



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee
From: Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager, Community Services
Re: Federal Minister for Seniors and Aging

Date: March 30, 2016
File: 07-3400-01/2016-Vol
01

Staff Recommendation

1. That a letter be written to the Federal Government respectfully requesting that consideration be given to appointing a Minister for Seniors and Aging; and
2. That copies of the letter be forwarded to Richmond's Members of Parliament.

Cathryn Volkering Carlile

Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager, Community Services

Att. 1

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Intergovernmental Relations & Protocol Unit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Cathryn Volkering Carlile</i>
REVIEWED BY STAFF REPORT / AGENDA REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE	INITIALS: <i>DW</i>	APPROVED BY CAO <i>[Signature]</i>

Staff Report

Origin

At the Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee (RSAC) January 13, 2016 meeting, the topic of the need for a Minister of Seniors was discussed and it was resolved:

That the Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee submit a letter to City Council proposing that the Federal Government appoint a Minister for Seniors.

The RSAC subsequently sent a letter to Council (Attachment 1) with this request. The purpose of this report is to present the letter and attached information to Council for consideration.

This report supports Council's 2014-2018 Term Goal #5 Partnerships and Collaboration:

5.1. Advancement of City priorities through strong intergovernmental relationships.

This report also supports the Social Development Strategy Action 41:

Develop and maintain strong networks and communication channels with senior government partners to seek their policy and financial assistance in addressing Richmond social issues.

Analysis

In announcing the Federal Ministry appointments in November 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, unlike his predecessor, did not appoint a single Minister responsible for Seniors. In announcing Ministers and their mandates, Prime Minister Trudeau indicated that all Ministers were to be of equal rank, hence no Ministers of State were appointed.

While no ministries were given oversight of seniors concerns, the Ministerial Mandate letters, made public for the first time, indicated that many include directives to address such matters. While advocacy organizations have acknowledged that many of these directives will benefit senior citizens, the lack of an oversight Ministry has caused concern. For example, the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of BC (COSCO) is working with the National Pensioners Federation to prepare a Seniors Ministry proposal. The COSCO position was discussed at the RSAC January meeting, and a sub-committee was established to research how the Federal Government was planning to address seniors concerns. Relevant excerpts from Ministry Mandate letters are included in Attachment 1.

Staff support the RSAC request. Given that 12 Ministries are involved in delivering mandates related to seniors issues, the range and complexity of these issues, and the significant growth in the seniors population anticipated in coming years, a devoted Ministry would provide needed focus to this substantive body of work. A Minister responsible for Seniors and Aging would provide oversight, coordination and profile to these undertakings. A dedicated Ministry would also provide seniors with a single point of contact in a complex, wide-ranging bureaucracy, thus improving communication channels between legislators and the public they are seeking to serve.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact.

Conclusion

The RSAC is requesting advocacy to the Federal Government for a Minister Responsible for Seniors and Aging. Given the range and significance of seniors issues to be addressed by the Federal Government through a number of Ministries, as outlined in Attachment 1, staff support the RSAC request. A coordinated, concerted approach to supporting and monitoring the progress of these substantive undertakings through parliament, as well as a single point of contact for seniors, is required to ensure the best possible outcomes for Canadians at all stages of the aging process.

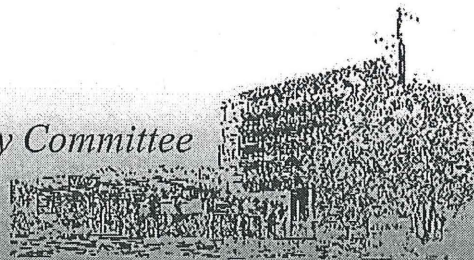


Lesley Sherlock
Planner 2
(604-276-4220)

Att. 1: Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee Letter, "Federal Minister for Seniors and Aging", March 9, 2016.



Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
Serving Richmond since 1991



March 9, 2016

Richmond City Council
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

Re: Federal Minister for Seniors and Aging

At the January 13, 2016 meeting of the Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee (RSAC), it was moved:

"That the Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee submits a letter to City Council proposing that the Federal Government appoint a Minister for Seniors".

