission. There is no mention of creating, retrofitting or preserving affordable housing. That is the reason we requested a formal agreement with a housing provider. In any case, it is an excellent start! I would like to make some comments and ask questions about the particulars.

1. \$30,000 for a homeless liaison pilot contract: The request for proposals (RFP) for this contract should be open and transparent and application timelines should be sufficient for local non-profit societies to fully consider and respond to the RFP. I note that \$30,000, while it seems like a lot, is only a 15 hour/week job at \$20/hour, but part-time is better than none.

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3. A five-year plan for \$50,000 towards a homeless liaison pilot contract: I am assuming that \$10,000/year is provided to act as leverage funding to attract other levels of government funding. The PRC would suggest the pilot project develop terms to deal with immediate housing needs as well as building a base for short term and future needs, considering the fickle realities of provincial and federal government funding priorities.

I would like to close by making some suggestions in regards to the Affordable Housing Strategy Update. On Page GP-98 of the General Purposes report, it refers to "policies and strategies with respect to the City's role." As I said on another time before Council, perfectly good houses used as rentals are being torn down. Many of these homes housed two and sometimes three families. We know this because these are the at-risk families coming to local service agencies saying they have been evicted. I know the City has a policy on replacing rental units on a 1:1 basis. Does this apply to a single-family house that houses more than one family? If not, perhaps it is time to think about revising the replacement policy. Lastly, the PRC hopes the City will consider employing a number of policy tools that other cities are using, one of which is reducing or eliminating Development Cost Charges (DCC's) for purpose-built rental developments.

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