Following the change in government in October 2015, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau selected a Cabinet and issued mandate letters to the thirty-one Cabinet Ministers. The Prime Minister also decided that there would be no Ministers of State and that all his Ministers would be of equal rank.

Many of these mandate letters include responsibilities that directly affect seniors. Extracts from the relevant letters are attached and parts relating to seniors and aging issues have been highlighted.

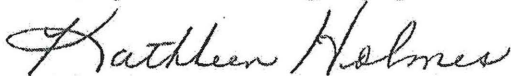
Projections over the last many years continue to clearly show that seniors are rapidly becoming a significant and growing proportion of the Canadian population. Seniors and organizations representing seniors need one point of contact with government, and this is vitally important at the Federal level.

There is an urgent need for a separate Ministry for Seniors to advocate for seniors within the Cabinet, be directly accountable to seniors and organizations representing seniors, conduct policy research, and design and coordinate policies and programs for seniors.

Richmond City Hall 6911 No. 3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1
Telephone 604 276-4220, Fax 604 276-4052, Email lsierlock@richmond.ca

The Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee is requesting that Mayor and Council write to the Prime Minister, with copies to all the Premiers and leaders of other Federal and Provincial parties, urging the Prime Minister to appoint a Minister with responsibility for all issues related to seniors and aging.

Thank you for considering this request.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathleen Holmes".

Kathleen Holmes
Chair, Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee

KH:hm
Att. 1

Federal Government Mandate Letters highlighting items specifically or somewhat related to seniors issues (excerpted by Leslie Gaudette, November 2015)

- Mihychuk: Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour Mandate:
 - Work with the Minister of Finance to improve the income security of lower income seniors living alone by:
 - increasing the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) by ten percent;
 - indexing Old Age Security (OAS) and GIS payments to a new Senior's Price Index;
 - cancelling the increase in age of eligibility for OAS (65 to 67); and
 - working with provinces and territories to ensure adequate and coordinated support programs to address seniors' poverty. - See more at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-families-children-and-social-development-mandate-letter#sthash.VHRIOKcs.dpuf>
- Duclos: Minister of Families, Children and Social Development:
 - In your role as Minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, work with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities to develop a strategy to re-establish the federal government's role in supporting affordable housing, including:
 - prioritizing infrastructure investments in affordable housing and seniors' housing, including finding ways to support the municipal construction of new housing units and refurbishment of existing ones;
 - providing support to municipalities to maintain rent-geared-to-income subsidies in co-ops;
 - providing communities the money they need for Housing First initiatives that help homeless Canadians find stable housing;
 - working with the Minister of Finance to encourage the construction of new affordable rental housing by removing all GST on new capital investments in affordable rental housing;
 - working with the Minister of Finance to modernize the existing Home Buyers' Plan to allow Canadians impacted by sudden and significant life changes to buy a house without tax penalty;
 - working with the Minister of Finance to ensure that the new Canada Infrastructure Bank provides financing to support the construction of new, affordable rental housing; - See more at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-families-children-and-social-development-mandate-letter#sthash.VHRIOKcs.dpuf>
- Philpott: Minister of Health No specific mention of a seniors health care plan; nor pharmacare
 - Engage provinces and territories in the development of a new multi-year Health Accord. This accord should include a long term funding agreement. It should also:
 - support the delivery of more and better home care services. This includes more access to high quality in-home caregivers, financial supports for family care, and, when necessary, palliative care;
 - advance pan-Canadian collaboration on health innovation to encourage the adoption of new digital health technology to improve access, increase efficiency and improve outcomes for patients;
 - improve access to necessary prescription medications. This will include joining with provincial and territorial governments to buy drugs in bulk, reducing the cost Canadian governments pay for these drugs, making them more affordable for Canadians, and exploring the need for a national formulary;
 - and make high quality mental health services more available to Canadians who need them. - See more at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-health-mandate-letter#sthash.QurEhFqp.dpuf> **note: this could include dementia**
- Momeau, Finance:
 - Meet with your provincial and territorial colleagues at your earliest opportunity to begin a process to enhance the Canada Pension Plan to provide more income security to Canadians when they retire. - See more at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-finance-mandate-letter#sthash.JbZzSCx5.dpuf>
- Garneau, Transport:
 - Work with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, who will have the lead, and in consultation with provincial and territorial governments as well as municipalities, to develop and implement an Infrastructure Strategy which will see significant investments made to improve public transit infrastructure and green infrastructure. The Strategy should also improve access to, and governance of, existing infrastructure programs, increase data collection capacity, promote better asset management of infrastructure in Canada and provide better supports for local communities. - See more at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-transport-mandate-letter#sthash.MSovf8FH.dpuf>
- Wilson-Raybould: Justice:
 - Lead a process, supported by the Minister of Health, to work with provinces and territories to respond to the Supreme Court of Canada decision regarding physician-assisted death.
 - Develop, in collaboration with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, and supported by the Minister of Status of Women, an approach to, and a mandate for, an inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls in Canada, including the identification of a lead Minister. - See more at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-justice-and-attorney-general-canada-mandate-letter#sthash.CukeNWn5.dpuf>

- Sajjan, National Defence:
 - Work with the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence to reduce complexity, overhaul service delivery, and strengthen partnerships between National Defence and Veterans Affairs.
 - Work with the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence to develop a suicide prevention strategy for Canadian Armed Forces personnel and veterans.
 - Support the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness in a review of existing measures to protect Canadians and our critical infrastructure from cyber-threats. - See more at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-national-defence-mandate-letter#sthash.bCYzKz8K.dpuf>
- Lebovitch, National Revenue
 - Ensure that CRA is a client-focused agency that will: proactively contact Canadians who are entitled to, but are not receiving, tax benefits; offer to complete returns for some clients, particularly lower-income Canadians and those on fixed incomes, whose financial situation is unchanged year-to-year; - See more at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-national-revenue-mandate-letter#sthash.rvmd7IGI.dpuf>
- Goodale, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
 - Enhance compensation benefits for public safety officers who are permanently disabled or killed in the line of duty, including the creation of a compensation benefit for firefighters, police officers, and paramedics.
- Foote, Public Services and Procurement
 - Work with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities to conduct an inventory of all available federal lands and buildings that could be repurposed for affordable housing in communities. - See more at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-public-services-and-procurement-mandate-letter#sthash.GHv58Ihv.dpuf>
- Qualtrough, Sport and Persons with Disabilities
 - Lead an engagement process with provinces, territories, municipalities, and stakeholders that will lead to the passage of a Canadians with Disabilities Act. In this work, you will be supported by the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. - See more at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-sport-and-persons-disabilities-mandate-letter#sthash.GbKDL5I9.dpuf>
- Hehr, Veteran Affairs
 - Re-establish lifelong pensions as an option for our injured veterans, and increase the value of the disability award, while ensuring that every injured veteran has access to financial advice and support so that they can determine the form of compensation that works best for them and their families
 - Expand access to the Permanent Impairment Allowance to better support veterans who have had their career options limited by a service-related illness or injury.
 - Re-open the nine Veterans Affairs service offices recently closed, hire more service delivery staff, and fully implement all of the Auditor General's recommendations on enhancing mental health service delivery to veterans.
 - End the time limit for surviving spouses to apply for vocational rehabilitation and assistance services.
 - Increase the veteran survivor's pension amount from 50 percent to 70 percent.
 - Eliminate the "marriage after 60" clawback clause, so that surviving spouses of veterans receive appropriate pension and health benefits.
 - Double funding to the Last Post Fund to ensure that all veterans receive a dignified burial.
 - Work with the Minister of National Defence to develop a suicide prevention strategy for Canadian Armed Forces personnel and veterans. - See more at: <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-veterans-affairs-and-associate-minister-national-defence-mandate-letter#sthash.QnnCKG2n.dpuf>